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“Abundance” Illusion: Food Politics in a Southwest Village in China in the Agrarian Extractivism Era

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Abstract

From the 1980s to now, China has on the track of high-speed of development, which enables the whole society to reduce poverty and become prosperity. It helps solve the problem of food scarcity and even achieve to “abundance.” However, this “abundance” is based on the great cost with much apparent and hidden crisis. This paper is dedicated to examining the food and farming practice and its transformation led by the developmentalism in a national poverty-alleviation rural community in southwest China minority ethnic area, showing a grand narrative of food politics in China. This research using a qualitative research method conducts a participatory observation in this rural community.

Based on the rich field research material, there are some preliminary findings. Firstly, even though the rapid development brings the “abundance,” while it is indeed an illusion since this output on material and sufficiency is based on the sacrifice of healthy and sustainability of human, society, and nature. Specifically, in a sphere of food, it represents the large quantity but poor quality. The food producer and consumer, especially the foodstuffs lose the sovereignty. Moreover, with the increase of food miles, the industrialization, commercialization, and globalization of food, food safety and food trust crisis become a problematic issue to the individual and the authority. For the authorities, with the top-down food regulation cost rising, it helps reduce some instant collective food safety incidents, while with the counterproductive result. For the public, the rising of food safety and trust crisis trigger them to engage in the bottom-up food strategies and food resistant actions. However, the bottom-up food strategy is struggling in the context of the grid of the authoritarian institution, the mainstream of developmentalism and the popularity of consumerism culture. Whether the illusion of “abundance” could be realized and reversed into the real sustainable alternative path is a vital project for China, the other developing countries, and even the whole globe.

Keywords: *Food politics; Food sovereignty; Agrarian Extractivism; Authoritarianism*

1 Introduction

From the 1980s, China has experienced high-speed of development, with the average annual GDP 8.0%¹ growth rate. During the recent three decades, China has been succeeding in integrating into the globalization process. Due to the achievement in economic growth aspect, the whole society has accumulated plenty of wealth. In agriculture and food system, the tremendous transformation like agriculture modernization and industrialization reform and food commercialization, de-localization and long food miles happens everywhere in the whole nation. Meanwhile, with the policy focus on urbanization development, until the year 2015, China urbanization rate is 56.1%, the urban residents amount arrives at 770 million², which means the depeasantation rising dramatically. At the same time, it is reported by Chinese official media that, in early 2016, China's grain output has been achieved "Twelve even increase", with 12,000 billion kilograms of grain production³. This means that China's food, especially agro-food production capacity achieves to a very high self-insured level, with 900 kilograms per capital⁴. However, with the meatification (Weis, 2007; Schneider, 2013) of Chinese dietary habit transformation, China still need import more and more grain especially feed grain for livestock, like pig or oil grain like soybean. In the year 2015, the total net grain import amount is 120 million tons, which represents 1/5 of the total amount of China's food production⁵. To some extent, this could explain why the central government and some scholars (Zhou, Pan, & Dong, From Who Will Feed China to How to Feed China: Food Properties, Model A and B of Food System and Food Sovereignty of the Development Era, 2012) emphasis on the issue of food security or even food sovereignty in China.

When the authorities cheering on the high growth of food production and agriculture modernization and emphasizing on food security, also the masses break away the food shortage memory, with plenty of food supply after reform era comparing with before the 1980s. However, that plenty or "abundance" is just an illusion which is based on the extraction of nature, society, sovereignty and public health. The outcome of this extraction illustrates mainly from the aspect of food safety crisis in China. The public becomes more and more anxious about food safety issue in China, because of the continuous food safety incidents happened intensively in the recent decade. The outcome of food safety crisis makes the public distrust the food system and the food regulatory in China. This even undermines the authority's creditability and legitimacy. In response, the central government promulgates the "strictest food safety law in China"⁶ in 2015 based on the 2009 food safety law and arranges the grid of local level implementation of the new law. While at the grassroots level, there is a noticeable food self-protection in different ways initiated by some scholars and social activists⁷, combined the food producers mostly are smallholders and the urban middle-class food consumers to solve the food safety crisis and "san nong issue"⁸. Encountered the top-down authoritarian food governance and agriculture policies and the consumerism culture, how this bottom-up grassroots food movement can unfold the illusion of the achieved "abundance" or plenty and reverse into a real alternative way of sustainable future of China's food and agriculture system is the core of food politics in China.

¹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2015-10/15/c_128319939.htm

² http://www.china.com.cn/guoqing/2016-02/02/content_37713840.htm

³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/tech/2015-12/09/c_128512190.htm

⁴ http://news.xinhuanet.com/2015-03/06/c_1114552799.htm

⁵ <http://mt.sohu.com/20160310/n439959963.shtml>

⁶ On April 24, 2015, the standing committee of China's National People's Congress revised the 2009 Food Safety Law. This revision is wide-ranging, imposing stricter controls and supervisions on food production and management. Especially this new law introduces rules on genetically modified foods and provide that packages of genetically modified foods must be labeled as such, and the information on the labels must be accurate.

⁷ From the beginning of 21st century, there are different patterns of community based agriculture emerging in China, as well as farmer markets in bigger city like Beijing, Shanghai and some capital cities. Noticeably, these are but not limited that the "nestle market" initiated by Jingzhong Ye and his team in China Agricultural University, "Little Donkey" urban farm initiated by Tiejun Wen, Yan Shi and so on, and the new rural construction movement launched by Huili He and the other associated scholars and activists.

⁸ "nongmin(peasant), nong cun(countryside) and nongye(agriculture)".

In the neoliberalism globalization wave, China as one of the Bricks countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) displays a high demand for large amounts of raw materials and food, and extract the domestic and abroad natural resources international accumulation projects based on the control of land, water and related natural (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015). As Acosta (2013) mentioned, these countries appear to be trapped in “the paradox of plenty” or “the resource curse”. He uses the term extractivism to describe the accumulation mode of development in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Extractivism as the process of removing large quantities of natural resources that are not processed or only processed limitedly for development, especially for export, it is not limited to minerals or oil, also in farming, forestry, and even fishing. Also, he combined the neoextractivism (a contemporary version of extractivism) with the paradox of plenty of natural resources and poverty and authoritarianism in the context of Latin America. No matter “new extractivism” (Gudynas, 2010; Ayelazuno, 2014), or “neoextractivism” or “agrarian extractivist project” (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015), the “abundance” illusion of neo-liberalism development process is a process to extract the natural resources within and beyond the territory and nation sovereignty within the frame of authoritarian politics by capital or power. However, within the context of China’s path, the extraction represents not only in “hard” or “energy” natural resources, but also in the “soft” and “invisible” “human resources” aspects as a world factory with the population bonus. And with the achieved accumulation, these twenty decades, china launches different overflowing investment projects on agrarian and food sphere abroad to extract more resources to continue the developmentalism process within the geopolitical and international context. This arouses a series concern and discussion.

As a fundamental basis of human society, agriculture and food could not be the better reflections or lens of the extractionism process in the neoliberalism era. As McMichael (2013) mentions in his book “food regimes and agrarian questions”, the food regime analysis situating the rise and decline of national agricultures within the geopolitical history of capitalism, is not simple about food, but about the politics of food relations. Based on the initial food regime definition with Friedmann (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989), the third food regime, also named corporate food regime (1980-2000s) has been proposed. This stage food regime is market hegemony rooted in a broad neoliberal project to securing transnational circuits of money and commodities (including food), and displacing smallholders into a casual global force for capital, which fuels a global counter-movement (Polanyi, 2001)of grassroots in the frame of food sovereignty (McMichael, Food Regime and Agrarian Questions, 2013). From the scope to food security, land reform, seeds control, fighting with free trade, ecological farming and even empowering woman, food sovereignty has become a critical alternative to the dominant neoliberal model in food and farming sphere (Wittman, Desmarais, & Wiebe, 2010; McMichael, 2013). In the alliance, those food movements dedicated to promoting sustainable agriculture, fighting hunger, supporting family-and –small-scale farming, and staving off ecological destruction have sprouted from the rural and urban grassroots everywhere: locally, nationally, and globally (Magdoff, Foster, & Buttel, 2000).In the name of hungry, mostly food security discourse, the nation government and largest agribusiness/food corporations, even some biotechnology scientist combine together to control the cost of the raw materials purchased from farmers while exert largest profit from environmental sustainability and human public health (Magdoff, Foster, & Buttel, 2000; Steinbrecher, Steinbrecher, Kuyek, & Michaels, 2003).

In China, the contemporary food politics is not merely about “the struggle over how the losses and gains from states action allocated in food and farming” (Paarlberg, 2013), or about “how the food industry influences the public’s health and nutrition” (Nestle, 2007), but mainly represents the request of food safety and coordinated development of rural and urban as a embodied food politics (Carolan, 2011) way. It implies by a bottom-up “one family, two systems” food self-protection strategy (Zhou & Fang, 2015), here I view it as a food sovereignty display in China’s setting to face with the extractivism developmental era. In order to unfold the illusion of “abundance” of developmentalism, integrate the food movements in China into the global context, and demonstrate the vivid picture of China food politics, this paper uses a southwest rural community as a zooming case to explore the whole picture.

2 Field story and methods

The story of village and me

I got access to the field site- Guzhai Village in Masha County in Nanning city of Guangxi Province in the southwest of China first time in summer of 2014 by staying there two weeks to conduct a research project on the practice of smallholders' recycling agriculture. The polyculture tradition, seeds-cultivation and conservation of some crops, plentiful food culture and traditions, and longevity of villagers offer me a very deep impression. However, the peasants' worry about food safety, even seed safety (doubt about the commercial seeds is GMO or not)⁹. This encourages me to enter into the food and farming system research deeply. After I finished my doctoral thesis research proposal that proposes Guzhai Village as one of the field sites, I revisited the village for around two months from May to June in 2015. I lived in the elderly apartment in the village, which is sponsored by the state project to support and gather the elderly villagers together in an official apartment. While there are four left-behind elderly women staying there to take care their left-behind grandsons/granddaughters or grand-grandsons/grand-granddaughters. It combines with the village office building, surrounded by the kindergarten, primary school and middle school of Guzhai town. While I seldom cook, instead, I had most of the meals at different villagers' home. By engaging into local people's daily life, especially food and farming practices, totally I interviewed deeply 63 households, with 14 key informants and village cooperative leader, village officers and some migrant works who went back home for a local traditional festival-the Ghost Festival. Also, I took part in some of the daily work of county levels FDA and agriculture, animal husbandry Bureau.

Why Guzhai village?

I was asked several times about why chose Guzhai village as the case. The original consideration was very simple. This is a common but special village in China. It can represent the main transformation of China agriculture and food system from the 1980s, such as agriculture modernization by using agro-chemical input (fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and antibiotics, commercial livestock fodder), hybrid and commercial seeds promotion and domination, agriculture technology extension, land concentrations and circulations, agriculture structure adjustment like cash cropping, and supermarketization in food system. Also, this village likes the general village in China nowadays, facing with depeasantation and rural governance plight. However, this village is special. Firstly, it is a remote mountainous community, with 10% arable land, 90% separately rock mountains, which limits the large-scale monoculture but keeps some traditional ecological agriculture. Secondly, the speciality of ethnic, this village located in Guangxi Zhuang ethnic minority autonomy area, with 20% Yao ethnic minority population conserving plentiful food and cultural traditions, which means it is "the minority of minority". This enables the village and the town to get more concern and support from the central, provincial and municipal authorities. Thirdly, this minority community is a national-level poor village. Combining with the minority policy, this village has become the target of "to be developed" in all aspects. The last but not least, this village located at the Mashan County that was selected to be one of the longevity village in China. With these generalities and specialties, I propose to illustrate an overall picture on food politics and also inspect some possibilities of an alternative path.

Four aspects introduction of Guzhai

The Intertwining agriculture model of modern and traditional. As mentioned above, Guzhai village, 21 kilometers away from Mashan County, and 138 kilometers away from Nanning City, is limited by the geographical restrictions, the total arable land is only 2100mu, 17000 mu forestry area with 2000mu bamboo planting and 2000mu honeysuckle flowers and 3000 mu Zenia tree as cash cropping, the arable land for per capital is 0.5-1.0mu. The main crop is corn-soybean/black bean rotation. The

⁹ In August of 2014, I entered Guzhai Village to conduct the field work. When I interviewed a 79 years old female village about the seed purchasing channel. She asked me the question:" Could you tell me whether this corn seed I bought from market is poisoned or not. I heard it is GMO seed. Is it safe or not?"

main family income is non-farm cash earning. In the interviewed 63 households, only two households run business in the town staying at the village, the other households each year have more than two people migrant working at cities for more than 11 months. The main agricultural income is small-scale family pig farming.

The agriculture model in Guzhai is modern and traditional mixing. The agriculture technology extension project launched by the nation government was landed at this village in the 1980s, with the cash plants like honeysuckle flowers and Zenia tree and granadilla promoting planting projects. The fertilizer using starts from the 1970s, with the large usage from 1990s to 2010, these years the fertilizer using drop to only less than 1000mu and less than 50g per mu/year. While the pesticides, especially the herbicides usage rose because of lack of on-farm labor. As the seeds, nearly 90% seeds are hybrid commercial seeds, like DK007/008 (Monsanto) and CP619 (Chia Tai) purchased from the market, actually from the agriculture technology extension center. While the cooperative leader cooperates with Yiqing Song in Chinese Academy of Sciences to carry maize breeding from the year 2001. The villagers conserve two local maize seeds—Mo Huang and Mo Bai and use the traditional ecological way, no chemical input but only manure from livestock and by inter-planting. The soybean and black beans are mainly local species. As for the livestock, the main livestock and poultry are pigs and chickens, with commercial white pigs and local black pigs, commercial and local chicken species division.

The mix of modern and traditional food system. Due to the restriction of a mountainous area, the main asphalt road supported by the authority was constructed in the year 2013. The local food system is mainly self-sufficient. As mentioned above, the smallholders in the village produce food, corn as the staple food of human and livestock, raise pigs and chickens, and grow different kinds of local vegetables for family consumption. The commercialization of the corn and beans, vegetables nearly 0%, only sale limited extra amount vegetables at local farmer's market. While the pig production is mainly for market, with 3-5 capitals per year, only in the spring festival, some of villagers will consume 1 capital with the traditional way to raise by feeding leftover food and wild vegetables or boiled corn soup, slaughter by themselves or village slaughters, and then give as gift to relatives and neighbors. However, with the industrial and commercial pig farming promotion, there are more pig farming by using commercial soy fodder (no boiled) and commercial white pigs which can be sold to brokers and slaughter by certificated and fixed place around 3 months, no less than 6 months, with the price floating with the market. As for the chicken, most are for family consumption, but some poorer family will sell out.

With the transportation improvement, food production structure change and rural-urban population migration, there is more and more commercial unseasoned and non-local and long distance food dumping in the nearby local food market. And the younger migrant works mostly construction works in Nanning city are influenced by the urban and modern dietary. This contributes the impact of local food traditions and culture. Also, with the different supermarket established in the county, purchasing supermarket food become a new fashion and trend for the village. However, the villagers, especially the older and women who care about food taste and food safety, and know the differences between local food and commercial food, still keep growing some non-chemical and mainly local vegetables for family consumption. And also, in 2008, the village leader Rongyan Lu established the "Mashan Rongyan ecological" cooperative to guide the left behind elders and woman to grow green vegetables, local maize, and raise local black pigs and chickens for the 138km far away "Tu sheng liang pin" restaurant in Nanning run by NGO "farmer's Friend". In May 2015, they started cooperating with "Mom Group" in Nanning city to supply fresh organic vegetables and local products.

Environmental decline and public health shock. Guzhai village, located in the east forestry area in Mashan County which is famous for the longevity and livable and natural environment, there are more than 30 hundred villagers alive in their one-hundred years old. The irrigated water and daily use water are spring water and ground water. Before the 1980s, there was rice production in the village, while because of climate change and groundwater shortage, turned into corn/beans production. Also, with the cash cropping and hybrid crop planting the water and soil are extracted heavily, which results in

the soil erosion these years. In addition, with the abusive use of fertilizer and pesticide and herbicide, the ground water and spring water become no safe for family daily use. Worse, the throwing plastic bags and package of pesticides, herbicides and unrecycled daily garbage and pollution of pig farming, the environment declines dramatically, and with the results of problems of public health. In every interviewed household, there are at least two family members have the modern diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease around the age around 50, or even younger. The cancer rates, especially the digestive cancers become the main cause of death. This makes the local villagers confuse because of the decline of health and lifespan.

Depressed village with the youngers escaping from the village and farming. For the younger village and children, their dream is “going out of the mountains to the glorious cities”. In the interviewed 63 households, only two households run business in the town staying at the village, the other households each year have more than two people migrant working at cities for more than 11 months. As the farmers say, “Here we have no enough land, we cannot rely on nature because floods and droughts happen frequently. We cannot live on farming, with less land and high-price agro-input, we have to go outside to work.” Feminized and aging agriculture is a common phenomenon. The rapid depeasantization and rural decay cause the shortage of agricultural labor and large “left- behind population” (Ye 2008). In the village, the public event and rural governance need the younger village, especially male ones to take part in. However, they have more desire to earn more cash in the city, living in a modern lifestyle, leaving the older and female on farming and public event.

3 The logic and reflections& characters of extraction hidden behind the “abundance”

In the age of “new extractivism” (Gudynas,2010; Ayelazuno, 2014), the exploitation and export of the “hard” and “energy” commodities are view as promising development strategies under the neoliberalism in the name of “motor of growth” to reduce poverty (Ayelazuno, 2014). Actually, this process is a “primitive accumulation” or “accumulation by dispossession” (Bush, 2009; Bond, 2006; Ayelazuno , 2011, 2014). By establishing and deepening the injustice and violence to peasants, especially the small holders, the agrarian extractivism makes up an illusion and a promising-like future to those marginal groups to exploit the “hard” natural resources and “soft” human labor force from them. The national and transnational agribusiness, government in different levels and some extension institutions like NGOs conspire together by the tools of public policy and market.

The logic and nature of extraction hidden behind the “abundance”

By unfolding the veil of this process, the logic of the extraction behind the “abundance” is that all the “hard” and “energy” resources, like natural resources-air, land, water and all the objects existing in the nature, and the “soft” and “humane” resources, like labor, society, culture and the other human-being associated objects are disposed as commodities to serve for the capital accumulation. With this integration, nature and human lose their nature and “freedom” in the “Satanic Mill” (Polanyi, 2001), also called “self-regulating market system” as fictitious commodities (Ibid)by achieving the modern materials and consumerism fulfillment.

In Polanyi’s quote (2001) “To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society”, “But labor, land, and money are obviously not commodities...Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in tis turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity can be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man...The commodity description of labor ,land and money is entirely fictitious.... In disposing of a man’s labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity ‘man’ attached to that tag.... they would die as the victims of acute society dislocation.... Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed.”

Polanyi's theory is still alive and well. With the commercialization of nature and human labor, food, as a necessity for human and a derivative from nature, become a commodity, with the original stage of food producing- agriculture become profit-driven with the assistant of modern agro-technology and "patent protection". The nation states especially the newly independent states, like China, India, and South Africa established as a "development state" after World War II, adjust into an extractive economy to acquire political legitimacy by the vehicles of "national industrialization" for "economic growth" "development projects" and by engaging in the "globalization project" (McMichael, 2017). In China, the "development projects" are mainly "national Industrialization" based on the assumptions that development involves the displacement of agrarian civilization by an urban-industrial society. And development is a linear direction based on Rostow (1998)'s economic growth theories, so the developing countries should institute development by the western developed standard to catch up with them(Ibid). This is what China has been done from the Maoist era with the discourse "industrialization by support from agriculture, like raw materials, foodstuff and so on" to Dengist reform era "the rich first pushing those being rich later" policy until the current post-reform era with the long-term integrated development principle "industry nurturing agriculture and cities because of a series of social and political outcomes of the agrarian extractive development projects. Moreover, China's offshore development projects are the extending of the domestic development principal to maintain the development advantages by extract the resources in worldwide.

Particularly, in food and agriculture system in China, the logic and nature of the extraction hidden behind the illusion of the "abundance" are following the basic principal as mentioned above—commercialization and modernization to catch up with the westerners in the name of "development", especially in the name of "agriculture industrialization & modernization" as the one of "the new four modernizations (si hua tong bu), "guarantee national food security " with the projects like "new countryside construction", "the construction of beautiful countryside", "rural poverty alleviation development ", the development policies target on ethnic minority areas like Guangxi and associated agro-food policies. On one hand, this reflects as transforming the traditional agriculture and food system by using the market regime, modern agro-technology and government-supported policies. On the other hand, this is also a process of transferring the "rural surplus labor" in the name of "emancipate the productive force (Jie fang sheng chan li)" to support the "world factory" economic regime in the globalization era. Consequently, this extractivism development process enables China complete the primitive accumulation with the 8% GDP economic growth achievement but with the sacrifice of ill effect on environment, human, society, culture, traditions and politics.

The reflections& characters of extraction hidden behind the "abundance"

As stated above, even though the national government launches a series of state development projects as a tool to support or extract the resources in rural area, it is clear to see that, the lively countryside becoming decay with left behind population (Ye & He, 2008; Ye & Pan, 2011; Ye, He, Liu, & Chen, 2016; Ye, Wang, Wu, & Liu, 2013; Jacka, 2014) or with the capitalization of agriculture to undertake the food security national task. And with the rapid depeasantation, the traditional rural society collapses. Food safety and public health become a crisis in national wide, even though there is sufficient food, especially meat stuff and modern advanced regulation and medical care system to support. In order to unfold the illusion of the "abundance" created by the discourse and practice of development projects in the extractive way, I will display the vivid picture and stories happened in Guzhai Village in the context of China's food and agriculture reform era in four aspect reflections.

The "Abundance" illusion reflections in agriculture and food system

The "Abundance" created by the government and agribusiness, even the intellectuals of the agro-technology in agriculture and food system are including main four aspects. Firstly, the "backward" traditional agriculture or farming model is developed to an "advanced" modern one with the weapon of agro-biological technology. In Guzhai, the small-scale family farming is the object to be developed to large-scale monoculture, cash cropping, and larger-scale industrial pig farming one. That's one of

the tasks of local (county level) government's required task to promote more land concentration and circulation to adjust the agriculture structure from low-income grain cropping like rice, corn to high-profit cash cropping like Zenia tree, introduced commercial not local wild honeysuckle flower and fresh fruit-granadilla with the support of local agriculture technology extension center and county-level poverty alleviation projects. By giving free hybrid seeds or plants of those cash crops and free fertilizer, matched pesticides and supported facilities, some villagers in Guzhai started granadilla planting from the year 2013. With the promotion of commercial hybrid corn seeds, like DK007/008(Monsanto) and CP619 (Chia Tai) introduced into Mashan County around the year 2008/2009, the villagers almost abandon the local varieties—Mo huang and Mo bai in order to harvest more.

As one left behind home farmer Yanhua Pan said,

“We can harvest more corn around 800 kilograms per mu one year after using the hybrid seeds, but the local one only can produce half of this amount. Five years ago, I used DK series seeds because it performed well in drought and pest-resistant, it was expensive but productive, then it fell down, so now I choose CP619 corn seeds. Last year (2013), there were shortages of this seeds. We have to buy, no choice, because we need to buy this seeds to produce more food to feed the livestock and ourselves. So the other villagers and I were queuing outside of the seeds dealer's store for several days even in the late night. The price was double, even triple as average price (15-18Yuan/gram). I compare the taste of the hybrid corn (powder) with the one we conserved. It is totally different. I do not know why. Also, I found after I grow these hybrid seeds, and use fertilizer, the roots of the corn plant is huge and extract more water and nutrition I think, the soil quality decline and become thin, I need to treat the land by using more manure to nurture it. But now I grow the hybrid one mainly for pig-feeding by using fertilizer and roundup pesticides and herbicides in larger-scale (0.5-1.0mu), while I grow the local one for family consumption by using human, pig and chicken manure and the recycled corn straw in smaller-scale (around 0.3 mu). This enough for my family because only me and two grandchildren left at home.”26/08/2014

The same situation happened in the aquaculture, as describe in the village introduction, the main livestock and poultry are pig and chicken. With the commercial varieties pig (white outsider spices) and hybrid chicken introduction from the beginning of 21st century, there are less pig and chicken breeding like conserving local seeds in Guzhai. There is one big professional pig farm in the village near the village office with the scale around 100-150 capital by enclosing in a three-floors building, and around 50 family pig farming with the scale 10-20 capital by using commercial fodder purchased in the market. The average scale of pig farming in the village is around 3-5 capital mainly by self-produced corn fodder and purchased one or two packages (100 grams/per package) in the beginning because the piglets bought from the market get used to the commercial fodder, around one or two months later feed by non-commercial fodder and family leftover food. The scale of pig farming is fluctuating because of the fluctuation of pork price. The same situation happens in the chicken breeding and farming. While most of the family in Guzhai raise chicken for family self-consumption.

With the modernization of agriculture, the productivity of grain and livestock is improved, with the reduction of the life cycle of livestock, more cash income from agriculture, more integration the small farmers into the agro-food market system. While the quantity improvement is based on the quality declining. Accompanying with the agriculture transformation, the food system is also reformed into a modern one. In Guzhai village, like the majority farmers in China, before the reform era, the family food is self-sufficient. The peasant produces food to consumer or exchange with the others nearby. However, with the development of agriculture modernization, farming is for cash. And Food becomes a commodity for profit. Due to the depeasantation, cash cropping, climate change and consumerism value prevalence, villagers start purchasing cereal foodstuff in the local and urban market. With the impact of modern dietary trend, the villagers, especially the youngster start to buy white rice as staple food, get used to the meatification dietary, reduce the intake of wild vegetables like lexis denticulate, purchase more unreason fresh fruits and vegetables, some luxury meat like beef, lamb and seafood in urban market as the second round catching up with the urban food fashion (the first round was meatification fashion). The processed food, soda drinks, and western-style wheat hamburgers or bread are popular as the new fashion among the younger villagers and children. As Qingwei Lan said, “We

can buy fruits and different vegetables imported from Nanning city or Mashan County at the farmer's market nearby, but I cannot afford the beef and lamb, seafood in the supermarket in the county. Not like the urban people, they are rich can eat whatever they want. But I think I should feel satisfied because most of the food I eat is self-produced, I feel safe. But I am worried about the safety of the seeds bought in the market."

Due to the agriculture modernization, the smallholders in Guzhai could get more cash or agro-food. They are not supposed to worry about food, even farming because there is no hungry and famine happening. However, they are trapped in the "development paradox", worrying about the safety of the food, and losing control of farming without knowing this until they figure out their body and their habitation environment encounter huge challenges and problems.

The "Abundance" illusion reflections in environment and public health

The negative externalities (Weis, 2007) due to the agrarian extractivism are mainly reflects on the ill-effects on the environment and the human beings who habitats there. The hazardous of the agro-chemical input to the soil, ground water and the whole eco-system is admitted as the common sense from the authorities to peasants these years. However, in the beginning of introducing the fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides, the government started a series of projects and integrated the agriculture scientists, local officials to promote the new chemical products and hybrid seeds with the package of technology to smallholders. This campaign is successfully substituting the traditional agriculture into the modern one. Because smallholders in China, they desire to improve the productivity and to save time and energy to flood into cities to make a fortune as a migrant group to earn more cash. Consequently, the fertilizer usage rose dramatically by peasants who pursue higher productivity and without the knowledge on fertilizer. Also, they have no actual knowledge on pesticides and herbicides using. Consequently, they become the middleman or frontier to extract more food products or cash from the land and the environment. Also, they become the real victim in this invisible extraction to sacrifice their health and longevity as a result.

Gu zhai is an extremely example of this case. As mentioned in Part 2, this village, located in the famous longevity area, is one of the best places for living with more than 95% forestry coverage. Before the year 2000, the villagers can drink the spring water directly, and the main river passed from the village belongs to the branch of Hongshui River had enough water yield from the rainfall and springs from mountains and groundwater with certain seasons. Villagers can swim; take bath or wash hair, wash clothes and wash vegetables in this river without worrying about the safety of the water quality. They divided the river into different pool by respecting its natural shape for daily use.

"When I was young (the 1950s), I had long hair. I often went to the village river to wash it with the other girls. The river looked like a mirror I could see my face clear because it was so clean so green. I love that moment, but could not go back. I am not young anymore, and the river is not clean anymore. Before the year 2014, you could see plastic bags, pesticides bag and garages everywhere in the river, the field, and our village. I dare not to use the water in the river because it is poisoned." ---Left behind woman Yanhua Lan who is born in 1940, Yao minority, 75 years old.

"The village environment gets sick these years. You could not see this with your eyes. You came from cities like the other 'da xue sheng', always commended our village was beautiful like a heaven with the green trees, mountains, rivers. Actually as a 37 years' primary school teacher and more than 45 years' peasants in this village, I want to tell you it looks beautiful now but the environment is ruined after the 1980s. The soil is not health now, and the water is also poisoned now because we use too much fertilizer and highly toxic pesticides and herbicides like DDT for so many years. The toxic residues left in the soil and immersing back to the groundwater or go to our only one river in the village. It is an ecosystem circle. So now you see the water looks clean, but it is dangerous. I am sure the running water is safe or not. I think the new diseases of corn and human we never see before is the aftermath.

I have many colleagues at the same age with me died of cancer like gastric cancer and colorectal cancer. I think because of the environment and food has problem. Now the living conditions and standards are higher, the technology is very advanced, but we human died sooner and quicker because of disease not hungry...” ---Yongbai Pan, a retired village primary school teacher and an on-farm season local peasant in Guzhai, 65 years old.

Like Yongbai Pan said, the current newly diseases on environment and humans is the aftermath of high-speed development. From my interview, Guzhai, as one of the well-known longevity village, the public health has become a serious problem. Like mentioned above, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease is common health problem among the age from 38-65 years old villagers who are the first generation of migrant works. But it is rare happened among the group beyond 70 years' old who seldom go outside of the village and have the collective memories of famine and food scarcity when they were young, and keep the local dietary habit- eat more local vegetables and wild vegetables, local corn as staple food, and less meat (pork). Also in the household interview, because of hard working to earn more cash in the city, nearly all the interviewed families have at least one member have the problem of should periarteritis, more than 90% of them are construction workers or have this experiences.

“I am worthless human now, I get sick very seriously and I could not go the city earn more money, only stay at home do some farming work and housework. I got high blood pressure problem in the year 2006, I was only 35 years old, and in the year 2009, I got stroke. And my husband got high cholesterol and shoulder periartthritis problem. After that we had come back home from Nanning city. I worked in a jeans factory in Guangdong before I got married with Changheng's (Her second child) dad before I was 22 years old, then we worked as construction workers in a construction sites in Nanning before I got the stroke. We could earn more than 120 per day per person there. We lived in the work site, we seldom cook; just eat the food offered in the site. The food was not tasty, just for not being hungry then we can continue work. It was not easy, but I could earn money. I could bear any hardship. But now, I could not earn money. I am even weak than my mother she is 75 years old already. I do not know why. But I become more care about the food and health now.”—Jinrong Lan ,44 years old.

“We are very busy to deal with loads of patients every day and night, mostly they are emergent problem like getting cold or fever, but the majority ones come here regularly to get medical care of their chronic health problems, mostly like ‘san gao’ and associated problems. I think the most important reason is the change of environment and what do eat everyday has some problem we do not know. In this area, most people died from digestive cancer I think it has relations to the water and food.” (Vice Dean of the Guzhai Town Hospital)

The development projects landed in the village with the name of “develop and promote the ethnic minority economic ”, like a pump established by the national government, corporates and the other stakeholders, extract the energy and life of the natural environment and the health of people in the village by offering the smallholders cash from agriculture and urban migrant working, The pump is a mechanism to offer the modern civilizations like infrastructure construction, modern technology modern education and consumerism to the local, while take the sustainability of the land and the people live there.

The “Abundance” illusion reflections in the rural society and traditions

With the exploitation of agriculture modernization after the reform era, which combines together with the large-scale of transferring the rural “surplus labor” into cities and industrial and services sector, the rural resources including natural resources, especially land and human resources especially younger peasant labor have been mobilized into urban to serve for the capital accumulation in China. From the 1980s until now, there are two generations migrant works with loads of left-behind home groups. Now

there are unstable employees in China. They are in the situation of “cannot settle down in the city, also cannot go back to rural hometown”. With the welfare of rapid economic achievement, the countryside can be favored by “poverty reduction projects”, “renovation of old and dilapidated house (wei fang gai zao)”, “clean countryside campaign”, “beautiful countryside construction” and the development of rural tourism. It is admitted that the overall income of rural household increase by those government public policies and peasants’ self-hard working. However, the decay of the rural society and the disappearing of the base of the society’s tradition and cultures are taken place during this process with the depeasantation.

In agriculture and food system, with the younger peasant’s escaping from the farming and countryside, actually rural life, the government and capital find a right excuse to concentrate and circulate the land into large-scale monoculture and cash cropping for profit. Because it is the general picture in China’s countryside that villages become hollow places and spaces. The sustainability of rural livelihoods is destroyed by the extractivism development. In Guzhai, considering the limitation of natural resources-less land, from the year 2013, the local government corporates with some touring company or businessman to develop rural tourism, which is named as culture development by constructing pseudo-ancient building or sponsoring the touring area’s villager to decorate their houses as the same standard to attract more urban residents to travel here. This is another way to extract the local resources—environment and culture. Because of these project, the villagers there have to uproot their vegetables grown around the house or tear down their pigpens or henhouse. Some of villagers in Guzhai change their limited farmland into house area in order to get more subsidies on beautiful village construction.

“No one wants to leave in this boring and backward village. I came back from 2 years ago because I have to take care of son who studies in the village primary school. I only have 0.5 mu land; I grow vegetables here for self-consumption. But next year I will build the new bigger house here, the government can support me around 10,0000 yuan. Then I have to buy vegetables on the market. But I still want to go back to Nanning city, no younger people would like leave here. Life in Nanning is more colorful, can go shopping and can earn money easier. I can go to factory or work in the supermarket or as a construction work, because I am still young.” ---Xiao Yan Pan, 29 years old.

“I have to shut down my rice noodles workshop next month, even though I the neighbors and villagers nearby need the rice noodles I make. They like it because I use real stuff and the traditional ways, which is inherited from the generation of my great-grandfather. Our noodles are soft and fresh but the noodles sold on the village market is harden and not fresh. The salesman imports them from the county agro-food market. The county agro-food market imports this from Nanning city. The price is higher because of the transportation. I could continue this business because I am old now. It requires physical effort, too much for me. And I try to find the younger people to carry on this, but nobody would like to do this because it cannot earn more money with the competition with large amount noodles on the village market. Also, these days the County FDA came to inspect the certificate and production conditions, and then finally they urged me to apply “the recording certification for the small workshop food production and processing”. This is the final and direct factor to make me stop. I am illiteracy. I could not do that complicated thing.” ---Uncle Lan who is 70 years old, a rice noodle local maker.

“It is a dilemma for me. I have to come back to the village help my mom’s cooperatives farming and raising pigs. Nobody wants to this dirty and tough work as a young man. And rural life is boring not fancy like in the city. The others will think you are not excellent so you have to do farming and stay in the village. However, sometimes I feel life in this village where I grow up is slow and peaceful. No family separation, no air pollution, no crowed peoples. And I can cook the good food I grow. But I still want to go back to city to find some work to earn more money in the coming year probably...” ---Pan (Rongyan Lu’s second son) , 29 years old.

With the depeasantation and the urbanization orientation and social value, there are less people left in the village, especially no younger peasant and they devalue the farming and rural life. With the reference of urban life, they purchase cars and higher and bigger houses in cities and home village. After unfolding the veil of the modern and standard village houses and living landscapes, a decay and hollow rural community has emerged after the output of labor and raw materials.

4 Bottom-up food movement as a reaction or resistance

In China, with the land reform in Maoist and Dengist era, the smallholders can access to small pieces of plots of land. It is different with the land policy in Latin American and India. The land resistance in China rural area is different, because the protest is mostly on the compensation for requisition of land, especially farmland, not for food sovereignty like in Latin America, India and the other nations. However, it does not mean that in China there is no food sovereignty. Actually it is in another different way spreading around the whole nation. From this research, I treat the food self-protection strategy or movement in China as a new context that mainly focus on individual food safety and rural-urban coordinated development in the international food sovereignty framework. As a common phenomenon, in China, with the agriculture and food system commercialization and modernization, even globalization, food safety becomes a crisis for individuals in China, in alliance with the “sannong” problematic issue. Smallholders as the main food producer, they utilize a divided way to produce food for self-consumption and market sale. Some scholars summarize this as a “one family, two systems” (Zhou & Fang, 2015) food strategy. With the exposure on food safety incidents, more and more urban middle class food consumers become to initiate or join the networks initiated by some scholars, social activists or NGOs in the forms—CSAs, farmer markets. These alternative food and farming practices started around the first five years in the beginning of 21st century as a reaction to the agrarian extractivism after the reform era in China. I called this food movement as “the bottom-up food self-protection”.

Generally, “the bottom-up food self-protection”, as a new social relationship or network established by small farmers, urban food consumers and scholars and practitioners by linking the food production with consumption to reduce the intermediate process, the reconstruction of a food trust relationship is a voluntary grassroots practice on a national scale. It privileges social need over the market calculus, with food safety sphere as a protective countermovement (Polanyi 2001; Zhou&Fang 2015). This movement resists food market disembedding (Polanyi 2001; Zhou&Fang 2015), advocating natural and social relations, the cultural habitus. It originates in the small farmers’ “negative personal-protection” (Zhou&Fang 2015) or “family protection”, after a CSA model introduced in China, entwined with urban “family protection”. Now it has already become a force to be reckoned with in the era of the Chinese food safety crisis.

From the case of Guzhai village, the reaction of self-food protection presents as two ways. The first is the small holders’ food self-protection practices. As the agro-food AB Model (Zhou, Pan&Dong 2012) states, smallholders in China produce food in two different models. One is Model A- “food for money”; actually, it is “food for cash”. They produce food for strangers in the market by extensively using fertilizer, pesticide, antibiotics and hormones to pursue higher food production to get back more cash in anonymous society. In contrast, the Model B, is “food for life”, actually “food for safety”. In Model B, the small farmers in the family unit produce family consumption food on family-based rationality by using traditional ecological farming habits geared to local dietary preference. This practice pre-dates the nation-wide food safety crisis outbreak, often because the farmers consider maximizing the use of space in their courtyard or space around their house, even the family plots lands or marginal lands to maintain the family daily food needs. With the deepening of the food safety crisis and the economic conditions improving, when more and more small farmers worried about the Model A food safety, they have turned to rely on Model B for their family livelihoods without considering the economic and labor cost.

“I raised 5 pigs last year, 4 white ones that I bought the piglets from market, and one black pig give from my mother who was 89 years old. I fed the 4 white pigs by using “Chia Tai” pig fodder, and add limited extra self-produced corn fodder. By this way, the pig can grow faster and the cost could be reduced if I sold them 4 months later to the broker who came to my house to buy and transport them outside of the village. Every pig I sold was around 200 grams; I earned 5000 Yuan last year. I slaughtered the black pig in the spring festival celebration when it was around 150 grams after around 8 months by feeding the boiled self-produced corn powder, wild vegetables and leftover food. I did not use commercial fodder (wo bu fang liao), because it is for my family consumption, no need it grow faster. I think it is not safe to feed pig by using commercial fodder, because I have the common sense as 50 years’ farmer. But I have to do that because everybody uses that way to earn more money. It is certainty that the taste and safety are totally different of these two different pigs by different ways feeding. The local black one has more fat I can extract the pork fat as cooking oil for the whole year, and the meat is very tender and tasty. I gave some pieces of this pork to relatives, neighbors and my daughters working in Nanning got more for her family consumption and giving some to their friends. I think nowadays we live in a food-abundant era not like my mother’s age (1930s). I can afford more meat (pork) to consume, but I feel the taste is not good as ever before. The reason is probably because the way we breed and feed the pig.” --- A 65 years old male farmer Qingwei Lan

The other ways are CSAs model by coordinating with the associated outsiders and mobilizing the villagers to use the traditional ecological way to produce food for determined consumers as a livelihood method. In 2001, this village cooperated with Yiqing Song in Chinese Academy of Sciences to carry maize breeding. In 2008, the village leader Rongyan Lu established the “Mashan Rongyan ecological” cooperative to guide the left behind elders (mostly are women) to grow green vegetables, raise local black pigs and chickens for the 138km far away “Tu sheng liang pin” restaurant in Nanning run by NGO “farmer’s Friend”. In May 2015, they started cooperating with “Mom Group” in Nanning city to supply fresh organic vegetables and local products.

“In 1960s, we grow rice in the lower valley area. But from 1970s the corn become popular in the village because it is more productive and less land management work. After the 1980s, the land is distributed to households, and more new hybrid corn species are introduced with the more fertilizer and pesticides and herbicides use, we could harvest more corn and can raise more livestock-pigs and chickens, even though there were more people left the village for cities to earn money. At that moment, going to Guangdong as a factory workers were a good living. These years more and more people go to Nanning and nearby cities working as constructions workers. With the elderly, Children and women left in the village, villagers have to rely on fertilizer and herbicides, and the peak time of using was around the year 2001-2004. We reduced the use of fertilizer and toxic things from around the year 2004, because there were more and more new and strange diseases emerged in the village, for example, children aplastic anemia, infertility among younger villagers, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, heart disease and more cancers. Our village is well known as longevity place nearby. This makes us try to figure out the reason. Now this the common sense in this village that from the opening up and reform era, we care money too much, most people go outside working. They eat bad food without care about health. We want more money from the land, and from ourselves. You see, in order to get more money, we ruin the environment and our health. After I got the chance to cooperate with Professor Song (,Yiqing) to breed the local corn seeds, save local, non-GMO seeds, and breed the local black pigs with the traditional ways to sell the products to “Tushengliangpin” restaurant every two days. In the beginning (2008) there were only 11 elderly villagers join. In 2012, I established this cooperative, with 36 villagers join in, in the year 2013 the annual income is around 10800 yuan per member. This cooperative only recruits the poorest villagers who know how to farm in a traditional way.” ---Rongyan Lu, Guzhai Village Director and Director of Mashan Rongyan Ecological Planting and Breeding Cooperatives.

The food sovereignty movement happened in Gu Zhai village is just an epitomize in China. It originates from the national wide food safety crisis and the aftermath of the extraction on the agriculture, rural area and peasants. It is embodied in the developmentalism process to express the appeal and the right on food democracy and agrarian citizenship with the trend of repeasantation. Like the food sovereignty in the other nations, it faces challenges and uncertainty. However, it is a symbol that in China, the food sovereignty practice is taking place with the awareness of fight for the right on farming and food, environment and human being, and with the consensus of rural food producers, urban middle class consumers and some scholars, activists. It is the hope of alternative way for the future.

5 Conclusion: Food sovereignty in China? And an authoritarian food politics in China?

It is common to find more food sovereignty research on the worldwide regions except for mainland China. The highlights are in areas where food sovereignty and food movement originate from, like Latin American, India and some global North nations. Because under the current food sovereignty framework, China is not in those cases. However, the food movement about food safety consideration and rural development practices and resistances happening on this land is happening within a particular authoritarian political regime. Struggles in the protection of food safety and the control of food from the cooperated food regime, and the distrust on the food regulatory of the government sprout in China in a particular way, which arouses the government, especially central government's attention on food safety and the coordinated development between rural and urban areas by launching and implementing series of law, policy or nationwide campaigns to support the invisible extractivism or acquire more political legitimacy. However, most of policies, laws and campaign make side effects on the food and farming problems or even make them worse, because after the 1980s, as a development state in the authoritarian political regime leaving less and limited space for social movement especially peasant movement, China is on the track of developmentalism and extractivism for primitive accumulation. Therefore, the main value is development. Rural natural resources like land, water, the whole nature, the human resources, and the food that connects human and nature are the tools of development and the servants as the agrarian extractivism. As the payback or the veil of the development and extraction, the residents in rural areas in China witness the materials abundance and plenty, even a boom. As the marginal group in China, the peasants having been extracted the health of their habitats and their physical and physiological health by getting a consumerism society and social value. The abundance brought from development is a bubble and illusion.

When food safety crisis breaks out from the 21st century, the individuals in China become more concerned about food safety and farming systems. With the authorities strengthening on food regulatory by using modern, scientific, standard way to control the food system, there are less space leaving for smallholders in China to continue the traditional ecological way to produce local food because of the unified standards. This push the smallholders lose more control on their food and the farming. However, within this powerful political regime, the individuals, and the society still keep finding an alternative way for a sustainable future in food and farming system. In the wave of fight for food sovereignty, China's food sovereignty movement is more invisible and embodied within the mainstream of the food and farming system because of the "strong nation- weak society" in the paradox of development. Also, in the global food and farming system, with the capital accumulation and the decline of cheap labor force advantage, the agrarian investments, and global food trade is an overflow effect of the domestic developmentalism and agrarian extractivism model.

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**Agro-extractivism inside and
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