“Drivers of Food Choice
Findings from Malaysian Food Barometer”

An Initiative of the Chair “Food Studies: Food, Cultures & Health” and the International Associated Laboratory (LIA) “Food, Cultures and Health”.

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Obesity and NCDs in Malaysia

• Overweight and obesity have doubled over the past decade among adult from 21% in 1996 to 43% in 2006 (Lim et al., 2000; MOH, 2008) and recently it was reported at 44.5% (MOH, 2011), highest among adolescents, 19% (Poh et al., 2003) and children from 20.7% in 2002 to 26.1% in 2008 (Ismail et al., 2009).

• Among the available tools to prevent and deal with the development of obesity are nutrition and food education. These should play a leading role.

Malaysia’s “Double Burden”

Obesity and NCDs in Malaysia

Moving from a population policy to a target groups policy

“The Ministry of Health Malaysia has often maintained that the prevention of chronic diet-related diseases relies upon a comprehensive approach including target-oriented nutrition intervention as well as a wide-scale nutrition education for the public” (NCCFN, 2010, p. 1)

“Makan Sihat, Bergerak Aktif, Cegah Obesiti”, Bulan Pemakanan Malaysia 2014
Obesity and NCDs in Malaysia

How to change eating habits?

Information
Increase relevant information

Cost-Benefit Calculation

Food Behavior

Improve adequate behavior

Individual

Instrumental Rationality

Eating Behavior

Ends rationally pursued and calculated

Consequences:
- On Health
- On Aesthetics (body shape)
- On Spirit
- On Budget
- On Pleasure
- ...

Poulain et Corbeau (2002). Penser l'alimentation, entre imaginaire et rationalités. Privat
How to change eating habits?

Instrumental Rationality

Ends rationally pursued and calculated

Eating Behavior

Consequences:
- On Health
- On Aesthetics (body shape)
- On Spirit
- On Budget
- On Pleasure
- ...

=> Calculation (cost / advantage)???
=> All the information is available???
=> Able to process all the information???

Poulain et Corbeau (2002). *Penser l’alimentation, entre imaginaire et rationalités.* Privat

How to change eating habits?

Max Weber

Instrumental Rationality

Value/belief-oriented Rationality

Traditional or conventional Rationality

Eating Behavior

Consequences:
- On Health
- On Aesthetics (body shape)
- On Spirit
- On Budget
- On Pleasure
- ...

=> Individual Calculation?

Poulain et Corbeau (2002). *Penser l’alimentation, entre imaginaire et rationalités.* Privat
How to change eating habits?

Choices are embedded in social relations


Identifying data needs

Identifying data needs

Food Cultures

Eating decision

✓ Food consumption
  - Vegetable
  - Meat and fish
  - Diary
✓ Food intake
  - Food: drinks
  - Meals and snacks
  - Structures & compositions
✓ Social representations & perception of risk
✓ Social context
  - Interactions
  - Conviviality,
  - Commensality

Nutritional surveys

Interdisciplinary dialogue

Socio-anthropological surveys

Public Health

Filling the gap

1. To understand effects of modernization in a multicultural context
2. To develop cross-national comparisons
3. To challenge the "convergence" theories which claim the homogenization of middle class lifestyles
4. To get a baseline for further surveys

Filling the gap

7 main parts in the questionnaire:
- Socio demographic and ethnic indicators;
- Food norms;
- Food intakes of the last 24 hours;
- Cooking practices;
- Social representations on food (including heritage);
- Health and risk issues.

Q9 The following question is about the usual organization of your meals. I will ask you to explain the different food items that your lunch, dinner and supper are usually composed of.

Bagian 9 Pertanyaan tentang rutinitas makanan harian anda. Silakan untuk menjelaskan berbagai makhan yang biasanya anda makan untuk makanan bersama hari, makhan makan dan makan makan sarap terdiri dari:

SHOW CARD
A proper breakfast
Makanan pagi yang betul
A proper lunch
Makanan siang yang betul
A proper dinner
Makanan malam yang betul
A proper supper
Makanan malam yang betul
A snack
Makanan
Tea time
Waktu minum

Questionnaire:
- 66 questions
- + 1,400 variables, including BMI

Randomized sampling for:
- States
- Level of urbanization (urban/rural)

Quotas sampling for:
- Age
- Ethnicity

40 minutes in face to face interviews

Languages: English, Bahasa, Chinese

Age: From 15 years old to the very elderly

Data collection: January - May 2013

Malaysia Food Barometer, 2013
Department of Malaysia Statistics, 2010

N = 2,000
How to change eating habits?

Legitimacy of Value:
- Traditional,
- Legal-Rational,
- Charismatic

Value/belief-oriented Rationality

Eating Behavior

Consequences:
- On Health
- On Aesthetics (body shape)
- On Spirit
- Economical
- Hedonistics

Poulain et Corbeau (2002). Penser l’alimentation, entre imaginaire et rationalités. Privat

Filling the gap

- The question about “eating well” (what is for you eating well ?) also aims to identify the main values system associated to food.

- The answer to this question highlight 5 values areas:
  - Health (eating well is eating healthy food and be in good health)
  - Energy and strength (eating well is eating in order to fill the stomach and be strong)
  - Pleasure (eating well is first of all enjoying and having pleasure)
  - Togetherness (eating well is sharing with other people)
  - Tradition (eating well is eating according to the cultural and traditional model)

Poulain et al. 2014 – Malaysian Food Barometer 2013

Filling the gap

Health
- 72.8%

Feel the stomach
- 9.5%

Pleasure
- 11.5%

Filling the gap

Poulain et al. 2014 – Malaysian Food Barometer 2013
How to change eating habits?

Filling the gap

64.1% of the Malaysian individuals eat at least one meal per day outside of the home. 12.5% of individuals eating only at home have at least one meal that comes from outside.


**Malaysian Food Barometer**

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**Filling the gap**

**Beneficial food to health**

- The purpose is to go deeper in analyzing the representations of food related to health and identify the food categories considered as healthy by the Malaysians.
- We assume that these representations are socio-economically, socio-demographically and ethnically differentiated.
- These elements are useful to build and target the public health messages.

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**Malaysian Food Barometer**

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**Malaysian Food Barometer**

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**Filling the gap**

- **Fruits & Vegetables**
  - 98.6%
- **Meat**
  - 20.6%
- **Milk & Dairy**
  - 20.9%
- **Rice**
  - 27.2%

(N = 2,000)
Filling the gap

Food to reduce to be in good health

- This variable aims to analyze the representations of food related to health and identify the food categories considered as unhealthy by the Malaysians.

- We assume that these representations are socio-economically, socio-demographically and ethnically differentiated.

- These elements are also useful to build and target the public health messages.

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Poulain et al. 2014 – Malaysian Food Barometer 2013
For a co-production of knowledge...

- To complement and enhance ongoing ministry efforts
- Can help to address the current problem of NCD / Not working in isolation
- Prepare MFB2 with experts of MoH and others scientific & industrial partners