

Original Article

Globalization of Africa; A Review of Culinary Development and it's Economic Trends in Ghana

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Abstract

This study critically explores the profound impact of globalization on Africa's culinary sector, employing the analytical framework of Trade Dependency Theory. By dissecting three pivotal eras of globalization, ranging from the trans-Atlantic slave trade to contemporary influences, the essay elucidates the intricate web of global trade dynamics and its ramifications for traditional food cultures on the continent. Noteworthy manifestations of this phenomenon include the proliferation of international cuisine restaurants, the emergence of culinary fusion, and the influential role of media in shaping gastronomic preferences. Employing a literature-based approach, particularly through Systematic Reviews, the study meticulously analyzes the consequences of trade dependency on local dietary patterns, agricultural practices, and cultural diversity.

Keywords: Globalization, culinary sector, Economic development, Africa

Introduction**1.1 Background**

Africa has had a long history with globalization, with scholars identifying three significant eras: 1870-1914, 1945-1980, and 1980 to the present (Ajayi, 2003). The interpretation of these eras, however, depends on how globalization is defined. The continent's engagement with global trade, particularly with the Americas and Europe, traces back to the 15th century when the trans-Atlantic slave trade emerged. During this period, Western traders acquired Africa's most valuable resources through transactions with African slave dealers, involving able-bodied men, women, and children (Carmody, 2010).

This historical juncture marked a transformative moment for Africa, leaving an enduring impact on its historical, cultural, political, and economic development. The consequences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade were profound, leading to a depopulation of Africa. Comparatively, colonialism, which followed, represented a more extensive and severe form of subjugation,

surpassing the devastating effects of the earlier slave trade (Akindele et al, 2001). According to Aboagye (2015), Globalization can be characterized in two major dimensions vis a vis historical and socio-cultural dimensions. From these dimensions, globalization is understood to be the locomotion of people, ideas and thoughts, linguistics, products as well as goods and services across the globe. However, Globalization proponents such as Cecil Blake (2005) averred that globalization is a diplomatic term that characterizes the dominance and imposition of multi-national corporations and the destruction of cultural identities.

Blake's perspective on globalisation resonates with that of Arystanbekova (2007) who posited that Globalization encompasses a wide range of developments, including the evolution of global ideologies, a fierce struggle for the establishment of world order, an increase in the number and influence of international bodies, a weakening of nation states' sovereignty, the rise of new and advancement of international corporations, the

increase in international trading activities, extensive demographic change and the creation of multicultural communities, and the establishment of planetary mass media.

The globalization of the culinary sector is exemplified by the rise of international cuisine restaurants in major African cities. As the middle class grows and global travel becomes more accessible, there is a heightened interest in diverse culinary experiences. This trend reflects the globalization of taste preferences and a desire for international gastronomic delights (Cook & Crang, P1996). A noteworthy outcome of globalization is the emergence of culinary fusion, where traditional African ingredients and techniques are blended with international flavours (Smith, 2010). African chefs and restaurateurs have adeptly incorporated global food trends into local menus, adapting them to suit local tastes and preferences. The role of media in shaping culinary preferences cannot be overstated. Television shows, documentaries, and social media platforms have exposed African audiences to global culinary trends, fostering a greater appreciation for diverse food cultures (Inglis, 2013). Culinary tourism has risen in tandem, with African countries increasingly being recognized as culinary destinations. Globalization has created economic opportunities within Africa's culinary sector. The demand for international ingredients and products has led to the establishment of markets for global culinary goods. This economic dimension underscores the interconnectedness of the global culinary landscape. (Lane, 2011).

1.2 Problem Statement

From slavery to colonialism, imperialist have instilled in their subjects the belief that anything African is of no worth. Both enslaved and colonized peoples were stripped of their individuality, culture, and identity. Via globalisation, the Western world continues to influence and alienate Africa's identity even after independence. Ghanaian culture has recently expressed concern about what they have labelled "rapid degradation" of its traditions and traditional values.

Many Ghanaians have been reported to have abandoned recognized Ghanaian traditional forms of wearing in favour of the more liberal, but often less acceptable Western style of attire such as the

wearing of suit over traditional garments and apparels like smocks, kente amongst many others. The alteration of our indigenous linguistic inclination such as the Twi, Ewe, Fante, Ga-Adamgbe, Hausa of the Muslims, Konkomba, Gonja, Dagbane, Tampilma and Mo to the use of colonial languages used in our education system vis a vis English language. Ghanaian delicacies have also been abandoned in favour of continental dishes.

Indigenous foods like Fufu, Banku, Akple Kokonte, Akple and kenkey to mention a few are unfortunately not preferred by significant section of the Ghanaian populace. Instead, they will opt for Pizza, Buffalo wings, Shawama, Pancakes and Pastries which are notably continental. The cultural conservation that the best form of education is found in the West thereby causing dozens of Ghanaian citizens to seek education abroad is resulting in an unbelievable rate of human flight and brain drain. Level-headed and best minds who expatriate to study abroad end up putting their expertise at the disposal of the west instead of Ghana. This has had enormous economic implications on the country.

Literature Review

2.1 The Culinary System

The culinary system is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that serves as a reflection of the rich tapestry of culture, tradition, and identity within a given society. It encompasses a wide array of practices, techniques, and rituals related to the preparation, cooking, and consumption of food. As an integral part of human existence, the culinary system not only sustains life but also weaves together the threads of history, geography, and social dynamics. This essay explores the various dimensions of the culinary system, shedding light on its diverse components and their significance. One fundamental aspect of the culinary system is culinary techniques. These encompass the skills and methods employed in the preparation of food. From the intricate knife work of French cuisine to the slow cooking methods of traditional Asian dishes, culinary techniques are deeply rooted in cultural traditions. According to Smith (2010), these techniques are passed down through generations, forming the backbone of culinary heritage.

Ingredient selection is another critical element of the culinary system. Ingredients are chosen based on factors such as availability, seasonality, and cultural preferences. For example, the use of spices in Indian cuisine or the emphasis on fresh, local produce in Mediterranean cooking highlights the impact of ingredient selection on the overall culinary identity (Kiple & Ornelas, 2000). Cultural significance is interwoven with every dish, adding layers of meaning to the culinary system. Certain foods may be associated with religious rituals, celebrations, or familial traditions. The cultural context shapes not only what is eaten but also how it is prepared and consumed. In many cultures, sharing a meal is a communal activity that fosters connections and reinforces social bonds (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002).

Cooking methods contribute to the diversity of culinary systems. Whether it's the slow roasting of meats in Argentine asados or the use of tandoors in Indian cooking, distinct cooking methods are emblematic of regional identities. These methods impact the sensory experience of the final dish, influencing taste, texture, and aroma (Symons, 2008).

Food traditions passed down through generations play a crucial role in shaping the culinary system. Recipes, cooking styles, and meal structures are handed down as cultural heirlooms. The preservation of these traditions is not only a testament to culinary continuity but also a source of comfort and nostalgia (Goody, 1982). Regional variations add further depth to the culinary system. Geography, climate, and the availability of local ingredients influence the development of regional cuisines. The diverse culinary landscapes of Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas showcase the impact of regional variations on culinary identity (Albala, 2011).

In the realm of dietary patterns, the culinary system reflects the broader lifestyle and nutritional choices of a community. The Mediterranean diet, characterized by an abundance of fruits, vegetables, and olive oil, is an example of how dietary patterns contribute to the overall well-being of a population (Willett et al., 1995). The culinary system is not static; it evolves over time through innovation and cultural exchange. Fusion cuisine, blending elements from different culinary traditions, exemplifies the

dynamic nature of culinary systems. Globalization and increased connectivity have facilitated the cross-pollination of culinary ideas, leading to the emergence of new and exciting gastronomic experiences (Kronld, 2012).

2.2 Culinary sector in globalized world

In their book titled "Globalization of food systems in developing countries: impact on food security and nutrition", Kennedy, Nantel and Shetty (2004) noted that, globalization is having a significant effect on food systems across the world. The food system has been seeing notable evolution leading to heightened availability and diversity of food, albeit not universal. Several of these developments are linked to urbanization, rising affluence, trade liberalization, and foreign direct investment. With the arrival into the system of powerful new companies such as huge international fast food and retail chains, competition for a market share of food purchases tends to escalate.

Small local agents and conventional food markets, as well as, to some degree, merchants selling "street meals" and other food items, are the losers. Supermarkets bring with them considerable advancements in food quality and safety, as well as competitive costs and convenience, which appeal to an increasingly sophisticated consumer. As a result of these changes in food systems, changes in food production, procurement, and distribution networks, as well as the food trade environment, have an impact on food availability and access (Kennedy, et al, 2004).

Consequently, there is a steady shift in food culture (towards a more general one), with corresponding different dietary consumption habits and nutritional status that differ depending on socioeconomic position. Moreover, poorer socioeconomic classes gravitate for low-quality, high-energy-density, yet inexpensive and accessible foods. Others have emphasized the key drivers of changes in food systems and dietary habits, such as urbanization, rising wealth, capital movement, and market liberalization (de Haan et al., 2003; Haddad, 2003; Popkin, 2003; Reardon et al., 2003)

2.3 Urbanization and Culinary Development

In emerging countries, urbanization has become one of the most significant influencers on eating

patterns. People are migrating from the hinterlands to urban areas in greater numbers than ever before, owing to a variety of pull and push reasons such as improved life circumstances, job opportunities, education, and healthcare. Moreover, 54 percent of the world's population now lives in cities, with that number expected to rise to 66 percent by 2050. Most of this urbanization is taking place in African and Asian countries (UN, 2014).

With more employment available and a strong propensity for a greater income, myriad of people are joining the workforce, notably women who have traditionally worked in more informal capacities at home. There has been a substantial shift in food behaviours as more people enter the labour for a myriad of purposes. For starters, there is less talent, time, and desire to cook at home. Families are constantly needing or wanting to eat outside of the typical home setting due to a lack of land for farming and decreasing time spent at home (Black, 2016)

In Tanzania, for instance, low- and middle-income people are consuming 70% of their calories from street food, which includes fast food, pre-packaged foods, large amounts of meat, and sweets. Matuschke is a character in the movie *Matuschke* (2009). "Priority to nutritional balance and taste, which was traditionally "intuitive" at the home level, is now susceptible to broader cultural shifts and external influence," according to the study. This is significant since it indicates that people are firstly relinquishing control over the sort and quality of food they consume and secondly becoming increasingly impacted by food globalization and habits of consumption (FAO, 2004).

The development of global food corporations and their related concepts, culture, and infrastructure is another manner that urbanization is influencing eating trends. The availability and accessibility of continental, foreign foods have increased because of new technology, mass media, and improved infrastructure (Black, 2016). Consequently, there are more fast-food restaurants, casual or dressy eateries or bars, supermarkets, and other fast foods choices available. The availability of these new meals commences to coincide with rising social and economic growth (Popkin et al, 2012).

2.4 Culinary System and its impact on Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign direct investment has a considerable impact on changes in food trends in emerging countries. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is described as a "long-term investment by a corporation in one country into a company in another, with the foreign company becoming the parent (transnational) company" (Hawkes, 2006; Martins, 2023). Foreign transnational food corporations have been investing in low-middle income nations across the globe by virtue of market concentration in advanced nations and the emergence of new markets in emerging countries (Popkins, 2012).

Initially, packaged and heavily processed meals that are promoted as exotic, quickly accessible, and contemporary is the emphasis of entering the market. Food manufacturing today receives the most FDI relative to other sections of the food system, owing to the success of such investment. The idea that FDI in the global processed foods business is more essential than FDI in international trade is surprising (Hawkes, 2006). This is significant since it emphasizes how much market dominance exists in the global food industry, especially in the sector that sells the most harmful, nutrient-deficient foods. Dietary systems are highly affected by external, instead of influences within home nation, because of such massive investment by multinational Big Food businesses (Wardhani, & Haryanto, 2020).

2.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Trade Dependency Theory is a perspective within the broader field of dependency theory that focuses on the economic relationships between less developed countries and more developed nations, emphasizing the impact of international trade on the development and well-being of nations. This theory is particularly relevant when examining how globalization, including the culinary sector, affects Africa's food cultures.

Trade Dependency Theory argues that the global economic system is structured in a way that perpetuates inequality between nations. It suggests that less developed countries often find themselves in a dependent relationship with more developed countries due to their reliance on

exports, which can result in economic vulnerability and social consequences.

Increased trade dependency has led to the influx of foreign food products and culinary influences in Africa. This is particularly evident in urban areas where globalization and increased trade have facilitated the availability of a wide range of imported foods. As African nations become more dependent on food imports, there is a risk of a shift in dietary patterns. Traditional foods may be replaced by processed and imported alternatives, impacting local food cultures, and potentially contributing to health challenges associated with the consumption of processed foods. The emphasis on export-oriented agriculture, driven by trade dependency, may result in changes to local agricultural practices. The cultivation of crops for export, often monoculture, can displace traditional crops and impact the diversity of local food systems.

The influx of foreign culinary influences, driven by trade, can contribute to cultural

homogenization. This occurs when traditional culinary practices are overshadowed by globalized food trends, leading to a loss of culinary diversity and uniqueness. The importation of heavily processed foods and the dominance of fast-food chains in urban centres can be seen as a manifestation of trade dependency impacting African culinary cultures. For instance, the presence of global fast-food franchises may contribute to a shift away from traditional dietary practices.

Trade Dependency Theory provides a lens through which to analyse the impact of international trade on the culinary sector in Africa. As nations become more integrated into the global economy, it is essential to consider how these economic relationships influence local food cultures, dietary patterns, and agricultural practices. Balancing economic development with the preservation of cultural and culinary diversity remains a critical challenge for policymakers in the face of increasing trade dependencies.

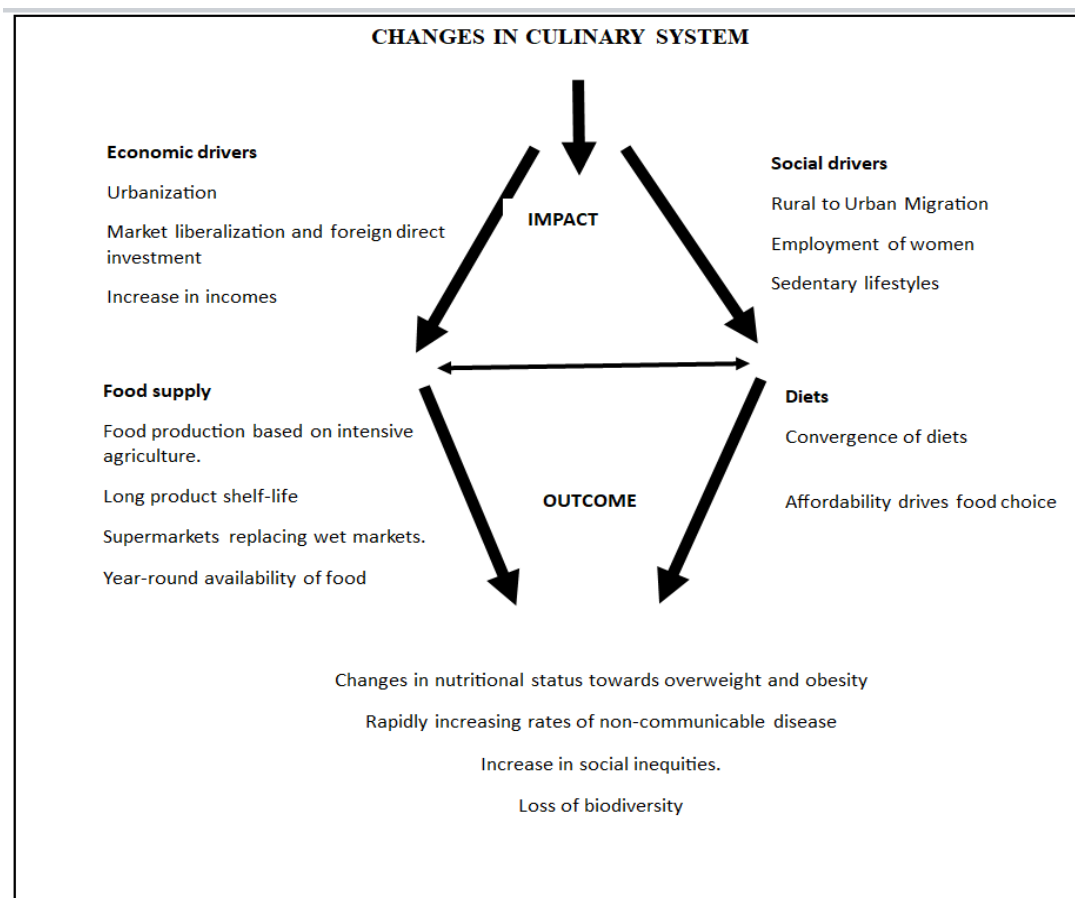


Figure 3:1 Changes in Culinary System

Source: Kennedy, Nantel and Shetty, 2004

The key economic variables impacting changes in food supply and dietary include urbanization, rising incomes, and foreign direct investment in emerging country markets, as shown in Figure 1. Concurrent societal developments, such as more women joining the workforce and increased sedentary lives, are occurring in addition to economic influences. Modifications in dietary patterns and illness load follow these developments. The connections between the environment, diet, and disease are complicated, and they are affected by a wide range of external factors. The focus of this research will be on urbanization and its relationship to dietary changes, health, and nutritional status (the lower right and bottom sections of Figure 1). A brief overview of the alteration in the supply of food chain (left side of Figure 1), on the other hand, may be illuminating.

Alteration in food system and agriculture are described by Lang (2003). Changes in food production geared to achieve uniformity in size, quality, and shape, perfectly suitable for brand name items; and modifications in distribution and marketing systems hugely backed by Digital systems for ordering, delivery, and enhanced corporate power over markets are among them. These systems of food traits are substantially established in rich countries and are fast spreading to emerging national markets, affecting systems of agriculture putting small farmers out of business, and promoting urbanization.

2.6 Conclusion

The pervasive influence of globalization in Ghana's culinary sector is evident in the rapid infiltration of foreign companies, leading to an increasing availability of intercontinental and continental dishes. Local food producers are adapting their recipes by incorporating foreign flavours to meet the growing demand for international cuisine. This trend is primarily driven by rising income levels, accelerated urbanization, and evolving eating habits and lifestyles. The researcher highlights a prevalent perception among consumers that foreign-origin products are superior, fostering an insatiable desire for such items. Notably, the study aligns with previous research by Nondzor & Tawiah (2015), emphasizing the willingness of the middle and high-income classes to pay a premium for internationally branded fast foods. The escalating

proliferation of Western foods in urban centres further tilts consumer preferences towards continental and intercontinental dishes, potentially overshadowing indigenous options.

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