



# Following eating in rural South Africa

Dramatic transitions



Stefanie van Geert  
931126253070  
Master thesis



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## Dramatic Transitions

Stefanie van Geert

**931126253070**

MSc 'Communication, Health and Life Sciences'  
Specialisation Health & Society

RSO-80433 Rural Sociology Group

Supervisors: Jessica de Koning  
Paul Hebinck

Examiner: Han Wiskerke

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## Abstract

We are currently not only concerned with the problems of feeding the public, but there are also more modern food problems. Changes are visible in the way food is produced (agro-food sector), as well as in the dietary patterns of people (nutrition transition). Food cannot be understood without understanding social and cultural practices and networks of people that go along with foodways (the cultural and social practices that affect food consumption). Foodways are constantly changing and changes meanings and social relations along with it. In this thesis, I look at food from an embodied perspective, which means that a form is given to food through lived experiences. Embodiment shows how complex and important food is and how food security is not only about availability, accessibility and utilization of food, but also contains a social and cultural side. The research has been conducted in a rural South African village, where it focused on changing foodways and how food security is incorporated in this. An ethnographic approach was used and observations, semi-structured interviews and food diaries were combined to get complete and reliable results. Food embodiment tells the story of people in rural South Africa through food and shows how the nutrition transition is visible in changing foodways. When foodways change, the meanings and social relations change with it. Food and eating can form and sustain relationships, but also damage them. Food has many important aspects apart from production and in both research about food security as well as policy-making, these other aspects should be taken into account. Embodied food security takes many different aspects of food and eating into account, like the meanings of food, the ways of procurement, types of food and the environment in which this happens. It shows the interaction between networks, food and eating and offers a more holistic approach towards food security.

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# 1 Introduction

We are currently not only concerned with the problems of feeding the public, but there are also more modern food problems (Sherwood, Arce & Paredes, 2017). The food crisis has changed from a lack of food availability to a decline in the quality of food and land. As a result of technological breakthroughs, yields have increased substantially, which enables us to feed the growing population (Hazell and Wood, 2008). This modernization is also visible in the changing dietary patterns of people, which is called the nutrition transition (Popkin, 2006). The nutrition transition is defined as the shift in dietary patterns and nutrient intake that go hand in hand with economic, demographic and epidemiological changes. The new dietary patterns show a tendency towards lower fiber intake and higher consumption of saturated fat, sugar and refined foods (Boonzaaier, 2005). There is an association between the changing dietary patterns and the increase of non-communicable diseases (Popkin, 2006). Non-communicable diseases are also known as chronic diseases and are diseases that have a long duration and are caused by factors that are genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioral. Examples of these diseases are cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer (World Health Organization, 2017).

## 1.1 Nutrition transition in South Africa

The nutrition transition has been occurring on a global scale and went from developed countries to developing countries, including South Africa (Monteiro, Cannon, Levy, Claro & Moubarac, 2012). There is now more availability, accessibility and choice of food in South Africa, due to migration, urbanization, acculturation, education and economic development (Boonzaaier, 2015; Ronquest-Ross, Vink & Sigge, 2015). Urbanization and a growth in the income per capita caused a higher demand for high-value food like meat, dairy, processed foods, fresh fruits and vegetables. While these food products became more popular, the demand for maize and wheat flour started to decline (Ronquest-Ross et al., 2015). The traditional South African diet is associated with low prevalence of non-communicable diseases, but the changing diet is associated with increased prevalence of these diseases (Bourne, Lambert & Steyn, 2002).

The nutrition transition is taking place simultaneously with and is closely related to changes in the agro-food sector. Since the start of the nutrition transition, the demand for processed foods and animal products has increased, which puts more pressure on the food supply system (Godfray et al., 2010). People are now relying more on buying food from shops, which is also visible in the growth of supermarkets. Supermarkets now account for 50-60% of retail sales in South Africa (Ronquest-Ross et al., 2015). Because the dietary patterns and changes in the agro-food sector are happening simultaneously, they have the power to interact and strengthen each other.

The nutrition transition is visible in both urban and rural areas, but in rural areas westernized food patterns are not as prevalent as in urban populations. In urban areas, supermarkets are more readily available, whereas in rural areas people often still produce part of their own food and buy additional food partially at open-air markets and small retail stores (Sherwood et al., 2017). People in rural areas also spend a larger proportion of their expenses on purchasing foods, which can be explained by the fact that rural households often pay higher prices to acquire food (Aliber, 2009). Foods bought at a local store are often more expensive, but taking a trip to the supermarket costs money as well. However, in exact amounts, rural households are the ones to spend less money on food than their

urban counterparts. This can be partly explained by the different dietary patterns. Urban South African people generally consume less maize porridge, but more fruits, vegetables, animal products, fats and oils than people in rural areas. These different dietary patterns are also related to increased obesity rates. With urbanization, the amount of obese and overweight people also increases (Shackleton, Pasquini & Drescher, 2009).

## 1.2 Income

For poor households in South Africa, the main sources of income are often migrant remittances and social security grants, which makes people vulnerable to food insecurity (Agriculture republic of South Africa, 2002; Shackleton, Shackleton & Cousins, 2001). In rural areas, many people rely on remittances from urban areas and there is less economic activity than in urban areas. It is also hard to get employed elsewhere, due to factors such as transport and a lack of information (Shackleton et al., 2001). The welfare grants offer a solution for people in rural villages. As a result of the many welfare grants people in South Africa can receive nowadays, the rural economy has gone from a subsistence and resource based economy towards a more commercial cash based economy (Lewis, McCosh & Nxele, 2011). Since the introduction of these grants, not only people who receive a grant have increased economic resources, it also gave opportunities of starting businesses and selling products and services.

## 1.3 Agriculture

Commercial agriculture is very little in South Africa, but homestead gardens are often used for household food production (Trefry, Parkins & Cundill, 2014; Connor & Mtwana, 2017). In the Eastern Cape, there is a tendency away from outlying maize fields and towards homestead vegetable gardens. Deagrarianization is visible, which is defined by Connor & Mtwana (2017) as the increased reliance on remittances and other outside types of income in rural livelihoods. Rural poor households are becoming more dependent on purchasing foods from the stores, and a decline in cultivation can be observed (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009; Shackleton & Luckert, 2015). The transfers of cash in South Africa can support people to pursue farming activities. Many farmers depend on social grants as their main source of income, and part of the grant is used for agricultural activities (Palmer & Sender, 2006; Rogan, 2017; Von Fintel & Pienaar, 2016).

This raises questions about how these transitions are taking place and how this influences people's lives. Do these changes in the agro-food sector and the nutrition transition also change the way people experience food? How do people feel about these changes, do they think these developments are beneficial or do they see the changes as a undesirable?



## 2. Theoretical Framework and methodology

In this chapter, I will start by explaining the concept of food security as it is often used in both research as well as political contexts. After that, I will argue why this approach towards food security is insufficient in my opinion and explain what the embodiment of food is and how this can be used as a way to look at food security. After operationalizing the theory and showing the conceptual framework, I will explain the problem statement and research questions and why these were formulated this way. The chapter will end with the methodology of this research.

### 2.1 Food Security

The most commonly used definition of food security is the one that was agreed upon at the World Food Summit: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 1996). In 2001, this definition was refined into: “Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2003).

In this definition there are three dimensions of food security. *Availability* is when appropriate food is available in sufficient quantities to individuals. This is influenced by a combination of production, exchange and distribution. *Access* to food means that people are able to get food in adequate quantities. It is about how they can convert their assets into food in any way, whether this is buying food or producing it themselves (Ericksen, 2008). This could be influenced by economical, socio-cultural, political and legal causes. When food is prepared, consumed and stored in a way that satisfies the nutritional needs of a person, including enough variety it is called *utilization*. This refers to quality and safety of food, as well as dietary adequacy and personal preference (Schreckenberg et al., 2016). This dimension has been added to the food security framework because of the emphasis on public health (Ericksen, 2008). *Stability* is when the above mentioned dimensions are satisfied at all times (Schreckenberg et al., 2016). Stability is focused on long-term food security, where major changes in the previous dimensions can have a big impact on food security.

The above mentioned dimensions of food security are quantifying the concept of food security into a ‘fixed’ definition. However, in my opinion this definition is not sufficient to describe the real food security situation. Having the means for enough food to feed the growing population, does not directly mean that everyone is secured for food. Food security is, especially in policy contexts, often seen as a quantitative concept that can be ‘fixed’ with a proper agro-food policy (Carolan, 2013). The most commonly used approach towards food security does not include the social and cultural side of food (Coates et al., 2006), though sociologists agree that food is embedded in a culture and shaped by social relations. In most food security research, the focus is still mainly aimed at the quantity of food, instead of other important aspects of food security. Though food security has been extensively researched at both national and global levels, there has often been a tendency to focus on the production side of food (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009; Chakona & Shackleton, 2017). Carolan (2013) calls this the empty calorie-ization of food and food security, where it is assumed that enhanced agricultural output will improve people’s lives.

On the other hand, sociologists agree that food is culturally embedded and shaped by social relations and should not be treated as a fixed object (Chamberlain, 2004). Only increasing agricultural output is not the solution for food security, because it neglects that food also has a 'social side'. The general approach towards food security does not include this side yet (Coates et al., 2006). Food security fails to see how food plays an important role in culture and ignores the 'social side' of food (Noack & Pouw, 2015). Instruments in food security research do not collect data on the preparation and consumption of food in a social or cultural context. In South African literature, there is no difference in this, the biggest share of work on food security fails to understand the feelings and perceptions of the people that are involved (Chakona & Shackleton, 2017). I would like to introduce the concept of the embodiment of food as a way to look at food security. Food becomes embodied within lived experience. Because our knowledge of food is relational, food is always experienced in a context, and different relations thus have different outcomes on people's views on food (Carolan, 2011). The relationships between people can be expressed through food, and food is used to initiate and maintain social relations. Food is able to bind people together and support solidarity between people (Haaland, 2007). The embodiment of food can explain food security from a broader perspective that is inclusive of the 'social side' of food.

## 2.2 Embodiment of food

I will firstly explain the embodiment of food, and then go into why this is a good way to look at food security. Embodiment means to give a form to something. Our understanding of the world is shaped by lived experience and we think with and through our bodies (Carolan, 2011). Embodiment looks at the links between meanings and practices (Roos, 2002). The embodiment of food is about lived experiences, material practices and sensory engagements that shape how we think about issues related to food consumption and production (Sherwood et al., 2017). Food becomes embodied within lived experience, because our knowledge of food is relational, food is always experienced within a context. Food-related practices, for example cooking food, have meaning in the way that they express the culture (Roos, 2002).

Because food is being constituted through relations, various relations have different effects on people's view of food (Carolan, 2011). The embodiment of food, wherein things become food, can be used as a tool to trace the materiality of foodstuff. When looking at the practice of eating, one can see the process in which foodstuff becomes food which is then eaten. When someone is consuming something, this consumer has already accepted the thing he is eating as food (Roe, 2006).

Food expresses the relationship people hold to one another and also include elements that are non-human. Food can for example become embodied in a public event that acts as an intersection between food, people, and things, generating sociability and ongoing public action (Sherwood et al., 2017). Food is engaged in a network of interconnected systems. In this network, the use of one component is determined by the other components and the interaction between them (Parasecoli, 2011). Social relations between people are expressed through food (Haaland, 2007) The embodiment of food also shows the changing dynamics of how food is produced, collected, exchanged, distributed, desired, eaten, thrown away and debated over (Haaland, 2007).

### *2.2.1 Socio-cultural environment*

The socio-cultural environment is important for the embodiment of food. Dietary patterns are influenced by the environment people live in and in different cultures; people see different foodstuffs as being edible and actually ending up as food (Boonzaaier, 2005). Many foodstuffs are edible, but only a few of these become part of food as a cultural system. In cultural contexts, foods can be viewed differently. Food can be prohibited by some, seen as edible by others and even be advised to eat by a third culture (Marshall, 2005). An example is the consumption of insects, which is in many countries despised, while in other cultures they are seen as a delicacy (Parasecoli, 2011). People tend to take the food that is familiar to them for granted. These foods are so normal to them that they do not think about the consumption of it, even though in other cultures it might be seen as inedible. The cultural and social practices that affect food consumption, including what and how people eat, what and how they shop and how their preferences are motivated is often referred to as foodways (Roe, 2006).

The socio-cultural environment shapes how, when and what we eat. Children first learn about food habits from their parents. Later in life, one's food choices are influenced by the people who surround them (Pachucki, 2014). The presence of another person can not only influence the type of food that is consumed, but also the amount of food. Many people have the tendency to consume more when they are eating together with others. Within a social network, there are many similarities between the eating patterns of the people (Pachucki, 2014). The people to whom someone is socially connected is thus an important determinant in food choice.

Because food has the means to both nourish the bodies of people physically, as well as giving meaning to practices, it has a big role in many rituals. Social relationships can be sustained by eating practices, while feeding the body at the same time (Corr, 2002). Through food, social networks and ritual symbols can be traced throughout a community. In giving and sharing food, both the social and the physical body are sustained. There are many rituals in which food plays an important role. Already the way people dine is influenced by the culture they live in (Pachucki, 2014), but other rituals, for example having a pancake day, are shaped around food as well. In many official ceremonies, like weddings or funerals, certain meals are served. The food served during an event often has guidelines about what kind of food, how many courses, how to serve it and the people that are supposed to be present (Marshall, 2005). Depending on the foods that are served during a feast, to whom, when and how, can bring people together or tear them apart. Feasts are communicative and socially organizing acts that are indispensable for maintaining but also fixing relationships. Foods are used to convey a variety of beliefs and feelings about things and relationships that are not-food, which can further increase the distance between foreigners and local communities (Hobbis, 2017).

### *2.2.2 Identity*

Habits around food and eating have many meanings that can be important for the identity of a person (Corr, 2002). There is a close relationship between identity and food; hence 'you are what you eat'. What we eat symbolizes who we are, and in which social group we belong by eating the same things in the same way. Identity and embodiment have been used as related concepts in previous research (Rajan-Rankin, 2014; Stanghellini, Castellini, Brogna, Faaravelli & Ricca, 2012), but not yet in a setting of food embodiment. Embodiment is important in defining and developing identities, as the world is experienced through our bodies (Lowton, Hiley & Higgs, 2017). Embodiment can shape

identities, and since identities and food are closely connected, the embodiment of food comes up here once again. The embodiment of food shows how food is important to form people's identity. According to Fox (2001), ethnic foods can be seen as identity markers, especially when foreigners are present. When people with different ethnic backgrounds come together, their personal food identity becomes a lot stronger. Depending on the foods that are served during a feast, to whom, when and how, can bring people together or tear them apart. Feasts are communicative and socially organizing acts that are indispensable for maintaining but also fixing relationships. Foods are used to convey a variety of beliefs and feelings about things and relationships that are not-food, which can further increase the distance between foreigners and local communities (Hobbis, 2017). Next to the types of food eaten, the way these foods are eaten is also part of the identity. Food etiquette differs between cultures. In some cultures it is common eat together out of the same dish, using your hands, while in others it is custom that each gets his own dish and eats with fork and knife (Fox, 2001).

### *2.2.3 Taste*

Taste orders society, organizes groups of people with similar tastes, helps define group boundaries and is part of individual identities. Taste can have the power to motivate and move people (Carolan, 2011), for example buying the more expensive variety of tomatoes because they are more flavorful. It is an important factor in the decision making process about food (Carolan, 2011). Even though taste is sometimes viewed as a personal concern, it is shaped by many factors in the social and cultural environment. Taste is thus a social construct and influenced by one's community (Marshall, 2005). This shows how taste plays a role in the embodiment of food, tasting food and food preferences are part of the lived experience of food. This lived experience is shaped by environmental factors and moves people towards certain decisions surrounding food. These decisions are partially based on the taste of certain food products. To give foods a certain flavor, seasonings can be used (Kittler, Sucher & Nelms, 2011). Different ethnic groups use typical seasonings for their food, which helps to give the traditional flavor to their foods.

Taste can be seen as both a cause and a consequence of social practices. Prior experiences with a certain taste influence the current appetite for a certain taste, and repeated exposure majorly impacts the likability or aversion towards foods (Pachucki, 2014). Tastes have been used to keep the class divisions in society up. Certain tastes that are seen as 'socially desirable' take time and/or money to acquire (Carolan, 2011). An example of a taste that can be 'socially desirable' and takes time and money to acquire is whiskey. When one is a 'beginner' to drinking whiskey, he starts with a light and easy whiskey that has an accessible taste. One can start there and 'work his way up' to stronger and heavier whiskeys once he has acquired a taste for whiskeys. This process takes time and a lot of whiskey drinking, for which one needs enough money to be able to do.

### *2.2.4 Materials*

Materials that play a role in the embodiment of food can be any objects that are used for the production, distribution or consumption of food. Examples of these objects are containers, cooking equipment or grinding stones. As mentioned previously, the embodiment of food is about lived experiences, material practices and sensory engagements that shape how we think about food-related issues (Sherwood et al., 2017). Materials have a role in the embodied food experience, as well as the general, daily food experience. With the help of these materials, foodstuff is transformed into the food that is eaten; 'raw' ingredients become a meal that people consume (Steel & Zinn,

2016). These material practices have seen major changes over the years, which have also changed the way people eat and perceive their food. The production side of food has changed majorly with the modernization of the agro-food sector and the technical assistance and modernization has caused a shift in production, food and markets. Technologies are changing continually and new ways of cooking, packaging and storing are being introduced. These changes alter the choice in consumption and utilization of food, as well as the environment in which this is done (Steel & Zinn, 2016).

#### *2.2.5 Changes in the embodiment of food*

With changing foodways, the embodied food experience also changes. Over the years, food has gone from a matter of life-or-death to something that involves pleasure and symbolic constructions (Carolan, 2011). Because of the transitions, people are more disconnected from the food production process and therefore they have to rely on certain proxies, like the food package, to understand what they are eating (Carolan, 2011). The distance between producer and consumer changes the lived experience of food, also because acquiring food has changed. Where people used to work on the field to be able to get food, they can now decide to buy their food at a store, which is a completely different lived experience. Another factor influencing the embodiment of food is technological progress and new tools, like ovens (Carolan, 2011). They have changed the way in which we transform foodstuffs into food we like to eat, which results in a different process, different taste and a different embodied experience.

#### *2.2.6 Reciprocity*

Food is an important medium to initiate and maintain social relations. Food can bind people together and support solidarity between people (Haaland, 2007). In accessing foodstuffs reciprocity can play a major role. Reciprocity is a behavioral reaction to a kindness or unkindness perceived by someone, and can be a powerful determinant for behavior (Surma, 2016). Reciprocity is expected to produce balanced benefits to both givers and receivers in the long term, as well as strengthening the social bond between the actors.

Often, three different types of reciprocity are defined. First of all, there is direct reciprocity, which refers to when there are two actors involved, A and B. Actor A either hurts or benefits actor B and actor B reciprocates. The second type of reciprocity is indirect reciprocity, in which the return comes from a third person. This happens when actor A either hurts or benefits actor B, and actor C knows about this and reciprocates to actor A. The third type of reciprocity is generalized reciprocity. With this type of reciprocity, the return is not towards the first actor but towards another person. This happens when actor A either hurts or benefits actor B and actor B reciprocates this towards actor C. A possible reason for generalized reciprocity is that actor B is unable or unwilling to reciprocate towards A (Herne, Lappalainen & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2013).

In reciprocity, immediate or equal exchange is not expected, but in the long term, it is assumed that the exchange between people is balanced (Surma, 2016). However, there is always a risk of non-reciprocity, in which the receiver gives little or nothing in return to the giver, and the giver obtains a loss. The risks that reciprocity involves means that actors have to trust on each other and have the ability to prove their trustworthiness towards other with reciprocal behavior (Molm, Collett & Schaefer, 2007). The amount of risk in reciprocity depends partly on the type of reciprocity. Indirect



or generalized reciprocity give bigger risks of obtaining a loss, because there are more actors involved who make their own decisions about reciprocating the behavior of others (Molm et al., 2007).

Within South African families, there are norms and values of obligation towards family members to provide support (Knight, Hosegood & Timaeus, 2016). In rural South Africa, these moral obligations often spread to a wider network, which includes social relations outside of the family. Next to the obligations due to social norms, people also hope that when they provide assistance to others, others will reciprocate this behavior when needed (Knight et al., 2016). It can be a way of building a social safety net. Children are also expected to reciprocate support they have received from their parents over the long term and elderly receive support for all the work they have done during their lifetime (Surma, 2016).

During times of need, the universal tendency is to seek help and give aid in an altruistic manner. This can be observed everywhere, regardless of culture, environment and other factors (Dirks et al., 1980). Emergency aid distinguishes itself from other types of aid. When acute problems arise, there is the unconditional response of those who are able to assist (McGuire, 2008). However, when the problems are more chronic, people are less likely to be able to count on automatic support. Under continued stress, individuals drop friends and extended kin from their food-sharing network and only reciprocate towards close relatives anymore (Dirks et al., 1980).

### 2.3 Embodied food security

The embodiment of food shows that food security is more than just the availability, accessibility and utilization of food. Food is not only necessary for bodily survival; it also contains strong emotions and may be fundamental for self-formation. Food can thus be socially constructed to influence and build social identities (Haaland, 2007). Information about cultural acceptability of food, functions of food, taste preferences, preparation and conservation methods should be included in food security research (Noack & Pouw, 2015). To understand local food challenges in an effective and sustainable way, the cultural understanding of decisions about the production, consumption and distribution of food cannot be ignored. Knowledge about culturally adapted food within the social environment in which this is utilized, is needed (Noack & Pouw, 2015).

Food has many functions in the socio-cultural environment of people. It is used to show status, have people over for dinner, celebrate events and perform certain rituals. In a situation where people are food insecure, these social functions of food are also denied to people (Hamelin, Beaudry & Habicht, 2002). This shows how food security is related to the embodiment of food. Food shapes the socio-cultural environment and identity of people. Not being able to consume the types of food that are preferred in certain situations, or procuring it in a way that is not the cultural norm might be socially unacceptable (Coates et al., 2006). When people are not serving and sharing food as they are expected to, they might encounter disapproval from others (Hamelin et al., 2002). These situations can lead to tension and dissatisfaction, both within a household, as well as between community members.

## 2.4 Foodways

As mentioned before, foodways are the cultural and social practices affecting food consumption. This includes what and how people eat, what and how they shop and how their preferences are motivated (Roe, 2006). The term foodways is developed by social scientists and includes all activities surrounding food items and their consumption (Finch, 2010). Foodways are not a static concept, but are being created and revived continually. New foodways can come into being and foodways that have been out of use can become the new foodways again. Foodways continually change due to all kinds of circumstances, such as changing relations, migration or financial circumstances. New foodways are discovered as well as foodways from the past are being rediscovered and used again (Darnton, 2012).

Foodways are various in different places and are important for local communities that perform certain foodways. When foreigners come to a place and do not adjust their foodways to the ones appropriate in the local culture, this can lead to friction between the inhabitants and foreigners. The rejection of a local community's food and foodways can negatively affect this community's self-confidence, perceived value and status in the global economy (Hobbis, 2017). The fact that foreigners are not eating together with the local community and not eating their foods might be perceived as a rejection of local foods and foodways. For local people, it might feel as if only people who are from the same community are willing to consume these foods. These feelings of rejection can influence the relations between inhabitants and foreigners. By rejecting foods and foodways, it feels as if foreigners are rejecting a core component of the identity of local communities, which can damage the confidence and sense of belonging (Hobbis, 2017).

## 2.5 Operationalization

In order to convert the concepts of the theoretical framework from theory towards measurable units, an operationalization of the concepts of embodiment has been made. I will describe here what I will be measuring and how this relates to the concepts. In table 1, the different concepts of embodiment are operationalized. Underneath each concept, methods to measure the concept are described. The operationalization gives an understanding about what can be observed or asked of each concept of embodiment. Some concepts have more characteristics than others, because these concepts are broader and cover a larger part. Each concept can be made less abstract by looking at this operationalization, which makes the concepts identifiable during the phase of fieldwork.

Table 1 Operationalization of the concepts

<b>Socio-cultural environment</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Taste</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Reciprocity</b>
Who is the person responsible for meals (including procurement, preparation, dishing, cleaning)	What does it mean to eat together	Is the taste of food important	Materials used to cook and dish food	Do people recall food-related changes	What role do others play in the procurement of food
What is eaten, where is it eaten, when is it eaten, by whom is it eaten	Which types of food are eaten and why	Why do people choose to consume certain food products	Materials for procurement of food, including transport to shop or tools to perform agriculture	Do people still consume the same foods as they did in their youth	Do people give food to others, to whom and in which situations
What is eaten during celebrations, who cooks this, how many people are present and how are these people related to the host	How do people eat their food (food etiquette)	How do people make sure the food is tasty		What are feelings related to new food products and changes	Do people ask others for food, when does this happen and who do they ask
Importance of food for social connections, rituals, culture and tradition				What might change about food and eating in the future	If food is given to someone, is anything expected in return for this

### 2.5.1 Conceptual framework

To further clarify the theory used in this thesis, a conceptual framework is visualized. In this framework, the connections between the different concepts of the theory are made clear. The embodiment of food is the first central concept and by using foodways, the different concepts of embodiment can be observed and discussed. These concepts explain how embodied food security comes into being and what it entails.

Foodways are ‘the ways of food’ in both the literal sense as well as figuratively. Examples of the literal ways of food are taking the taxi to buy food at the supermarket, harvesting food from a garden and putting it into a pot to cook or giving or exchanging foods with others. Figuratively, foodways is about the social connections around food and how food is culturally embedded. Foodways can give valuable insights in the lives of the people who are performing the actions surrounding food (Ishak,

Zahari & Othman, 2013). Foodways are influenced by many factors. Firstly, the built environment plays an important role in foodways (Alkon et al., 2013), which is visible in factors such as geographical location, economic resources and ways of transport. For many people, the access to food is an important factor that distinguishes their foodways (Peres, 2008). Most people have certain routines in procuring food, which includes visiting particular stores to obtain specific items for the best price and a certain order in which they visit shops. Transportation plays an important role in the decision about which shops to visit and how often people shop. Proximity to a supermarket is thus helpful, because supermarkets are often cheaper than convenience stores (Alkon et al., 2013). This shows how material practices become visible in foodways.

But not only the material practices around food are important to include in foodways, foodways are about more than just where people get food (Vissing, Gu, Jones & Gabriel, 2017). The social aspects of food play a major role in people's lives and relationships people have with food and the people with whom they share food. Foodways are treated as a social act and show distinctions and boundaries between different ethnic groups. Foodways are not only based on convenience or practicality, but also show identity and sociability of people (Johnson, 2016; Tookes, 2015). The foodways are a central part of belonging to an ethnic group, and people from ethnic backgrounds have certain beliefs about foodways that are better or worse (Johnson, 2016). Foodways that are common within a cultural group are a bonding mechanism between family and community and shape personal and cultural identity (Ishak et al., 2013). Acculturation of knowledge, social interaction and media can change foodways and create shared foodways between different ethnic groups. In multi-racial countries, these shared foodways can shape commonly accepted foods throughout the whole country.

Foodways can be seen as a form of communication, since people everywhere have foodways embedded in their cultural system. When foods are consumed by a community this food can be seen as a metaphor by the people within this community. Food preferences can also unite or separate individuals and groups from each other (Tan et al., 2015). Foodways are shaped by the community, but also by personal preferences. Many people find health and cultural practices important, which can be observed in their foodways. The quality of food is a factor that differs per person, some people are very much concerned with the quality of foods they consume, whereas others are more concerned about quantity (Alkon et al., 2013).

### **Foodways and reciprocity**

The exchange of foods seems simple at first, but is embedded in a complex system of social reciprocity, relationships between people, understandings of wealth and its distribution and social status (Shuman, 2000). It shapes the foodways of people and social interactions and relationships between people. The ways in which people negotiate and show their relationships through giving food contains meaning. Solidarity can be developed between people by practices of sharing food and participating in meals (Tan, Ngah & Abdullah, 2015). Reciprocity involves obligations concerning social practices, because it has to conform to the norms of the community, but also regarding the relationship between giver and receiver. To ask for food changes the power dynamics within a relationship (Vissing et al., 2017). When people ask for help, givers can sometimes respond insensitive and engage in interactions that feel like a humiliation to the receiver, which damages the relationship between giver and receivers.

### **Changing foodways**

Foodways change when contexts change, this can be in the case of migrants but also on other occasions. For migrants, foodways are important to mark boundaries between their place they come from and the place they are currently living. Many migrants are still tied to their country of origin and try to obtain ingredients from this country to use in their new place of residence (Tookes, 2015). Foodways can also change when lifestyles of people change. For example types of food that have a long preparation time are renewed so the cooking time becomes less and it is more convenient in the busy lives people are living nowadays. Both the types of food as well as the materials used for the preparation can change in order to fit into a changing lifestyle. As a result of the changes in the agro-food sector, varieties of food that have similar tastes and structures, but a shorter preparation time become available and affect foodways (Tookes, 2015).

Daily foodways are easier to change than foodways that have deeper meanings during special occasions, for example the slaughtering of an animal during a ritual. These food items are strongly tied to the identity of people and have symbolic meanings that cannot be changed easily. Daily foods are more localized and prone to change when the environment changes (Tan et al., 2015). Foodways have already played a role in cultural practices for a long time and are embedded in many special occasions. Though these traditional events and celebrations are more resistant to change, modernization of foodways is often visible (Muhammad, Zahari, Abdullah & Sharif, 2015). New trends in preparation and consumption and adjustments to changing environments can change foodways, even during traditional celebrations. However, these are often smaller changes where new foods are added instead of replacing the traditional foods.

### **Foodways and embodiment**

Foodways mediate the embodied identities of people, and through foodways, both individuals and groups can celebrate and solidify identities and connections as well as find a place in the changing world (Johnson, 2016). Foodways are behaviors that can be observed easily and contain a great deal of symbolic meaning (Tookes, 2015). They adapt to changes in the environment quickly, but are on the other hand so embedded in a culture that certain parts are very resistant to change. This is visible when people come into a different environment and want to keep their own foodways to distinguish themselves from others. Using foodways as a way of distinguishing oneself from others, demonstrates how foodways can be used to show one's identity (Tookes, 2015).

Foodways are closely related to the embodiment of food and there is overlap between the two concepts. Both concepts concern themselves with the complete process of acquiring food to consuming these foods and are inclusive of social and cultural practices that influence food choice. The transformation of foodstuffs from objects to something conveying meaning goes through foodways (Vogts & Constandius, 2017). Once it conveys meaning and is accepted as a food, it is used to show identity, value and relationships. I will use the literal sense of foodways as a way to look from the embodiment of food towards embodied food security, which I have shown in the conceptual framework (Figure 1). When looking into foodways, one can see how the embodiment of food is executed, and foodways can thus be seen as a tool to recognize embodied food practices.



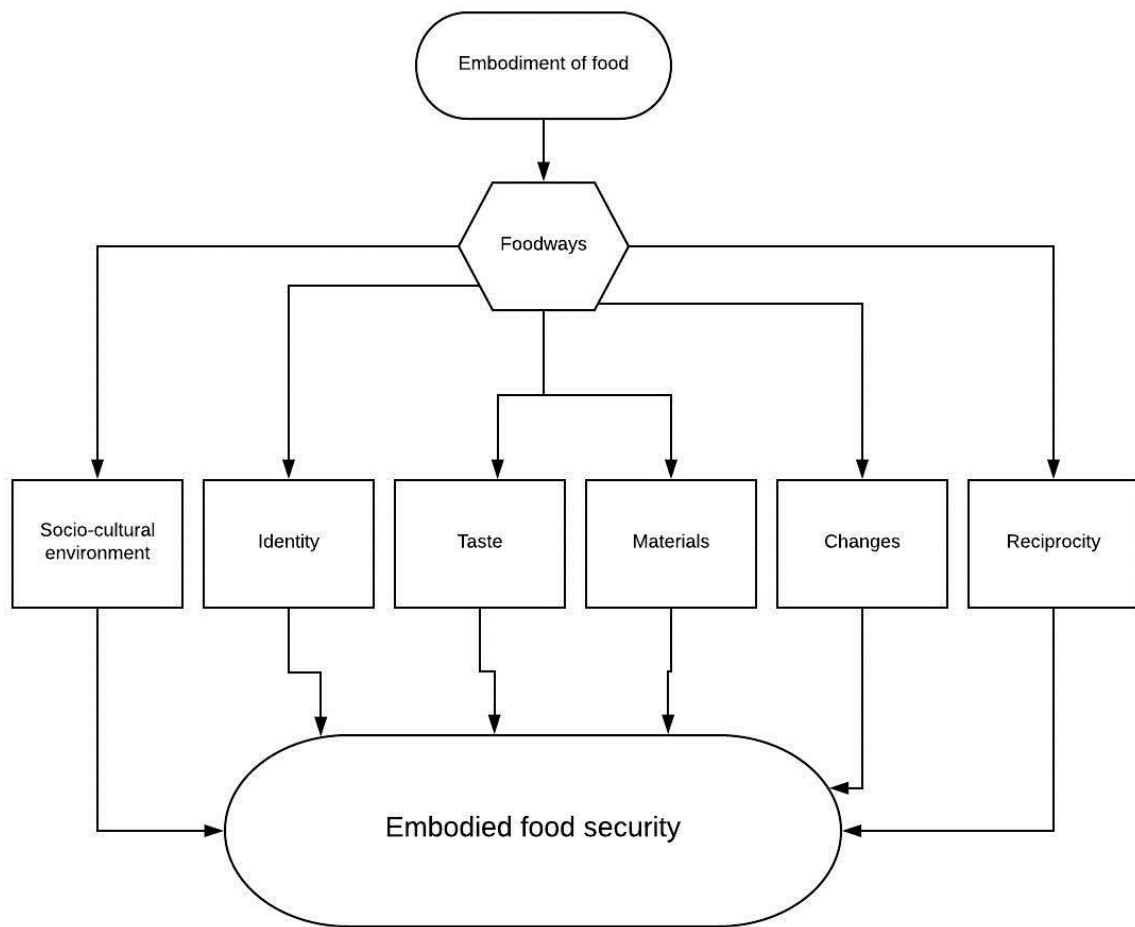


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

## 2.6 Problem statement

### 2.6.1 Transitions

The modernization of the agro-food sector and the nutrition transition are taking place simultaneously. The modernization of the agro-food sector is concerned with technological breakthroughs that have increased yields enormously and make it possible to feed the growing world population (Hazell and Wood, 2008). The nutrition transition is closely related to these changes in the agro-food sector. Since the start of the nutrition transition, the demand for processed foods and animal products has increased, which puts more pressure on the food supply system (Godfray et al., 2010). The role of supermarkets has grown majorly in supplying food and is now the main source of food procurement in South Africa (Ronquest-Ross et al., 2015). The nutrition transition often goes hand in hand with increased wealth and higher purchasing power (Godfray et al., 2010). These changes in dietary patterns would not have been able to happen without the changes in the agro-food sector that increased the amount of available foods.

However, these technological breakthroughs also have their downside. Firstly, when looking at the modernization of the agro-food sector from the perspective of farmers, it has come with difficulties

to remain profitable. With the modernization also came higher costs for agricultural inputs, but not the same increase in prices for their products (Ferrigno et al., 2005). Actually, the prices of food products have been declining while the costs of production have increased. This puts farmers in a difficult position to keep their business going (Ferrigno et al., 2005). Secondly, this modernization increased the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. The use of pesticides and hormones, additives in food-processing and large-scale farming are a few risks going along with the modern forms of production (Mol & Bulkeley, 2002). It has also caused poisoning and epidemics due to the use of pesticides, and is a cause of global warming and obesity (Sherwood et al., 2013).

To summarize, the modernization of the agro-food sector has come with increased yields and more availability of food (Hazell & Wood, 2008), but also has negative outcomes, like consequences for farmers (Ferrigno et al., 2005) and land degradation (Cassman & Wood, 2005; Mol & Bulkeley, 2002; Sherwood et al., 2013). Sherwood et al. (2017) refer to this as a modern food crisis. This modern food crisis is thus a direct result of the modernization of the agro-food sector. In the procurement of food, food security, and eating behavior of rural South-African households, past and present come together. The lack of available foods is still visible, but the social and environmental responses to the nutrition transition and transition in the agro-food sector are also present.

#### *2.6.2 Embodied experience*

Due to the modernization of the agro-food sector and the nutrition transition, the embodied experience of food and foodways has also undergone changes (Carolan, 2011). Working on the fields to get food is an experience that differs majorly from a trip to the supermarkets to get food. In his book, Carolan (2017) describes that food cannot be understood without understanding the social practices that go along with foodways. When following eating, changes in the social practices, culture, networks of people and composition of dietary patterns can be shown. Foodways have changed dramatically in the last century, together with farming practices. To eat means to be connected, and eating differently also requires a change in these connections (Carolan, 2017). To be able to develop new habits and feelings about food, it is required for people to get together, which might also change their feelings about each other.

This illustrates how changes due to modernization of the agro-food sector, will likely also influence social relations of people and the embodied food experience. As is visualized in figure 2, this thesis is taking place at the intersection between the nutrition transition and the changing embodied experience. The nutrition transition is changing foodways and the meaning of food is shifting simultaneously. I am interested in how and in which direction this is shifting and what this means for the connections of people and feelings of food security. Food security and feelings of security change as a consequence of the ongoing transitions. Even though sociologists agree that food security should include the social and cultural side of food (Chamberlain, 2004; Coates et al., 2006; Noack & Pouw, 2015), in many policy and research contexts it is still seen from a quantified perspective that focuses on production (Carolan, 2013). However, I agree with sociologists that collecting data about the preparation and consumption of food in a social or cultural context should be included in instruments aiming to measure food security. When food security is only measured by taking the production side into account, it does not do justice to the role food plays in everyday life and on special occasions (Carolan, 2013).

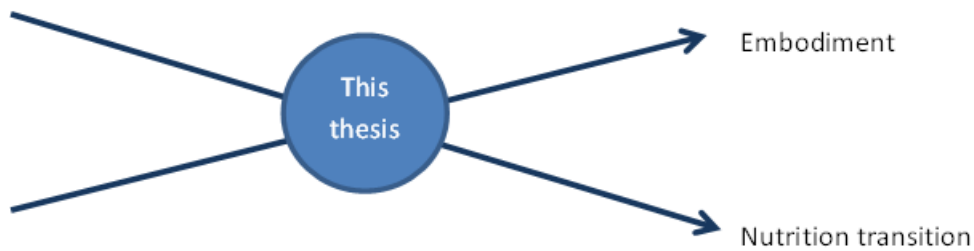


Figure 2 Visualization of the intersection

### 2.6.3 Aim of the research

Using the approach of food embodiment tells the story of the people living in the area through food. Food is integrated in people's everyday life, and is important in many things people do. When looking at culture and social relations, the embodiment of food can explain much about how and why people are doing things a certain way. According to Marshall (2005), there has been little cross-cultural research on meals and how eating occasions impact other food-related activities, like shopping and cooking. Food plays a crucial role in everyday life, in maintaining social relations and on special occasions. Without food, things would be shaped differently and different meanings would be given to practices. Foodways have changed over time and are still changing, which changes meanings and social relations along with it. There is a lack of research about the meaning of food and the construction, understanding and contextualization of food (Chamberlain, 2004). Studying the embodied, practical experience of consumption is attracting increasing interest (Lockie, 2002). I seek to contribute to this scientific discussion by using an integrative approach to study food security, in which I do not focus only on the side of production, but at connections and social and cultural practices that influence food security. I discuss foodways that are integrated in everyday life and the contexts foods are consumed in. Food is more complex than it is often treated in research and the embodiment of food can show how complex, though important, food is. Looking into embodied food security will broaden the narrow scope that is often used when looking at food security. This inclusive approach can show how food is embedded in a culture and cannot be seen apart from social relations it involves.

This research holds societal relevance because it contributes to a better understanding of changing food practices and how this influences embodied food security. I try to look at what people in rural communities want and I believe their opinions and feelings should be taken into account when policies are being formulated, implemented and executed. Understanding foodways helps to become aware of the roles food plays in a community. Food is not only important for people's health but also contributes to solidarity and plays a role in social networks of people in rural South Africa. People can develop new habits and feelings about food as a result of getting together with other people, which has the power to change the way people perceive each other (Carolan, 2017). This can positively contribute to social cohesion and social developments in rural areas. When policies only focus on the production side of food, this social side and the desires of the community are often overlooked.

An example of how the social-cultural is related to food and foodways can be given by looking at the availability of refrigerators. If people have refrigerators, this helps to store food products for a longer period of time, which can be seen as positive because people are able to buy cheap meat in large quantities. However, if people do not have a refrigerator, the available meat will often be shared

with many people inside the village, since it would be a waste to let it spoil. The availability of refrigerators might thus change the social-cultural environment and damage the local culture of sharing food. This shows how a minor change in available materials might have big consequences on foodways and why these socio-cultural aspects should not be overlooked.

## 2.7 Research questions

To gain insight in the relation between food security, food networks and the embodiment of food, the general research question that will be investigated is:

### ***How did foodways in rural South African communities change over time?***

This research question will be guided by two sub-questions:

#### 1: What are current foodways in rural South African communities?

This first sub-question aims to get insight in the current situation. This question will be the guideline of chapter 4, to give background information about the process of acquiring food until the consumption of this food. The types of food, procurement, ways of cooking and setting in which the food is eaten are part of this question. This will give an overview of what is happening in Number Five and give a first look into the cultural context.

#### 2: How is food security incorporated in foodways?

This question focusses on the perception of food security by residents of a rural South African village and does not go into the facts whether people are food secure. Since I try to go beyond the scope of the traditional food security definition, it does not do to look at the facts whether people are secure according to this definition. To go beyond this definition and look into the 'social side' of food security, I am interested in how people perceive food security and when they feel secured for food. Naturally, access to food and the other aspects of the classic definition are still part of this, but I strive to go deeper into food security than *only* those parts. I will look into strategies people use to secure themselves for food and what they need to feel food secure. I will investigate the importance of agriculture and the influence of seasons on perceived food security. Next to that, I will look at coping strategies people use when they do not feel food secure.

## 2.8 Methodology

This research was carried out by using multiple research methods, consisting of two parts: a literature study and 'fieldwork'. The fieldwork was of ethnographic nature, the activities of the participants were closely observed and the researcher tried to look at things from their point of view. There was a combination of participant observations, food diaries and semi-structured interviews to get a complete view. The results from this were compared and complemented with existing literature.

### *2.8.1 Ethnography*

There are different variants of ethnography and it is thus hard to define precisely. It is often seen as a type of methodology where the researcher observes and interacts with a social group he is interested in (Herbert, 2000). An ethnographer closely observes daily activities of a group and can

start to understand things the group takes for granted. In this, ethnography distinguishes itself from other research methods, like interviews. In an interview people won't mention things they find obvious, but might be interesting for research purposes. With ethnographic research, the researcher can have various degrees of involvement in the activities of the group, but there is inevitably a lot of interaction. Ethnography is a useful tool to generally explore social phenomena (Herbert, 2000).

Marcus (1995) developed the multisited ethnography, which refers to ethnography that doesn't limit itself to a single site or local situation, but looks at the circulation of identities, objects and cultural meanings. With multisited ethnography, one looks at how a phenomenon takes shape on multiple sites. By this, one is able to make connections or notice discourses in different sites and can explore relationships between different elements.

An example of this multisited ethnography is following food. Cook (2006) explains the importance of research like 'following food' in his paper. He states that food stories often tell bigger stories about topics like civilization, racism, gender, discrimination or dominance. Consumers are currently separated quite far from the origins of their food and should reconnect with the producers. This might change the way consumers spend their money, improve the relationship between producers and consumers and let people be more appreciative of each other's work and reduce wasteful practices (Cook, 2006).

Ethnography is not flawless and has received criticism. However, according to Herbert (2000), when keeping in mind its limitations it can be used as a good research method. It has the potency to look at both micro and macro levels and give a lot of useful information. In the case of Number Five, an ethnographic approach can be useful. It can show how the old and new ways of producing and consuming food can come together in different places and with different people. When conducting ethnographic research, lots of time will be spent with local families, doing participant observations and noting about food procurement, cooking techniques, meal participants and reciprocity.

### *Participant observations*

Participant observation is a big part of an ethnographic approach. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), all of social research can be seen as a form of participant observation. Participant observation is about getting a connection with people and making them comfortable with the presence of a researcher. In this way, the researcher can observe the daily lives of the participants and record information (Bernard, 2011). The data collected from the participant observations was recorded in field notes that were made throughout the day. At the end of the day, the field notes were written down on the computer and elaborated on. With every participant, there was one planned moment for participant observation. For this, an appointment was made beforehand to go shopping or cook and eat together. Next to these planned observations, there were more general observations, in which the researchers visited the participants spontaneously and had informal conversations. Next to the observations with the participants, there were also participant observations planned with the 'elderly project'. This was planned a few days beforehand, so all the people from the project knew the researchers would be present that day and they could decide whether or not they would like to join.

It was planned beforehand to do different types of observations, for example cooking with people, shopping, growing food. However, during the research it was hard to make this happen. Most people



receive their money on payday and go to town straight after that. This meant that almost all the participants went shopping on the same day, so it was hard to go shopping with different people. Many people only go to town on this day to do their big shopping, and go to the local store when they run out of something, which happens in the moment and is not a planned activity. It was also hard to participate in farming practices, because at the time of year the researchers were present, most people were just gardening occasionally or getting food from the garden whenever they started cooking. Most of the planned observations were thus cooking and eating together with people. However, with the general observations, it has been observed a few times that people were working in the garden, herding their livestock or buying something at a local shop.

### *2.8.2 Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews have been carried out to allow participants to express their views, articulate their experiences and describe situations as they see them (Boeije, 2010). The aim of semi-structured interviews is to get insights in how people attribute meaning to their worlds in social interaction (Grindsted, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are a combination of structured questions with room for further exploration. This way of interviewing is useful when working with a complex issue, due to the fact that an interviewer can use probing and spontaneous questions to get more in-depth information and clarification of answers (Wilson, 2014). These interviews were carried out with the help of an interpreter, who is able to translate the questions from English to isiXhosa and the answers from isiXhosa to English. Beforehand, an interview guide, consisting of a list key terms and possible questions has been made (see appendix). However, there was no strict list of questions, to allow participants to expand on topics that are in their opinion most important. In some cases, extra questions were added based on interesting findings from the food diaries or observations. After the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed and coded to clarify the main themes and sub categories to the researchers.

The interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants, at the place that was perceived most comfortable by the participant. This could be in the rondavel, another house or outside. We tried to conduct the interviews at a location that was private and without distractions to be able to focus properly on the interview. By interviewing people in a private place, we tried to make sure the answers wouldn't be influenced by other people who were around, both in the sense of socially desirable answers as well as people interfering in the interviews.

Before starting each interview, a small introduction was told to the participants, in which the aim of the interview, the duration, confidentiality issues and so on were explained (see appendix). Participants were also asked whether it was okay to record the interviews on a mobile phone. Some people were hesitant about this at first, because they did not understand the purpose and were scared the recordings would be shared. After explaining that the recorded interviews would not be made public, but had the purpose to allow the researchers to know exactly what has been said in the interviews, all the interviewees agreed with the recordings.

### *2.8.3 Food diaries*

Food diaries have been used in health and nutrition studies for a long time; it is a validated method to get information about the diet of a person or a household (Bellisle, Dalix & De Castro, 1999). With

food diaries, participants are asked to record for each meal which food items they used and how much. This is often firstly done for one day, after which they have contact with the researcher to review the information and talk about possible problems. After this first 'trial', the participants are asked to record their intake for a longer period (often one or two weeks). With this data, researchers can calculate consumption frequency, which is then used to calculate nutrition intake. However, within the more geographic side of studying food, this research method is still relatively new and not yet used as often (Bono & Finn, 2017). It has already been successfully used by for example Shannon (2016) and Legwegoh & Hovorka (2016) to look at food access and food choices, but is not as extensively used as in research about nutrition.

The food diaries used in this study do not only look at the foods that are consumed, but also where the food is consumed, the source where this food was acquired and which people are eating this meal together. In the first meeting with research participants, the researchers first introduce themselves and the research, and explain to the people what is expected of them. After that, people are asked if they are willing to participate and the food diaries are handed out and explained. It is emphasized that people should eat the types and amount of food as they usually do and not change their habits for the research. It is clarified that this is very important for the research and that their normal daily food habits is what is interesting to us. The participants were asked to fill in their main meals in the food diaries for 7-10 consecutive days, to get a good overview that includes all the days of the week. They were allowed to fill it in English, isiXhosa or a mixture of these, depending on the preferences of the participants. The design of the food diaries can be seen in Figure 3.

Day, time, kind of meal Usuku, ixesha, uhlobo lokutya (breakfast, lunch, supper)	Who was eating this meal and where was the meal eaten? Ngubani ebesitya okukutya, ebekutyela phi
What was eaten (ingredients) Bekuyintoni okukutya bekutyiwa (dwelisa izinto ebezikhona)	Source of the food Bekusuka okukutya phi

Figure 3 Design of the food diaries

It is explained to participants that the section 'who was eating this meal' is mainly about the amount of people eating together and the relation between these people. The ingredients and source of food are situated next to each other so the participants can write down the ingredient and the source of every ingredient in the next column. With the source of the food is meant where the person has gotten this ingredient from.

After handing out the first food diaries, some people seemed to have trouble filling in the food diaries. There were a few things that had to be explained extensively again:

- With the source of the ingredient, the specific location where the person got the ingredient is meant. For example, if someone buys milk at the local shop, we want them to write down 'milk comes from the local shop' instead of 'milk comes from a cow'.
- One page in the food diary equals one of the main meals. Many people tried to write the whole day on one page, which caused it to be hard to understand.
- Many people didn't understand at first that we would like them to split up the meals into the different ingredients. For example people wrote down they ate 'pap', to them this is very logical and everyone knows what they mean. However, we asked them to split this up into 'water', 'mealie meal', and 'salt', then give the source for each of the ingredients.

With the next participants, the approach was altered a bit regarding the food diaries. Next to explaining what we would like to know of the people and explaining how to fill in the diary, the breakfast on the first day of the diary was filled in together. Because we came in the morning, all the people had already eaten breakfast, and we asked them to recall what they had eaten and where these ingredients came from, with whom they had eaten and where they had eaten. We put this in the right boxes on the food diaries, so people would have an example for the next meal about how to fill it in and know what to do.

#### *2.8.4 Triangulation*

Bono & Finn (2017) designed a food diary method that provides information on where food items come from as well as the food items consumed. They instructed families to write down what they had eaten and where the food came from for an entire week. They visited the households on daily basis to make sure data was reliable and accurate. Also one researcher lived and ate with a household in the community, this participant observation helped detect possible inconsistencies. At the end of the week they collected the schemes and distilled from them the main sources of food and main ingredients. The combination of food diaries, interviews and observations reveals how complex sourcing foodstuff can be and how many social relations it involves. This method helps understanding the reciprocal relationships within a community, which rely on personal interactions between residents. This approach towards food diaries combined with participant observation and interviews helps to collect data tracing the network of food access; it is able to capture the link between mobility and food access (Bono & Finn, 2017).

#### *2.8.5 Sampling method*

The sampling method here was non-random sampling. Because of cultural differences between participants and researchers, the interpreters were asked to advise about people to include in the

sample. The objective was to get a mixed sample with people from different ages, people with or without livestock or a garden, and different household sizes. A few of the participants had to be included in the sample because they play an important role in the community and they would feel 'left out' otherwise, which could get our interpreters in trouble. Because it is important for ethnographic research to build up good contacts and a strong relationship, we included these people in the sample.

On the first day, 8 households were selected for the first food diaries. These were split up in two groups of 4 households. In this way, there was enough time to explain elaborately about whom we are, the research and how to fill in the food diaries to the participants. Having a day in between handing out the food diaries also helps spreading out the work after picking up the food diaries again. The decision to split up the introduction in two days should not influence the results, since the people were asked to keep the diaries for approximately a week. In the end, all of the diaries will have at least every day of one week in there.

After the food diaries were finished, the interviews were planned and conducted. The participant observations were done in between. Sometimes, if the researchers were close by, they would pay the participants a visit to see how they were doing with the food diaries, see if they were doing anything food-related and to get accustomed to each other. Because of the cultural differences, it was important to spend a lot of time with the participants. At first, most people were shocked to have 'white people' in their village and even inside their house and they would be a bit shy. Visiting people many times helped to build a relationship with the participants, which meant they were more comfortable with us. The interviews were planned after the food diaries and observations, so people would be more comfortable with the presence of the researchers and dare to talk freely.

After the first 8 households had finished the food diaries, and most of the observations and interviews were conducted, 8 new households were selected and asked to participate. After a few days, one of the participants decided she didn't have enough time to participate and she wanted to withdraw from participating. There was still enough time, so the decision was made to add another participant instead. Altogether, a sample of 16 households was used for the research (see appendix).

#### *2.8.6 Data analysis*

The first step of analyzing the data was transcribing the interviews. These transcriptions were done as soon as possible after each interview was conducted. Everything that was said was written down literally and gestures made during the interviews that seemed important were also written down. In order to make sense of the research findings, observations and interviews were coded. When coding, the data is first split up into segments that seem meaningful and relevant, then categorized and compared before reassembling them again (Boeije, 2010). During the coding process, I started with reading through all the data I collected to get familiar with the data. I marked parts that seemed interesting or outstanding and tried to find the most important concepts. Afterwards I started thinking about what I wanted to do with the collected data and I started to code the data, using my theoretical framework and concepts. The same codes were used for the observations and interviews. When coding, most of the questions were not taken along with the codes, except in cases where the question was needed to understand the text, as is advised by Boeije (2010). Food diaries were collected after they had been completed for at least seven days. Some diaries included more than

seven days of results, but seven days was the minimum, in order to be able to see differences throughout a week. Diaries were first digitized to be able to get a good overview. From the diaries, the sources of food were used, as well as the types of food, the people who were eating together, and the moments of consuming certain meals. The combination of observations, interviews and food diaries made inconsistencies detectable at an early stage, after which additional questions about these inconsistencies could be asked to clarify the situation.



### 3. Context of the research

In this chapter, I will explain the context in which this research is conducted. I will start this chapter by explaining the general South African context, including types of income, expenditures and agricultural activities. After giving a wider South African context, I will focus more on the specific study site.

#### 3.1 Income in South Africa

During the days of apartheid in South Africa, a welfare state for white people was constructed, with social insurance in case of unforeseen circumstances (Pauw & McNube, 2007). When South Africa transitioned in 1994 towards a system of majority rule and the African National Congress (ANC) came to power, the social welfare system was subject to many changes. The system was no longer only targeted towards white people and the grants were extended, both in terms of the value of the grants as well as people's eligibility for grants (Pauw & McNube, 2007). Currently, roughly a quarter of the South African population receives public grants (Neves, Samson, van Niekerk, Hlatshawayo & Du Toit, 2009).

##### 3.1.1 Social support and grants

The distribution of public grants is executed by the South African Social Security Services (SASSA). People can apply for social grants and other types of aid for multiple reasons. There are two ways in which people can receive this money: they can get a check at a specific pay point once a month or the money can be deposited into their bank account. There are some general rules for receiving a social grant from the SASSA: People have to be a South African citizen or permanent resident, live inside the country, not receive another type of social grant, not be cared for in a state institution and not earn more than R73800 for a single person, or R147600 for a married person. Next to that, a person cannot have assets worth more than R1056000 for a single person or R2112000 for a married person (South African Government, 2018). There are six different types of social support South Africans can receive:

*Older persons grant*, this grant can be received by anyone who qualifies for the above mentioned rules and is over the age of 60 years. It used to be called the old age pension, and this name is still used by the people in Number Five. The amount people will get is R1600 a month, and once a person has passed the age of 75, it will become R1620.

*War veterans grant*, is similar to the older persons grant, but is destined for people who have fought in the Second World War or the Korean War. However, all other qualifications are the same as for the older persons grant, including the minimum age. The amount of the war veterans grant is R1620 per month.

*Child support grant*, another reason to receive a social grant is to receive money for child support. For this, a person has to be the child's primary caregiver, not earn more than R45600 per year and he cannot get paid to look after the child. The child has to be under the age of 18 and live with the primary care giver. The amount given is R380 per month, per child. When someone is taking care of another's person's children, he cannot get the grant for more than six children.

*Foster child grant* when someone is taking care of a foster child, who has legally been placed in his/her custody by the court, they can also receive a grant for this child. This grant is a lot more than the normal child support grant; it is R920 per month per child. To be able to qualify for this grant, the

caretaker has to be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee, the caretaker and the child have to live in South Africa and the child has to be younger than 18.

*Disability grant*, the amount of money for a disability grant is the same as for an older person's grant, R1600 per month. It is meant for people who have a physical or mental disability that causes them to be unable to work for a period of more than six months. For this grant, one has to be between 18-59 years old, have an identity document, and a person needs to undergo a medical examination where a state doctor will assess the degree of disability. Children under 18 with a disability can apply for a care dependency grant.

*Grant in-aid*, this grant is meant for people who already receive a grant, but are unable to care for themselves, so they need an additional grant in order to pay for a person who takes care of them. To qualify for this grant, you already need to get another type of grant (old person or disability), you need to not be cared for in a government-funded institution and you need to be taken full-time care of. If you qualify for this type of grant, you get an additional R380 per month.

*Social relief or distress*, social relief or distress is not in money, like the other types of social aid. This type of aid provides people with materials they need when they are unable to meet the most basic needs of their family. It can be a food parcel or a voucher to buy food. This type of aid is only given for a short period of time, mostly three months. There are many reasons why a person can receive this type of grant, some examples: Someone doesn't qualify for a grant and is in a desperate situation, someone is unable to work for less than six months (and thus unable to apply for a disability grant), or a crisis has occurred.

### 3.1.2 Poverty

Even though there have been major changes in the social support system in South Africa, poverty is still visible. Many South Africans still view themselves as lacking the resources to meet their household needs (Labadarios et al., 2011). It is typical for poor South African households to have few people that earn income, and many people that are dependent on this income (Agriculture republic of South Africa, 2002). The main income sources are often migrant remittances and social security grants. This makes people vulnerable to food insecurity, especially in rural areas, where people rely on remittances from urban areas (Agriculture republic of South Africa, 2002; Shackleton et al., 2001). In rural areas, there is less economic activity than in urban areas, and it is hard to get employed elsewhere, due to factors such as transport and a lack of information (Shackleton et al., 2001). The welfare grants have increased the economic activity in rural areas and made the economy go from a subsistence and resource based economy towards a more commercial cash based economy, but there are still big differences between rural and urban areas visible (Lewis, McCosh & Nxele, 2011).

### 3.1.3 Rural-urban differences

Rural households in South Africa spend a larger proportion of their expenses on purchasing food, and a significantly larger part of their budget is used to buy grain products than in urban households.

Urban South African people generally consume less maize porridge, but more fruits, vegetables, animal products, fats and oils than people in the rural areas (Shackleton, Pasquini & Drescher, 2009). Rural households often have to pay higher prices to acquire food, since they must either pay for transport to a supermarket or buy food at a local shop, which is more expensive than a supermarket in town. However, in exact amounts, rural households are the ones to spend less money on food than their urban counterparts (Aliber, 2009). A possible explanation could be that many rural

households produce part of their foodstuff themselves, but since there is a lack of data on this topic, one cannot be sure (Aliber, 2009).

### 3.2 Procuring food

From a survey with poor urban households within the Southern African Development Community Cities (SADC) they found that people obtain their food from a variety of sources (Table 2, Frayne et al., 2010, p.24). At least 20 percent of households obtain food from sources that are sometimes called 'coping strategies'. These are sources like food aid, remittances, sharing meals, borrowing food or community kitchens. Only few use these sources on daily basis, but the safety nets are used occasionally (Frayne et al., 2010).

Table 2: Household sources of food (Frayne et al., 2010)

	% of Households Using Source	% of Households Using Source on Daily Basis*
Supermarket	79	5
Informal market/street food	70	31
Small shop/ restaurant/take away	68	22
Grow it	22	3
Shared meal with neighbours/ other HHs	21	2
Food provided by neighbours/ other HHs	20	2
Borrow food from others	21	2
Remittances (food)	8	0
Community food kitchen	4	1
Food aid	2	0
Other source	2	0

*\*At least five days per week*

*Note: Multiple responses permitted; N=6,453*

### 3.3 Income and employment in the Eastern Cape

Employment rates in the Eastern Cape are very low, especially among black Africans. During the census of 2011 in the Eastern Cape (Lehohla, 2011), 58,4% of the population between the ages of 15 and 64 was not economically active. During this same census, 15,6% were unemployed and 26% were employed. The status people have in the labor market differs per population group, as can be seen in Table 3 (Lehohla, 2011, p. 33). In 2011, the black African population group had the lowest proportion of employed persons, namely 22,1% against 38,4% of colored people, 53,9% of Indians or Asians and 62,5% of White people. This shows how differences between population groups are largely visible in employment rates.

Table 3: Distribution of persons age 15-64 by labor market status and population group, Eastern Cape (Lehohla, 2011)

Labour market status	Black African		Coloured		Indian or Asian		White	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Employed	74 0675	22,1	136 616	38,4	10 736	53,9	13 0417	62,5
Unemployed	547 454	16,3	56 811	16,0	1 385	6,9	8 862	4,2
Not economically active	2 063 531	61,6	162 434	45,6	7 811	39,2	69 554	33,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 351 660</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>355 862</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>19 932</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>20 8833</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Next to differences in the labor market status of different population groups, there are differences in poverty rates between these groups as well. Poverty rates in South Africa are mostly explained by poverty among black South Africans. Only 1% of the white South African population is deemed poor (Pauw, 2007). Most people in the Eastern Cape are living below the poverty line and household incomes often mainly consist of welfare transfers and grants (Westaway, 2012). These grants significantly reduce hunger and are seen as a safety net for rural unemployment (Pienaar & Von Fintel, 2013).

### 3.4 Agriculture in South Africa

Even though the risk of poverty is higher in rural areas of the Eastern Cape (78% compared to 62%), the risk of hunger is actually lower in these areas (Rogan, 2017). A reason for this can be that many rural households engage in farming activities, which protects them against food poverty. In rural South African villages, many people are directly or indirectly linked to agricultural activities (Pauw, 2007). Commercial agriculture in the Eastern Cape is very little, agricultural activities for household food production are often visible (Trefry, Parkins & Cundill, 2014; Connor & Mtwana, 2017). There is both agriculture in the form of homestead gardening as well as using arable fields. Homestead gardening is where households cultivate a plot of land next to their house. This can be a small patch of land that is only a few square meters, but it might also be a bit bigger, up to 4 hectares. Arable fields may be close to the homestead or several kilometers away, depending on the environment (Shackleton et al., 2001)

In some cases, the old age pension is what enables people to perform small-scale farming. Using the social grants, people can engage in farming activities, which usually requires a start-up capital (Rogan, 2017; Palmer & Sender, 2006). The transfers of cash in South Africa can support people to pursue farming activities. Many farmers are dependent on grants as their main source of income, and part of the grant is used for agricultural activities to stimulate self-rated food security (Von Fintel & Pienaar, 2016). A big share of the people who receive old age pensions are using wild resources and cultivating their land. These people have often grown up doing this and have been doing this their whole life, so it is the way of living they are used to (Lewis, McCosh & Nxele, 2011). Younger generations are often less eager to engage in agriculture or use wild resources, even if they have the time for these activities. Some younger people might not even possess the skills necessary to perform agricultural activities (Lewis, McCosh & Nxele, 2011).

According to Palmer & Sender (2006), households that engage in farming activities generally do not earn income from this and are just as reliant on buying their food from the market as others. For most households, the reason to perform agricultural activities on their homestead plots is to produce

food for own consumption, as an additional food source (Shackleton et al., 2001; Palmer & Sender, 2006; Pauw, 2007). For most households, agriculture is not the main source of food anymore, but a way to supplement market purchases (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). It is a way to reduce dependency on market purchases and is related to lower levels of hunger (Rogan, 2017). A small amount of home-grown foods might be sold or donated to friends, family and neighbors as a sign of kinship and community ties. But only a few rural households are able to get a substantial cash income out of farming. Farming contributes less than ten percent to rural incomes and is thus for most people not a main source of income (Palmer & Sender, 2006).

### 3.5 Wild resources

In rural parts of South Africa, the use of wild resources is still widespread (Dovie, Shackleton & Witkowski, 2002). Examples of these resources are food products, shelter, energy, medicine, timber, weaving materials and animal fodder. These products can both be used to consume by themselves or to be traded with others as a form of income. In rural areas, the use of wild resources is often a safety net against poverty and unforeseen circumstances (Dovie et al., 2002). This can be in the form of everyday life, but also as an 'emergency net' (Shackleton, Campbell, Lotz-Sisitka & Shackleton, 2008).

The most commonly used resources are wood for fuel and fencing, wild herbs, wild fruits, medicinal plants, wood for utility items and grass to graze livestock on (Shackleton et al., 2001). The wild resources are both used for the households themselves as well as a part of generation of income. Poor households often make more use of these products than wealthier people do (Shackleton et al., 2008). The people who use these products as a source of income, often have a lack of other sources to provide income, have to save money, are poor and need to get some kind of income. The chance to use these free resources is an important safety net for many households (Shackleton et al., 2008). However, a decline in the consumption of indigenous vegetables and grains is visible, due to soil conditions, climate and a lack of water (Boonzaaier, 2005). These conditions influence the growth of wild products and limit the consumption of these items.

### 3.6 Livestock

To own livestock has a multipurpose character in communal areas. Both goats and cattle serve more functions than they would in a typical commercial production system, since they play an important role during the performance of rituals and celebrations. Households in rural villages own livestock to maximize the yield of consumable products and services and as a form of capital (Shackleton et al., 2001). Livestock can also be used as draft animals or as a way of transport (Palmer & Sender, 2006). Since people can produce animal products by herding livestock in the communal areas, this can be a way to save money. Instead of having to buy animal products from a store, one can keep livestock and use these products, which means a smaller part of the budget needs to be invested in purchasing animal products (Aliber, 2009).

### 3.7 The Ntabelanga Area

In the Eastern Cape province lies the Ntabelanga Area, an area which is known for rural poverty and land degradation. In 2014, a project was launched, namely the Ntabelanga Laleni Ecological Infrastructure Project (NLEIP), this project includes the construction of two Dams in the Tsitsa River

catchment (Botha, Rosenberg, Biggs, Kotschy & Conde-Aller, 2017). The area is shown in Figure 4, including the two locations for the dams. The Laleni Dam will be built with the goal to generate hydroelectric power and the Ntabelanga Dam will be built to get water available for domestic, agricultural and industrial use (Fabricius, Biggs & Powell, 2016). Getting a good ecological infrastructure can bring more productive agriculture to the area and can help the rural people towards a more sustainable future. Currently, less than 20 percent of the fields in the Ntabelanga & Laleni area are cultivated (Fabricius et al., 2016).



Figure 4 Ntabelanga area

In the Ntabelanga area, there is a lack of studies, though interventions with mayor consequences are planned (Fabricius et al., 2016; Sisitka, Ntshudu, Hamer, & Vos,, 2016). This research is therefore conducted in collaboration with Rhodes University and the NLEIP project. For the NLEIP-project it is good to get insights about the livelihoods of the people in this area. No research that involves the communities has been done in the area before. This research can help establish and maintain connections with people in the rural villages, get insights in their livelihoods, and is part of community engagement.

### 3.8 Case study, Village Number Five

Through connections at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, 'Village Number 5' was chosen as the village to conduct the research. Hereafter, the village will be referred to as 'Number Five', since this is how people in the area mostly refer to it. Number Five is located in the Hlankomo area. This area lies between Maclear and Mount Fletcher and consists of 15 different villages. It was decided to go to this village for a number of reasons. First and foremost was the issue of safety, in this village were already some contacts which helped becoming familiar with the people and safety issues, getting the first contacts and finding an interpreter. The last reason is that in this area little research has been done. This is both convenient for the current research, since the people are not yet 'research tired', as well as research in this area is needed.





Figure 5 Village Number 5

There are approximately 200 homesteads in this village, but no records are being kept, so nobody knows the exact number. There are many properties that are empty most of the time, because they are owned by people who work in towns or cities and are only able to come home for holidays or special occasions. There is also no electricity in the village at the time of research. The Eskom company is working on installing it, but the end date for the instalment gets postponed frequently. The structures for electricity were present but there was no working power yet. It was tried to obtain knowledge about the history of the village, but unfortunately nothing is written down or registered. Attempts were made to ask people about the history, but many different stories were told, so it was decided these sources could not be relied on to get knowledge about the village's history.

To be able to work in the village, the sub-headman had a meeting with the researchers and his committee to give their permission. The objective of the research was explained to them and it was also explained that they won't receive anything in return from us for this research, except our gratefulness. The committee approved the research and was happy that they are able to help people with their studies and personal development. After this, the sub-headman has informed the headman, the chief of the 15 villages in the area and the village itself about the research.

### *3.8.1 Language*

The main language in Number Five is isiXhosa. Because the researchers are not familiar with this language, they needed the help of an interpreter. Through Rhodes University, the first contacts in Number Five were made and two interpreters were asked to help out during the fieldwork. The first



one is a community development worker and sees it is a good opportunity to visit households together with the researchers. The second one is a single male who lives in the village. He has a good relation with the sub-headman and other people in the village, he doesn't have a job and he is often available.

To make sure the interpreters are doing their job properly, someone from Rhodes university comes along during the first meeting as well as during the first day of fieldwork. Her first language is isiXhosa and she is fluent in English as well. She makes sure the interpreters can translate well in both directions. During the first week of research, both interpreters were present, so they could get used to the researchers and to the interpreting. They could discuss about certain things together and with us to make sure everyone understood what their role was. After this week, it was decided that only one interpreter at a time was sufficient. The first interpreter was also busy with other parts of his job, so the second interpreter did most of the interpreting during the whole study period.

### 3.8.2 Relevant projects

There are a few projects going on in the village regarding food and eating. The biggest of these projects is the *elderly project*. This project was started in 2007 by people from the village, and in 2010 it became funded by the government. The project is meant for people aged 60 years and older, with the main purpose of fighting loneliness. Next to that, older people are not always able to eat good food at home for multiple reasons. Sometimes they have to take care of their grandchildren, while the grants are kept by the parents. It also happens that older people do not have the time or energy to cook a full meal, because they have a hard time cooking. The project is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and people can eat breakfast and lunch there, with a snack in between. There is a daily food schedule in the room, which can be seen in Figure 6 While they are at the project, people can do some handcrafting, play sports, sing and dance or do other activities together.

DAILY MENU	
MONDAY	<p><b>BREAKFAST</b></p> <p>WEET BIX &amp; MILK</p> <p><b>DINNER</b></p> <p>RICE, POTATOES, PARS, BAKED BEANS &amp; NICE BISCUITS &amp; TEA</p>
TUESDAY	<p>AMABELE &amp; TEA</p> <p>PAP, BEEF, PARS &amp; POTATOES</p> <p>SWEETS</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p>SOFT PORRIDGE &amp; MILK</p> <p>SAMP &amp; BEANS</p> <p>APPLE</p>
FRIDAY	<p>WEET BIX &amp; MILK</p> <p>RICE, PARS, BEANS POTATOES &amp; CHICKEN</p> <p>DRINK &amp; BISCUITS</p>

Figure 6 Daily menu of the elderly project

Another project in the village is the *maize project*. People have told us about this project during the interviews. Sometimes they also call it the 'maize society'. It was founded in 2014 by people from Number Five. They have a group of 43 people together, who take care of the fields together. When they want to become a member, they have to pay a small amount of money. They plant the maize at the end of November and guard it in turns, around July or August the maize is ready and can be harvested. The government also wants to stimulate people to do agriculture together so they fund the project and pay about half of the expenses. The project has 15 hectares worth of fields.

The last relevant project known to us is *the garden vegetable project*. This project is not very well-known in Number Five, few people are a member. They can become a member by registering with a copy of their ID. People in this project get seeds from the government to plant in their own garden. They get seeds for a variety of vegetables like potatoes, cabbage, spinach, green pepper and carrots. They plant and plough by themselves, but someone from the project comes to inspect if they are actually using the seeds to grow vegetables.

## 4: Foodways in a rural village

In this chapter I will describe the foodways in Number Five by explaining the complete process from procuring food to consuming food in Number Five. This includes what and how people shop, what and how they eat and how these choices are motivated. I will start with describing the types of food that people in Number Five eat, the reasons to eat these foods and on which occasions they eat which types of food. Next, I will discuss the possible sources where people get their food from, and who is the person to acquire this food. Thereafter, the way people are cooking, who is cooking, where they are cooking and how they are cooking is considered. Finally, the setting to eat is described, who are eating together, where are they eating, which materials do they use for eating. For the results of this chapter, the interviews, observations and food diaries are used as source of information. Food diaries are used as a source of information for the type of food, the sources of food and the setting to eat. Interviews and observations are used for all the parts of this chapter. The ideas of embodiment will come up throughout the chapter and be discussed further in the discussion section of this thesis.

### 4.1 Type of food

There are different types of food eaten on different occasions in Number Five. Many factors influence the food choice of the people, for example money, culture, health or traditions. In Number Five, maize is the main staple food that is used in a lot of households for different meals. The foods that are seen as having a cultural importance, are also mainly foods that are made from maize. Examples of this are inqodi, umngqusho, umvubo, umqombothi and pap/porridge. First will be explained what these foods are before going into their cultural relevance.

Pap is a traditional porridge that is made from mealie meal. Mealie meal is made by drying maize, then grinding this until it is very fine. Nowadays, the grinding of maize is usually done by machines and people can buy mealie meal in a store. Pap can be made by first bringing water to a boil, then adding mealie meal and cooking this for approximately half an hour. As a soft porridge with sugar and sometimes vinegar, it is often eaten for breakfast. It can also be prepared as 'stiff pap' with salt, which has a thick consistency and can easily be eaten using your hands, or as a more dry and crumbly variety of pap. These last two are usually eaten together with a 'shebu'. A shebu can be anything that can be combined with rice or pap, this can be vegetables, meat or a combination of meat and vegetables. Next to eating pap with a shebu, it can also be used to make umvubo. Umvubo is made by combining pap with amasi/maas, a type of fermented milk that is similar in taste to sour cream. In some cases, umvubo is also made with regular milk or with bread instead of pap. However, when talking about umvubo, people generally mean the umvubo made from pap and amasi.

Inqodi is a drink that is called 'African yoghurt' by people in Number Five. It is a drink that is often consumed as a snack between meals, or directly after a meal. When drinking inqodi, it is common to share a big jug with the people who are present, instead of using separate glasses. Inqodi is made by cooking mealie meal and sugar, then letting it cool. It is a drink with a thick consistency, which is why it is often called yoghurt. Below in Figure 7 is first a picture of a woman cooking inqodi and the objects she needs for this, on the right is a picture of me drinking inqodi for the first time.



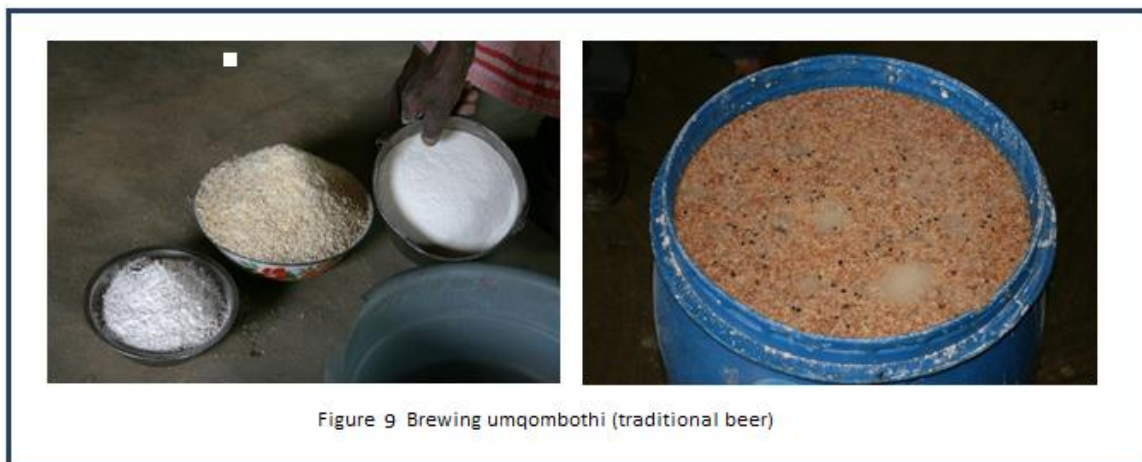
Figure 7 Preparation of inqodi and drinking Inqodi

Umngqusho is the Xhosa word for what is often called samp. Samp can be bought in big bags from the store, but can also be homemade from maize. The preferred type of maize for this is the white variety, instead of the yellow one. To start making samp from scratch, a little bit of water is added to dried maize. It is then ground with a rock or a mortar to take the covers of the kernels. This is easiest to do in a special type of stone with a big hole in it, but can also be done in a bucket. Once the covers are off, they need to be separated from the kernels. This is done by putting it into a big bowl, then shaking this bowl in a certain way to shake the covers off. It requires a lot of skill to shake the bowl this way. The kernels that are left in the bowl are the actual samp. These kernels are then washed and mixed with beans, after which they are put in a pot with boiling water and cooked for 2-3 hours. People can add onion, oil, salt and other spices to this according to taste. Figure 8 shows first how the maize is ground, then how it looks when it is ready and finally how the bowl is shaken to separate the covers from the kernels.



Figure 8 the process of making samp

Umqombothi is the ‘traditional beer’ that uses maize as main ingredient. Brewing this beer is a process that takes 5 days, and starts with mixing brown wheat flour, mealie meal and coarsely grinded maize that has been soaked and dried before grinding. This mixture is first mixed with approximately 5 liters of lukewarm water. Afterwards, 10 more liters of hot water are added. After waiting for a while, it is put into a big barrel and this barrel is filled to the top with cold water. This needs to stand with a cloth on top, until bubbles are forming from the fermentation process. Once it is fermenting properly and starts to smell a bit sour, it will be cooked over a fire and is set to cool again for a day. The next day ‘king korn’ (a brand of sorghum), is added and the mixture is left with a cloth again inside the house until it is fermenting properly and one can see bubbles forming. The last step before drinking the beer is to put the mixture through a sieve. The grains that are left after sifting can be fed to the pigs or thrown away. Umqombothi is similar in taste to regular beer, but has a different structure, it is more granular than regular beer. Below in Figure 9 are two pictures, first showing the main ingredients that are mixed together in the first stage of preparing the beer. The second picture is taken a few hours later and shows how the beer mixture is bubbling due to the fermentation process.



Another type of food that is often prepared in Number Five is Isonka Samanzi (steam bread). Nowadays, this type of food is made with flour instead of maize, but it is still an important food for people in the village. It is prepared by mixing yeast, flour, sugar and salt with lukewarm water. After combining these ingredients, it becomes a dough that needs to rise. It is left in a bucket with a lid on it, or a bowl with a cloth on top. It is left in a warm place, either inside the house or outside in the sun. The bowl or bucket is often wrapped in a blanket to keep warm so the dough will rise properly. After a few hours, the dough is ready and the baking can start. To bake the bread, a pot with some water is put over the fire, then some sticks are put at the bottom of the pot. A bowl is greased with oil and the dough is put in this bowl. The bowl is then put on top of the sticks inside the pot, to prevent the bowl from touching the water. The lid is put on top of the pot and it is left to literally steam the bread for a few hours. While it is steaming, water needs to be added occasionally, since part of the water will evaporate and the bread could burn otherwise. In figure 10, two pictures about the preparation of steam bread are included. The picture on the left shows the prepared dough that still needs to rise more, the blanket is wrapped around the bucket after this picture was taken. The picture on the right shows how the dough is put into a bowl which is then put in a pot over a fire to



steam. Between the bowl and the pot are sticks and water, and after the picture was taken, the lid was put on top of the pot.



Figure 10 Preparing steam bread

People in Number Five are very fond of eating meat. With every important occasions, they will serve people meat. Especially ‘the inside’ of an animal are a very popular dish that are seen as a real treat. Meat is a special food product because most people cannot afford to eat it every day. For many participants, eating meat is a thing reserved for weekends and special occasions. During the weekend, many people enjoy to eat a bit more extensive if they are able to and eat what they call a ‘full meal’. A full meal usually includes meat, vegetables and rice, but can also be eaten with pap or bread. People who have more money to spend, start to eat meat more often. Thembeke (2017) tells us:

‘We eat meat almost every day, now that we have money. Before we used to eat meat only on Sunday’

Not everyone reserves eating meat for the weekends, some people will eat meat whenever they can afford it, independent of which day it is. The diaries were analyzed to see how many times meat was eaten, how many times a ‘full meal’ was consumed and how many times a meal without meat was consumed. In this, all the meals from the diaries that were filled in completely and accurately were included, this resulted in a total of 386 meals. Of these meals, 320 were eaten without meat, 29 existed of only a staple and some kind of meat. A staple here can be rice, pap, samp or bread and meat includes canned fish and canned beef, as well as other types of meat, but excludes other animal products, like eggs. Criteria for a full meal were that it has to include some staple (rice/pap/samp/bread), some vegetable (beans/onion/potato/cabbage/carrot/spinach etc.) and some sort of meat or fish (canned/regular), which resulted in 37 full meals in the diaries.

Table 4: Amount of full meals, meals consumed with meat and without meat

Full meal	Meat only	No meat
37	29	320

Next to looking at the amount of meals that include meat, there was also looked at when these meals were consumed. It is interesting that many participants in the interviews mentioned to only eat meat during the weekends, but from the diaries, there is also a lot of meat consumed during the week. A few of these meals can be explained by the researchers doing their observations during this period. Even though it was specifically mentioned to the participant not to change their diets during

the observations, the researchers were often served a meal including meat. It is common cultural practice to serve meat whenever there are visitors, so people wanted to serve this to the researchers.

Table 5: Meal timing and the consumption of full meals and meat

	<b>Full meal</b>	<b>Meat</b>
<b>Monday-Friday</b>	22	23
<b>Weekend</b>	15	6

When people in Number Five eat meat, chicken and sheep are eaten most often, but cattle, goats and pigs can also be slaughtered and eaten. Young animals, like lamb, are never eaten in the village. They see this both as cruel as well as a waste, since you could have waited longer and have a bigger animal with more meat on it.

### *Cultural importance*

People in Number Five describe the above mentioned types of food as the most important for their culture. Next to these products, rice is sometimes mentioned as well, but not all participants agree on the importance of rice. It seems that in some traditional gatherings rice will be eaten, but this is a new thing, so older people do not always agree that rice is important. It is clear to see that maize has been and still is the most important food for the culture of people in Number Five. Maize is important because it is the type of food that everyone is able to get, it is cheap and you can also grow it yourself. Secondly, it is what people have been eating their whole life, so they are used to it and grew up with it. Finally, it is easy to prepare in big portions so you can feed a lot of people with it. Khwezi (2017):

‘I think one of our reliable food in our culture that is very stable and easy to cook, and you can cook for a lot of people, is samp. We always cook samp in our cultural activities, because it is easy to cook, you can cook it with beans, you can cook it without beans, it does not give problems. And you can serve it to a lot of people and papa sometimes, but samp is easier. So it is always a reliable food in our cultural activities. And papa sometimes, so the maize products are very important’

It also becomes clear from the food diaries how important maize is as a food in Number Five. Of the 386 meals that were filled in adequately in the diaries, 212 meals contained maize. In most cases (180 meals), this was in the shape of mealie meal, but also other types, such as samp, were consumed during the research. Maize products are consumed at all meals: breakfast, lunch and supper as can be seen in table 6. In this table, maize stands for any meal that uses maize, mealie meal stands for any meal that uses mealie meal and the total meals is all the meals that were consumed and properly written down in the diaries.

Table 6: Number of meals, with and without maize and mealie meal

	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Supper</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Maize</b>	61	81	70	212
<b>Mealie meal</b>	53	66	60	180
<b>Total meals</b>	140	119	127	386



In Number Five, umqombothi, the maize beer, is also seen as a type of food, instead of a beverage. They say it is nutritious and makes you feel full, not like regular beer. Umqombothi is often made for a certain purpose, because when someone starts brewing the beer, other people will go over to their place and know something is going on. Reasons to brew umqombothi can be to ask people to help you with a certain job, for a celebration, if you want to have people over for a meeting or just inviting people. Sisipho (2017):

‘I sometimes feel like doing that traditional beer so that people just come and stay in here at my place. It is a way of inviting people, to spend some time in your home’

When people drink umqombothi, they do not drink this with the intention to get drunk, like they do with other alcoholic drinks. They drink it because it is part of their tradition and it is important in many special ceremonies.

Whenever there is a celebration or a ritual, it is important that there is always meat present. A cow, a few goats or sheep will usually be slaughtered for this occasion, depending on the situation. Some rituals need the slaughtering of a certain animal, in other cases the type of animal is not important, as long as there is meat. Next to meat, there is often samp, steam bread, vegetables and sometimes papa on these occasions. Some people also serve rice during celebrations or rituals, but to others rice does not belong on such occasions. However, rice is tolerated during these celebrations, even though it is not one of the traditional foods. During certain rituals, men are not allowed to eat salt or other types of flavoring on their foods, they just have to eat boiled food without any additives. Women are allowed to add these things, so they will cook the foods for men and women separately. Next to having many different types of food present, it is also important to have drinks. Most of the time, the umqombothi will be brewed for a celebration or ritual. There are other alcoholic beverages present as well, like regular beer and brandy. Next to the alcoholic beverages, there are also non-alcoholic drinks available. Inqodi, soft drinks, tea and coffee are usually available at events for people who decide not to drink alcohol.

### *Taste*

Not all participants value taste equally. Uuka (2017):

‘The taste is not very important to me, it is more important to have food than to have very tasty food’

However, many other people do value the taste of food and want to eat food that tastes good. People have different strategies to ensure tasty food, some people only cook types of food that they like, others add oil, salt or flavor enhancers, like beef stock, to the food they are cooking. Zintle (2017) describes how she makes a tasty meal:

‘To make sure food is tasty, you just cook something that you feel like eating, even before you eat it. Maybe it is pap or meat, but you feel the taste even before you eat that pap, while you’re still cooking it. And I feel happy inside before even eating’

Babalwa (2017) uses the technique of adding things to her food to ensure its tastiness:

‘I make sure my food tastes good by adding things that influence the taste, like fish oil, spice, beef stock, aromat, salt. I keep tasting while cooking, to bring it to the required taste’

During the observations in Number Five, it was notable that all residents drank tea or coffee with big amounts of sugar in it, and most people added milk as well. When adding the sugar to the drink, a tablespoon is used and multiple heaping spoonfuls are added. The researchers both prefer to drink their tea without adding milk or sugar, and the people in the village had a hard time believing tea could be tasty while drinking it like that. According to them, ‘it has no flavor’ when you drink it like that, without milk and especially without sugar. It took the residents a while to get used to the habit of the researchers to drink tea that has been made from hot water and a teabag only.

### *Health*

Some people in Number Five have health problems and have been told by the doctor to take less sugar and a different kind of sugar. Many of these people still eat sugar in the same amount as they used to, but have substituted granulated sugar for brown sugar. Certain other foods are also eaten or not eaten because of health reasons. Sisipho (2017):

‘With vegetables I don’t care of its taste, I eat it because it is healthy, not because I think it is palatable’

All people in the village see vegetables as a type of food that is healthy for you, especially if these vegetables come from your own garden. The majority of people do not know why they are healthy, but they ‘just know’ it is good for them. Many people believe that food that comes from the soil is a lot healthier than food coming from the shops. A few people believe that the way of eating nowadays is making people sick. Nofoto (2017):

‘I feel like in our days food is behind our sickness. We are sick because of the food we are eating. Because, during the olden days, we were always healthy when we were using that natural food. But the food we are getting from the shops now are the basic causes of many of our diseases. We are sick because of it’

Not everyone shares this point of view, other people think every type of food is healthy, because food gives you energy and makes you strong. It does not matter to them where the food is coming from.

### *New food products*

In Number Five, opinions about new food products, like biscuits and other processed foods, are varied. Both in terms of tastiness as well as in terms of health effects of these products, people have different opinions. Some people think they are tasty, others see them as products for only kids. Some think they are healthier because they have to be inspected before they can be sold, others feel like they are less healthy because they have been processed and they do not know exactly what happened to the products during the production process. Following are a few different opinions about these products:

‘I won’t say it’s not good, because they’re being totally expected, I mean inspected, before they’re canned, or before they’re processed, you know (Thandiwe, 2017)’

‘They are boring things to me. They are kids things, these things are made for kids (Lulama, 2017)’

‘When I eat biscuit I feel happy because of its taste and you can access them before you cook, you just eat (Daluxolo, 2017)’

‘I think processed foods is not better than the food I make myself. Not better.. that means that the food you buy at the shop is worse. The processed food is worse. Both in taste and in terms of health. It is light, the things you get from the shop are light they are not tangible (Esihle, 2017)’

‘I don’t use them, I don’t want them. They are not enjoyable to me, they are not tasteful to me. They also make us sick (Fezeka, 2017)’

‘I’m always suspicious towards processed food. I cannot be sure how fresh it is, about the expiry date. I always prefer food that I prepare myself. Because I know what I added’ (Bongani, 2017)’

‘They are ok but we must not depend on them, though they are delicious. They need a lot of money. Sometimes I can’t afford them, that’s why I don’t want to depend on them. I like to eat them but sometimes I don’t like to depend on it because they are expensive (Cebisa, 2017)’

These are a few opinions that show the difference in how people feel towards these food products. People have different reasons why they perceive them as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, caused by the taste, price, freshness and believes they hold about these products.

#### 4.2 Procuring food

People in Number Five do not have tap water, they get their water from the natural wells that are located throughout the village. There are many wells so people never have to walk more than 5 minutes to get water. They get their water from the well and use buckets to bring it to the house. Most people get two full 20L buckets of water in the morning, and if they need more during the day, they’ll get some more once it is finished. Figure 11 shows on the left how people get water in the village, and on the right someone buying food at a local shop.



Figure 11 Procuring food and water locally

### Overview of sources

In Number Five, there are two shops (spaza's) that people in the village call 'local shops'. These shops are owned by foreigners, who sell a variety of products, including vegetables, bread, mealie meal, sugar, cereals, baby food, rice, canned food, salt, cookies, candy, oil, eggs, chicken pieces, milk, soft drinks and shampoo. Next to these two shops, some people living in the village sell a few small products from their home, for example sugar, long-life milk and matches. There is also a lady in the village who has a big garden, she sells part of these vegetables to other people in the village.

### *Town*

Every day, taxi busses depart from Number Five to Maclear and Mount Fletcher, the towns closest to the village. A one-way trip with a taxi to town costs approximately R30, and when one buys big groceries he would like to transport, additional costs are charged. Most people in Number Five rely on the taxis to go to town, since there are only few people who own a car. In the research, only two participants had a car available, one of these would always take the car when going to town. The other participant would take the car for heavy groceries, but take a taxi if it were only 'small things'. In town, the main supermarkets are 'Spar' and 'Jumbo'. Next to these two supermarkets, there are many smaller shops that sell big packages of foodstuff like mealie meal, rice and sugar.

Most people in Number Five acquire the main share of their food by buying it in town. Many people go to town once a month, where they buy a big part of their monthly food supply. On the day that the social grants are handed out, 'payday', people receive their check and take a taxi to town where they cash the check and go shopping. When people go to town, they usually go for the biggest part of the day and have lunch in town. The supermarket has a 'fast food' counter, where many people buy lunch, but there is also a Kentucky Fried Chicken and some small stands where convenience food is sold. After buying food, there is always a person who puts everything in bags for the customer and can also help bring the food to the taxi stand place. For most people in Number Five, the trip to town is expensive and they only go once a month, but others, who have a bit more money go to town more often. When in town, food products are bought in bulk so they can last the whole month. The main products bought in town are mealie meal, sugar, rice, samp, beans, potatoes, onions, canned

products, flour, oil, long-life milk, salt, coffee, tea, beef stock, porridge and meat. This meat has to be eaten very quickly, since people in Number Five don't have a refrigerator at their homes and it will spoil.

#### *Local shop*

In the local shops, the products are more expensive than they are when one buys them in town. However, when people from Number Five buy at a local shop, they don't have to take a taxi to town, which saves money. For most people, this is the reason they buy their bulk in town, but get small products in the local shop. When they run out of a certain product before the end of the month, they go to buy this at the local shop. One of the participants explained

'I think a week after I've been to Maclear to buy my groceries, I start to go to the local shop to buy things like paraffin, and small things like matches (Bongani, 2017)'

Foods that are often bought in local shops are bread, soft drinks, cookies, vegetables, eggs, salt, tea, chicken pieces, yeast and amasi. This is a combination of products that people run out of before the end of the month and products that have a shorter storage life. The local shops have a generator so they can use a refrigerator for these products. When buying things at one of the local shops, one can decide to pay immediately or buy on credit. The shop owners keep a list of the people who have bought things on credit. Many people use this, since it is a way to acquire food when they are short of food and money and they can pay it later when they receive money again. However, they do have to pay interest rates over things bought on credit, which makes it even more expensive. In the research, only one participant indicated to buy all her food at the local shop. This is because she is an older lady and prefers to pay a bit extra and get the service of the shop owner delivering the groceries inside her house.

#### *Acquiring food products*

Getting the groceries is, like other food-related tasks, mostly seen as a feminine task. Since it is usually the women who are doing the cooking, they are also the ones that decide what and how much has to be bought. Some households do the grocery shopping in town together when they have enough time and money to afford this. In other households, only one person does the shopping. In most cases, it is the female who also cooks that does the shopping, but when another person does the shopping for her, she makes a list with the supplies she would like to have. People who are older and have trouble walking often send another person to bring their foods. When people need small things from the local shop, they often send a child to go to the shop and get whatever they need.

#### *Agriculture*

Part of the food people consume, comes from their own garden or field. Inside the village, most people own a small garden, where they produce vegetables like spinach and cabbage. Some people have a field as well, in these fields, maize is always grown, and sometimes this is intercropped with pumpkins and beans. The list of participants (appendix) indicates which households in the research own a garden or a field. In Number Five, a distinction is made between a 'real field' and a field inside the yard.

This is in line with literature, which shows that in villages in the Eastern Cape, it is common to distinguish between three types of places to grow food (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). Firstly, there is the *intsimi*. This refers to a large field that is some distance away from the homestead. It is rain fed and usually maize or oats are grown here (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). The second type is an *itsiya*, an *itsiya* is the homestead garden, which is next to the home. In this garden, a variety of vegetables and fruit trees can grow (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). In Number Five, the vegetables grown here differ per household but include carrots, spinach, potatoes, cabbage, beetroot, green onion and beans. Fruit trees around the village are mainly peach and apricot trees, there is one person who owns an avocado tree, this tree has been planted 35 years ago and only last year started growing the avocado fruits. The third type is the *igadi*. This is a plot of land that is closer to the homestead and can be irrigated by hand if necessary. People grow either maize or a mix of maize, beans and pumpkins on this plot, which are planted and harvested once a year (Connor & Mtwana, 2017).

In the research, of the 16 participants, there are 12 who own and use a vegetable garden, or *itsiya*, this year. One person owns a garden but is not growing anything this year due to draught. 10 participants have a so called 'inside field' or *igadi*, and only 4 have a 'big field' or *intsimi*. A big field can be owned by the participant himself, but many people are part of the 'maize project'. One participant indicated to have an 'inside field', but not in use due to a lack of fencing. If you have not fenced off your property, animals might go in there and destroy or eat your crop.

It differs per household how much food they can acquire from growing food themselves. None of the participants was able to rely fully on own production as a food source. Maize, beans and pumpkins are usually harvested between March and May, people then eat their own maize for a few months. The last part of the maize is usually finished by the livestock people own, and people start buying from the store for themselves when the maize is almost finished. It differs each year how much maize people can get from their fields, depending on weather conditions and other environmental factors. When intercropping of pumpkins and beans happens, these might spread out and grow into another person's field. According to Zintle (2017), the person who owns the field where the roots of the plants are, is the rightful owner of the pumpkins that grow. So even if the neighbor's pumpkins grow in your field, they are still theirs if the roots are in their field and you are not allowed not take them. If you do take those pumpkins from your field, it is seen as a form of theft.

People who own a vegetable garden use this as their main source to acquire vegetables. In summer, many people can eat vegetables from their own garden 2-3 times per week. In winter, vegetables are scarce because they don't grow well and people have to rely more on shops to get vegetables. Most people prefer the vegetables from their garden over the ones you can buy in a shop.

'Vegetables from my garden are more fresh, because I take them from the ground. The ones from the shop, I don't know when they were picked up from the garden, I don't know how long have they been on the refrigerator so I don't trust them (Khwezi, 2017)'

'The things we plough in the ground are much better than the things we buy from the shop, you see the difference? The one from the ground is nice and tasty, from the shop is tasteless (Lulama, 2017)'

Next to garden vegetables, there are also indigenous vegetables, which grow wild, as weeds, in multiple places around the village. Most people know where to find it if they want to eat it. When it grows in someone else's garden, you can ask that person if you can get it and they usually let you go on their property and pluck the vegetable. These vegetables are not eaten very often anymore, only a few households consume it more regularly (every other week), but most people can hardly remember the last time they ate it. There are multiple types of wild vegetables, the unomdlomboyi is the most favored in the village. Next to that, imbikicane is eaten as well, but less often. Both of these vegetables are varieties of wild spinach, the difference can be seen in the pictures below. Unomdlomboyi is the vegetable on the left, and is completely green, whereas the imbikicane is covered by a white 'powder' that has to be washed thoroughly before consumption.



#### *Other people*

Most people in Number Five share their food with others. Getting food from other people is not a main way of procuring food, but everyone is willing to share their food with other people if needed. When asking people whether they sometimes get food from other people, many answer they don't get food from others, or only from family members as a gift. When people from outside of the village come to visit their family members, they often bring food as a present. However, if someone would be short of food, they know they could go to a neighbor or family member and ask for food. In some cases, they borrow the food and bring it back later, but usually people just give the food. They know that if they are short of something next time, the other person will give something back. Occasionally, food is also bought from others, but most of the time when people go to other people to ask for food, the reason for this is that they don't have money left.

### 4.3 Cooking

#### *Fuel choice and use*

There are three different types of heat sources that are used for cooking in Number Five: cooking on paraffin, cooking on gas or cooking on fire. Most people in the village prefer cooking outside on the fire, this is the way they are used to cook and it is the cheapest way of cooking. To get wood for cooking is labor intensive but everyone can get wood from the forest for free. Some people collect wood and carry it back to their house, but it is a long walk and it is hard to bring a lot when having to carry the wood. Therefore, most people use oxen to get big amounts of wood from the forest. This is



a job that is typically done by males. If people do not own cattle themselves, they can often borrow cattle from other people. Khwezi (2017) explains:

‘I get the cattle due to the culture of helping each other. Because I help other people and then they also help me. And I like to contribute with Fezeka, and I’m related and they borrow me cattle there’

When the weather is ‘bad’ and it is cold or raining outside, people use other ways of cooking. When it is raining, it is hard to get a fire going outside, so in some houses a fire is made inside. When making a fire inside, there is always a lot of smoke inside the house, since there is no chimney or other way to get rid of the smoke. People in the village are used to this smoke and it does not bother them.

Everyone in the village has an alternative to cooking on fire, and most people use an alternative type of heat when they are not able to cook outside. Some people have a gas stove, where others use paraffin. These ways of cooking are more expensive, since paraffin or gas will have to be bought in town or at a local shop. It can also happen during the course of the month that people run out of gas and lack the money to buy more gas, so they rely only on wood as heat source. Many people in the village are also a bit scared of using gas as a source of heat for cooking. A few people see cooking on the gas stove as their preferred way of cooking, since this is fast and easy. However, when cooking certain types of food that take multiple hours to cook, everyone cooks on the fire because this is seen as a waste of gas. An example of this food is umngqusho (samp), this food needs to cook for 2 to 3 hours, so it is always cooked over a fire.

#### *Gender in cooking*

In Number Five, gender roles are still very relevant. Females are often the ones to perform food-related activities such as getting food and preparing this food. As one of the participants states:

‘Usually in rural areas, the males are outside most of the day with the cattle, when they come inside they are hungry and their only job is to eat the food. The women however, stay inside and do inside work, which includes cooking (Gcobani, 2017)’

It is clear from the interviews and observations that cooking is seen as a feminine task. If there is no female at home, the male will either eat leftovers or cook himself a ‘simple meal’. Many men don’t know how to cook food, they wait for their wife or daughter to come home and prepare food. While they are waiting, they sometimes start getting a few things ready, for example getting a fire going and bringing water to a boil for when she gets there. Then when the female comes home, the meal is prepared. A few younger males do know how to cook and occasionally help with the cooking or even cook a meal while the female is absent or not feeling well.

In households where multiple generations live together, it is often the younger adult female that has to do the cooking. The children do not have to cook when they go to school and elderly people do not have to cook if they do not want to. As one of the participants explains:

‘The daughters in law have to cook, one person cooks in the morning and then the other one cooks for supper. The older lady does not cook, she just sits and waits for the food to be

ready. Sometimes she feels like cooking so she does it, but she never has to, she is not forced like we are (Lulama, 2017)'

When asked how she feels about this, she does not complain, she simply states 'it is our culture'. However, later in the interview she does tell us that when she gets older, she will not keep doing it this way, she will still cook herself and not force her daughters in law.

Some people let their children cook during the weekends. In this way, they can learn how to cook under supervision. They are not told exactly how to cook, they have to look at how their elders cook and try to repeat this. People in Number Five cook on feeling, they don't have exact measurements for the amount of water and salt they need to put in, they just estimate. The cooking time of foods can also differ depending on the strength of the fire, people who are cooking 'just know' when the food is ready by stirring it and looking at it. When children first learn cooking, this can cause some food to be wasted, due to mistakes in estimating amounts or burning foods.

A few people in the village have a domestic worker. This is always a lady, usually originated from Lesotho, who is living together with the people she works for. When people have a domestic worker, she is always the one to do the cooking, though sometimes household members help her with this. When the domestic worker needs to go somewhere during the day, it is common that she will cook beforehand, so there is cooked food (often steam bread) available for the household.

#### *Materials*

Two types of pots are used in Number Five, one type for cooking on the fire and another for cooking on the gas or paraffin stove. These pots are made out of different materials, the pots for cooking on the fire are made from cast-iron and have a stand underneath them, so they can be put over the fire. The pots used inside on the gas or paraffin are mostly aluminum pots. Before anything is used for cooking or serving food, this is first cleaned. People always clean pots, cutlery, plates and other dishes before and after use. These materials are usually stored on open shelves, which could be an explanation for the cleaning.

Cutting and peeling is usually done with a knife, most people in Number Five do not own peelers, but they are familiar with the tool. A few people cut their vegetables with the use of a tin can. Cebisa (2017) told us she used to cut with a knife, but had recently learned this new trick. If you have a can, you can cut off the top part and it will become very sharp. It is a fast way of cutting vegetables like spinach, onion and cabbage, because it cuts with four sides at once.

#### *Special occasions*

On special occasions where many people are expected, big amounts of food need to be cooked. These occasions include funerals, weddings, celebrations, rituals and openings. When there is a special occasion, there needs to be meat, so usually one or more animals will be slaughtered. The slaughtering of the animals is typically a job for the males to do, the only animal women are allowed to slaughter is a chicken. The animals are slaughtered the day before this occasion will be taking place. Many men from the village will go to this place and help with the process. After they have done the hard work of slaughtering, the insides are cooked and eaten by everyone that helped. On this day, the insides will mostly be finished and the other parts of the meat are kept for the

celebration. This meat will mostly be prepared by the males on what they call a 'braai', which is the African word for barbecue. Some parts of the meat are also cooked in a pot with oil. Figure 13 shows how the meat is hanged after it has been cleaned and the insides are taken out. It will stay there until the next day, when the other parts of the sheep will be consumed.



Figure 13 Hanging meat

Females also start preparing the food the day before the celebration, they prepare foods such as inqodi and steam bread and already make a start with peeling vegetables for the next day. Newlyweds always have to help preparing the food at other people's celebrations, they cannot go and just enjoy the celebration. Cebisa (2017) explained:

'When I attend celebrations, I don't just attend because I'm still a newlywed. I must attend to help because of the stage I am still in in this womanhood. I have to wait until my mother in law tells me I don't have to help anymore. I have been married for 6 years now'

The day of the celebration, people start early in the morning with cooking the food again. Preparing food for a celebration can take up to 6 hours. A lot of food needs to be cooked, and most people do not have enough tools to cook everything at the same time. The cooking place only has a limited amount of space, so not all the big pots fit in there at the same time.

#### 4.4 Setting to eat

In Number Five, people who live together generally eat together. Whoever is at home at the time a meal is ready, will eat together. Most of the time, this means that the household members eat together, but when visitors are present, they will stay and eat with the household.

There are different reasons why people are sometimes not eating together. Children do not always eat together with the rest of the household, because they have to go to school. When they are in school, they get food there, so they don't go home to eat. Most children only eat supper at home on schooldays, but during the weekend they eat more meals together. Some households are very busy and people are not at home all the time, so they are not able to eat together. If people are not at home during mealtime they can eat different food elsewhere or eat leftovers later. Some people also skip a meal altogether and eat bigger portions when eating the other meals. In general can be seen that the people who are present when a meal is ready, will eat this meal together.

In Number Five, it is part of the culture to share food with other people. If one is about to dish food or already eating a meal and a visitor comes in, it is expected of the host to serve this person some food. If it is not during mealtime that a visitor comes in, it is expected that they will still offer the visitor some food or drinks. People in the village describe 'I cannot eat alone when I know others are starving'. Thembeke (2017) explains this very clearly:

'It's good for my social interaction, because someone comes to my house hungry and I give them something to eat. When I'm cooking and about to dish up my food, we will all eat together, even if he doesn't belong in my household'

Meals are usually eaten inside the house, this can either be in the kitchen or the rondavel, but very few people eat their food outside. Eating a meal is always a moment where people sit down and take some time together to enjoy their food and have a conversation. People from Number Five like to enjoy food and talk during the meal, especially when the food is tasty, they take time to eat and have a good time together. Lulama and Nofoto (2017) explain:

'When someone comes, you give them food and then you can have a nice conversation over that, while eating and having a nice conversation (Lulama, 2017)'

'It moves and touches my heart to have dinner at the same time as my children and my grandchildren. It makes me feel happy inside (Nofoto, 2017)'

Thandiwe (2017) adds to this that food is more enjoyable when eaten together with other people:

'You have got more appetite when you're eating with other people, you enjoy food more when you are eating in the company of other people. But when you are alone you eat very little, you eat less when you are alone, when there are other people you enjoy food more'

When people start eating, it is usually the person who has done the cooking who dishes the food on plates and serves this to the people who are present. Everyone gets his own dish to eat from, except for children, who in some cases are told by their parents to share a dish. When handing out the plates of food, the men are given their food first before giving the women. As soon as the first person gets his plate, he starts eating, he does not wait for other people to start eating together. When someone has finished eating, he gives his plate back to the person who has been cooking, so it can be cleaned. This means that the person who has been cooking hardly has time to sit down and eat herself when there are many people eating together. She is then often eating quickly in the kitchen during the short moments she has in between serving and cleaning.

The kind of foods that are eaten in Number Five, are all foods that can be eaten with only the use of a spoon or your hand. Most people in the village have not been taught how to eat with a fork and knife, and never use these types of cutlery. The most common thing is to eat all foods with a spoon, but some people prefer to eat using their hands, and this is accepted by other people as well.

#### *Special occasions*

During special occasions, there are many different types of food which are shared with all the people who are attending. Under normal circumstances, men and women sit together, but during celebrations, men and women are often separated. This is part of the cultural setting for celebrations, but the second reason is because a lot of alcohol is consumed during these celebrations. Uuka (2017) explains:

‘Old men and old women may sit together, but the younger men, the younger men have to sit alone. We separate them, sometimes when they get drunk and eat a lot of food... All get drunk, but the older ones have no problem. But they younger ones they get drunk and they might be fighting. That’s why’

## 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at describing foodways in a rural South African village from the procurement of food to the consumption. In this village, different types of food are eaten on different occasions and many factors influence the food choice. Examples of this are money, culture, health or traditions. Maize is the staple food that is used in many households for different meals and also seems to have cultural importance. Meat is eaten occasionally and is perceived as a special food by many people, since most people cannot afford eating meat every day. Consumption of meat happens mainly on weekends and special occasions. At special occasions, it is essential for meat to be present, together with traditional foods, beer, brandy and non-alcoholic drinks. The taste of food is valued by most, and different strategies are used to ensure tasty food, like cooking certain types of food or adding flavor enhancers. Vegetables are seen as a healthy type of food, especially if these come from their own land. Many people believe food that comes from the soil is healthier and better than food coming from the shops. However, most food has been bought from the supermarkets in town. Taxi busses depart to nearby towns on a daily basis and the majority of people take a taxi once a month to go to town and buy food in bulks. In the local shops, products are more expensive, but buying at a local shop saves the costs of taking a taxi to town. This is why many people go to town once a month for the main share of their food and buy additional things throughout the month at the local shops. Part of the food people consume comes from the residents’ own gardens and fields. Most people have a small homestead garden where they produce vegetables, and some people also own a field where they can grow maize and possibly intercrop this with pumpkins and beans. Food is often shared with other people, whenever someone is in need, they will receive food from others, because this is the normal cultural practice. Whoever is in the house when a meal is being eaten, will eat together. This means most of the time that household members eat together, but when visitors are present, they will stay and eat with the household. Cooking outside on a fire is the preferred way of cooking, it is cheapest and people are used to it. However, sometimes the weather is bad and people prefer to cook inside. Some people have a fireplace inside their house, but also paraffin and gas are used as a source of heat.

## 5 Changing foodways

In this chapter, food-related changes over time will be discussed. Many people have stories to tell about the past, how things are different now and why they think this happened. They also have different opinions about these changing foodways that will be discussed. Not only might the types of food have changed, but also the way foods are eaten and procured and the social and cultural practices around food. For this chapter, most of the collected data comes from the interviews and part from the observations, during which participants told stories to the researchers. Next to the information from the participants, the researchers gathered information about changes from elderly people, during two visits to the elderly project. This chapter will end with thoughts people in the village have about the future. Do they think food and eating will change more in the future and how do they feel about this?

### 5.1 Types of food

When asking people about the food types they used to eat and the types of food they are eating now, a shift is clearly visible. New food products have been introduced and people are consuming less maize products nowadays, though maize is still the main staple food in Number Five. People describe they were eating more 'natural foods', food that comes from the soil instead of from a bag, during the olden days. Nofoto (2017):

'There is difference now. In the olden days, we used to eat bread made out of maize. Now, we are eating bread made out of flour and we are eating vetkoeks that were not there before. And there is rice nowadays. There was no rice before. We were only eating inkobe before. They are no more eating this, but if one person misses them, longs for them she can do them but normally they are not being eaten anymore'

Inkobe is when maize is cooked in a pot. It is similar to samp, but with samp the covers are taken off from the kernels before cooking. When making inkobe, mealies are put into the water as they are and cooked for a couple of hours. Inkobe is not a soft type of food, but quite firm, which is for some elderly people the reason they cannot eat it anymore. Many older people do not have all their teeth left, and the ones they still have are not very strong anymore, which makes it hard for them to chew certain foods. Another reason inkobe is hardly eaten anymore, is that most people do not like it, so they prefer to eat other types of food.

Another food that is hardly eaten anymore is maize bread. People used to make their own bread using maize, but nowadays most people only use flour and do not use maize anymore. Sisipho (2017):

'When I was a child growing up, it was a habit to always make at home.. what is this bread.. maize bread! It was common to cook it every day at home. But no more in our days now'

People in Number Five have told us that the maize bread is less tasty and has a rough structure, so people prefer the regular steam bread. Nofoto is one of the only people in the village who occasionally bakes the maize bread and eats this. Fezeka (2017) told us, that other people do not have the strength for it, which is the reason they do not eat it anymore:

'It is not as originally as it was before. It is only Nofoto who still has the power to make it'

Nofoto showed and explained the process of making this bread. To start making the bread, she used fresh maize, ground this, mixed it with warm water, ground it again and then let it dry. This product made from ground maize is called intlama. She mixed the intlama with salt, yeast, sugar, a bit of flour and added lukewarm water to it. She told us that she added the flour to make the bread smoother so we would like it more, but you do not need to add it. After mixing the ingredients, the process of making the bread is the same as the process of making steam bread. When the bread was finished, it looked similar to steam bread, but the color is more yellow compared to regular steam bread. The bread had a coarser and rough structure and was harder to chew. Figure 14 include two pictures to show the regular steam bread, made with flour, on the left and the maize bread on the right, in the purple bowl.



The biggest change in types of food is that all the food products people used to eat were related to maize, and nowadays new food products have been introduced. This causes more variety in the diet of people. Eshle (2017):

‘There is a difference between the food we eat now and the food of before. Before we were eating inkobe or samp every day. There was no fruit in between, there was no changing of types of food. We just ate the same food every day. Now we are changing food, if we eat this thing today, tomorrow we eat another one’

New food products for people in Number Five are products like rice, flour, soup, beefstock, spices, oil, tinned fish and vegetables like cabbage and spinach. Anathi (2017):

‘In the olden days, everything we were eating was maize related. We grinded maize and make maize bread and make inqodi and make papa. That papa that we are going to make and mix with milk to make umvubo. That is all, our food was based on that. Today, there is rice and flour, brown bread flour, those are new stuff. These things like soup are new to me. And this tinned fish are also new to me. All those things are new and I forget them, I don’t recall. There is a lot of new things. There is a lot of things that I don’t know that are new’



Older people agree on the fact that they did not grow vegetables in gardens a long time ago. There were no vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, onions and spinach. There were only the wild herbs or vegetables that people dug out in the mountains. Nobody planted vegetables in those days, so the only source of vegetables were the indigenous vegetables that grow around the village. Most of these indigenous vegetables are growing like weeds, which people put to use by consuming them as vegetables. Nowadays, those indigenous vegetables are hardly ever consumed anymore, most people in the village just remember them from their youth. A few people still consume them on a regular basis, it is then usually mixed together with spinach, but this does not happen frequently.

## 5.2 Agriculture

In general, all people agree that the role of agriculture nowadays is less than it used to be. People buy more food at the shops, both in town as well as the local shops. Where food that was grown by people themselves used to be the main source of food, now shops have taken over that role. Nowadays, the majority of food products are bought from shops instead of grown on the fields. The reasons for these changes are not entirely clear, since people have different ideas about why the changes happened.

Participants explain that when they were growing up, the foods they ate came from the soil and not from the shop. Everyone used to plant and plough maize. Once this was harvested, it had to be stored to keep for the whole year and could be eaten in different ways. Khwezi (2017):

‘You see, during the olden days, for the first and foremost people who were ploughing, you can see the fields are sleeping now, they are not used. During those moments, maize was in abundance. Everything was plenty back then, because we were planting things’

During that time, people were not able to buy mealie meal, but grew their own maize, they had to grind the maize by hand. This is a process that takes a long time, regarding the amount of maize people use and takes strength and skills. When grinding the mealies on a rock, they never become as fine as the mealie meal that is bought at the stores. Gcobani (2017):

‘In the olden days, you plough a lot of food, then after you put it in the house, you take that amount, you grind it, take that amount, your tools, even, you know that maize you have ploughed. You give it to chicken, grind it and give it to pigs, they grow. You didn’t go and buy, no, you just keep that maize, and make different things’

When asked what people in Number Five see as the reasons for these changes, two main things come up: money and laziness. Many people receive some kind of social grant, which has increased the accessibility of money. Gcobani (2017):

‘But now money brought so many changes that we became lazy, we don’t even, we’re not interested to plough, because of this money, so many changes to us, to our life. I think the money bends the pocket. Makes somebody to go to town. If the money is not there, makes it easier to go and plough’

The foods that used to be eaten are not desirable anymore and since people now have the opportunity to buy their food, this is done frequently. People in Number Five prefer to go to the

shops and buy food instead of growing their own food. Due to the different types of food that are eaten now, people are also not able to grow all these products themselves. Some of the foods people enjoy can only be bought at the shops, for example beef stock and rice. According to some participants, the money and ability to buy food from shops has made people lazy. Uuka (2017):

‘They go to shop and buy, keep it in the fridge. It has made people lazy. Because usually they ploughed, everything was done by hand, now they buy from shops’

Lulama (2017) feels like it is mainly the youth that does not want to plough and grind anymore, and older people just don’t have the power to do it:

‘Our children don’t want to work hard as we were used before, they don’t want to grind umgrayo, they don’t want to grind for samp or mealie meal. So I am also old, I don’t have enough power to do that. But I like it, so sometimes I do’

Other people feel like it is not just laziness or a lack of power, but also a lack of available materials, Thandiwe (2017):

‘I’d like to think, we ploughed our field with ‘keckle’, we don’t have them these days now. We made a hole, you know, and since these are gone, I don’t know how, we don’t use our land now anymore. We just have a little bit, a small patch like this as you see. And most of things now are. Some of the people, really, I think they don’t have material to do things in their own, that makes people stranded’

### *Livestock*

Next to planting and ploughing, people also mention that the use of their own livestock was a lot more during the olden days. An example of this is given by Babalwa (2017):

‘There was no oil, we slaughtered and used fat from the pigs. If there was no fat from the pig, you just add salt to the food and that’s all’

When people wanted to get milk back then, they would milk their cow and drink this milk. They would either drink it right away or put it in an empty pumpkin shell or a clay pot for a certain period of time, until it would ferment and become amasi. Nowadays, people hardly milk their animals anymore, but they buy milk and amasi from the shop. During the period the researchers were present, many animals were a bit on the skinny side, because there had been a period of drought, which resulted in less available grass. One of the participants explained he did not want to milk his cows now, because he wanted them to use their energy to get stronger first.

If people wanted to eat meat in the olden days, they would have to slaughter their own livestock, but now they can go to the store and buy meat. Before people bought meat from the stores, an animal would be slaughtered and the meat would often be shared with many people, since you get a big amount of meat when you slaughter an animal. People did not preserve this meat, but ate all of it before it would spoil, which meant sharing the meat. Nowadays, you can buy small portions of meat from the shop so you can get the exact amount that you need for your household.

### 5.3 Cooking

The way people cook their food has also undergone changes over time. In the olden days, all the cooking used to be done on a wood fire, since there were no other types of heating available yet. The people from the elderly project explained:

‘The cooking style has also changed, cooking used to be done only outside, but now people can also use paraffin or gas to cook’

Many participants also agree on the fact that people do not put as much time and effort into cooking as they used to. People are eating more ‘readymade’ foods and foods that do not have a very long cooking time. Samp is eaten less, because this takes 2 or 3 hours to cook, and bread from the store is eaten more often, because this does not need preparation time. Gcobani (2017):

‘People don’t get enough time to cook, they’re very busy. Today’s people are very busy. So they eat, what’s that, already cooked, instead of cooking’

There are also new materials that make cooking easier and save time. An example of this is a ‘vegetable peeler’. In Number Five, not many people own these yet and many people are using knives to peel their vegetables, but they know them and are increasingly buying them. It is an easy and fast way to peel potatoes and carrots that saves time and effort. Younger people seem to be a bit more open towards these new materials, where older people are sometimes a bit scared of new materials.

The people from the elderly project add to these changes that they used to share food in one dish at certain rituals or traditional gatherings. However, nowadays this is seen as unhealthy, it is less hygienic and people are scared to get sick. The elderly people feel like this is a pity, since eating from the same dish teaches people to share food and has a deeper meaning. People who have learned to eat together from one bowl will be less selfish and more willing to share food.

### 5.4 Feelings related to change

Only a few people in Number Five see the changes in foodways as positive (Thandiwe, Esihle, Sisipho, 2017). Esihle (2017) perceives the new products as very positive:

‘They are good because they bring balance to our diet because the people of olden days were only eating the same types of food, not reflecting any balance in our diet’

Sisipho (2017) describes that she has an increased appetite since she is eating more different food products that she likes better and is able to choose her own foodstuff. She can now eat foods that she finds tastier, which makes her want to eat more:

‘I think that... I think that has an effect because, now I have the privilege to choose what to eat and what to cook. Back then I did not have a choice, I was just given maize bread and inqodi to eat. That was then, I did not have an option, I did not enjoy my food’

However, most people in Number Five have a negative view about the changes in food products and food patterns. Especially the type of foods and the way of procuring food is being criticized. Many

people in Number Five feel like the food nowadays causes diseases and makes people feel sick. Thembeke (2017):

‘Ahh they make us sick. They make us sick, we are very lazy because we are eating them, they make us feel tired. They make us sick. Before, everyone was active and very fresh eating that kind of food. At the age of 66, people of that age were very fresh and very active, they could go and collect woods from the forest and from the mountain. But now, we’re all sick’

Most participants agree that people used to be healthy in the olden days when they were using natural food. But the food from the shops is perceived as the basic cause for many diseases. Khwezi (2017), who is one of the younger participants, describes that the people of generations before him were stronger, because they were eating from the ground instead of food from the shops. The foods from the shops are perceived as less healthy, including vegetables and meat bought at the shop. People feel like the commercially bred chickens that you can buy in the shops is of lesser quality than the chickens living in the village. The chicken bought in the store is perceived as not strong enough, people feel like chickens should not be able to grow big enough for consumption in a few months, it should take at least a year. They feel like the chemicals injected in the chickens are one of the causes for diseases in the village.

Next to the cause of many diseases, food from the shops is seen as the cause of poverty. Money is one of the reasons for the changes, but some people also feel trapped because now they need the money to be able to get food. Babalwa (2017):

‘Shops brought the changes, but they take away all the money we have. We could save money in the olden days but now we cannot save money. They keep us bankrupt all the time. They bring food changes but keep us poor. It is not only that people are lazy, but the means by which they have to plough also requires money’

Many people feel like all these changes are not a good thing and they would like to go back to the way it used to be. Fezeka (2017):

‘We’ll go back to the normal... to the original food that we used to eat long, long before. Because this new foodstuff makes us sick’

## 5.5 Thoughts about the future

Next to all the changes that already happened, the researchers were also interested in how people perceive the future. Do people in Number Five think more changes are going to happen, what will those changes be and what will be the consequences? Participants are also asked how they think the instalment of electricity will influence future of food in Number Five. This electricity instalment is likely to happen in the near future, since the structures for electricity were almost finished when the researchers left the village.

### *Electricity*

People in Number Five expect the instalment of electricity to have different outcomes on cooking food and the consumption of food. Some people are already quite sure about things they would like to buy once they have a connection to an electricity supply and which things they don’t need. One

person immediately stated she will still be cooking on wood, this is the way she has grown up and she prefers to keep cooking this way. Others mention that they will use different ways of cooking. Cooking might go a lot faster if people are able to buy microwaves to heat up food. The opinions about electric stoves differ. According to Sisipho (2017), it will be cheaper to cook on electricity than cooking on gas, and Cebisa (2017) said she will throw away the paraffin stove as soon as she has an electric stove. However, not everyone agrees that it is going to be a better and cheaper way of cooking, Babalwa (2017):

‘I don’t know if I will change, maybe it will change because it always depends on money. Some people will be able to buy those electric stoves, others can’t afford to buy them. So everything still depends on the finance’

The thing that is expected to bring the biggest changes to foodways after the instalment of electricity, is the ability to buy a refrigerator. Being able to get a refrigerator means that food will not spoil as easily and people can keep food fresh for a longer time. Some people are looking forward to these changes, so they can eat more animal products. Fezeka (2017):

‘If I have a fridge, every two days I’ll eat meat, and have a lot of meat in my fridge. Now I only eat meat on Sundays’

Many people plan on consuming more meat once they have a refrigerator, because they can buy bigger amounts and keep them safely for a longer period of time. Bongani (2017) explained about buying things in bulk or when they are on special:

‘There will be a change, because sometimes we come across a meat on special in town, which we could buy in bulks if we have a fridge to store it in. I think there will be a change, people will buy a lot of things and store them in their fridges. And that will change the way they’re eating’

Not everyone is happy about these changes though, some people feel like it will damage the local food culture to be able to store foods for a longer time. Gcobani (2017):

‘Also with ceremonies, when people slaughter a cow, when people have a fridge, they’ll put part of the cow in the fridge so there won’t be enough food for everybody. Because of this fridge. But in the absence of the fridge, we slaughter, and we give the meat, all of it to people. And people enjoy, but if you’re having a fridge, no, you don’t give it, you keep it’

### *Money*

Thoughts about the future that are not related to the use of electricity are mostly related to money. Daluxolo (2017) thinks that in the future, her children will have more money available for food and will be able to buy different types of food:

‘Kids are going to have a new type of style of eating. More food from the shops even, more – different food products, because they will work and have money’

Other people feel like everything is only going to become more expensive, and they should go back to the ‘old ways’ of doing things. Eshle (2017):

‘Actually our culture was to live agriculturally. It is a new thing that we are living this lifestyle. This lifestyle goes back from the 70s, 80s, but now people have an interest to go back again. People are becoming to realize that it is expensive to depend, buying, it is cheaper planting and harvesting your own food’

Babalwa (2017) is also scared that everything will be more expensive in the future and she thinks going back to ploughing the fields will be a solution for this:

‘There is already change now, but the change will be more in the future. Prices are going to be even higher in the future, and it will be harder for people to shop. But if we could go back to our olden ways of ploughing the fields, we cannot struggle, we would not struggle’

## 5.6 Conclusion

In Number Five, a shift in consumption patterns is clearly visible. New food products have been introduced, people rely more on supermarkets and other shops to procure food and less staple foods are consumed. People used to eat mostly maize products but diets nowadays are more varied and certain food products are no longer consumed. Maize is still the type of food that is eaten most in Number Five, but a decline is visible.

The role of agriculture has also been declining. Most of the food is bought in shops, both from supermarkets in town as well as from local shops. The main way of procuring food used to be by growing it, but now shops have taken over this role as main source of food. Reasons for this decline in Number Five are multiple. Firstly, many people receive some kind of social grant nowadays, which makes money more available in the village. With this money, people are able to purchase more food products. People are now less reliant on agriculture, and rely more on remittances and other types of income. A second reason for the decline in agricultural activities mentioned by people in Number Five, is laziness. People are less eager to perform agricultural activities, because it takes more time and skills.

However, even though deagrarianization is visible, the biggest share of people still has a garden or a field where they produce some food for household uses. Growing vegetables from their own gardens is for many people the main way of acquiring vegetables for consumption. It saves money to be able to produce your own food and this food is seen as more healthy and fresh than foods from the shops. In this, the embodiment of food comes up again. Even though things are changing, people still prefer the food they have grown themselves, because they feel like this food is better than the food from stores.

The style of cooking in the olden days differed slightly from the current ways of cooking. Everyone used to cook on a wood fire, because this was the only accessible type of fuel during that time. Nowadays, cooking on a wood fire is still the preferred way of cooking in Number Five, but it is not the only way anymore. Other ways of cooking, on gas or paraffin, are used as well but people are still less eager to cook in these new ways. Certain foods that take long preparation times are consumed less, since cooking these takes up a lot of time as well as a lot of fuel. Cooking them on gas or paraffin is too expensive, and people also prefer to engage in other activities these days instead of spending all their time cooking.

### *Feelings related to changes*

Interestingly, most people in Number Five have a negative view about the changes in foodways. The types of food and ways of procurement are being criticized by themselves. According to most people in Number Five, the food that is eaten nowadays causes diseases and makes people sick. People feel like they used to be healthier in the olden days, when they were eating natural food that came from the soil. Now everyone is becoming sick because of the changes in foodways. Some people mention they would like to go back to the way it was, but they do not see the possibilities to do this. They feel trapped in the current foodways.

Another reason people perceive the changes negatively is because of money issues. When people think back about the olden days, they feel like there were never problems with money and nobody used to be poor. Money is seen as the reason for changes, but money is also keeping people poor. Some people view money and shops as the cause of poverty, when they used to plough and plant, they felt like there was always plenty, but now they have to rely on money.

### *Electricity*

Since the installment of electricity is supposed to happen shortly after the research is finished, many people already have plans about what they are going to change once they are able to be installed to the network. This made it interesting to get a first look about ideas regarding these changes.

The main thing that people intend to purchase is a refrigerator. Possessing a refrigerator can bring major changes to foodways in Number Five. Most people intend to eat more meat because they can store portions in the refrigerator, so they do not have to eat it all at once. This might damage the food culture in Number Five and therefore the embodied food experience is likely to change with it. The current practice is that when an animal is being slaughtered, people are invited over to share this meat because it will spoil in a short period of time. However, once people own a refrigerator, they are less likely to share all the meat, since they can cut it into portions and prolong the shelf-life by putting it in the refrigerator. Some people are currently only thinking about the positive side of this, where they can eat more meat, whereas others are scared what will happen to the social practices around food.



## 6 Food security

In this chapter, the embodied food security situation of Number Five will be described. When do people in this village feel they are food secured, which types of food do they need for that and what is the role of agriculture and seasonality of products in this? Next to that will be looked at food that is necessary for certain (social) practices and what happens if these food product are not available. How do the people in Number Five cope when they are not feeling food secure?

### 6.1 Feeling of security

This thesis does not go into the facts to see whether people in Number Five are food secure, but looks at perceived food security. Participants are asked what food security means to them and whether they feel food secure or not.

#### *Amount of food*

When the first question about food security was asked: 'when do you feel food secure?', answers differed majorly. The question was interpreted in different ways and some people asked for clarification of the question. A few people did give a direct answer to this question, and this answer was often about the amount of food they need to feel secured. For example, Thembeke (2017) gave the following answer to this question:

'If I have bought groceries of 1400 I know I'm food secured for six people for one month. Sometimes I also have visitors and then I go and buy special food. Or maybe if there is something short, if I happen to be in town, then I buy it'

This is a family that has a budget that is bigger than most in Number Five, and when they need a certain food they go and buy it. When they run out of something, they can afford to go to town or the local shop and buy whatever they need. They are also able to eat meat more often than most others because they are able to pay for it and also have many chickens they can slaughter to eat. Other people also mention that to be food secured, they go to town to buy food in bulk and when it is finished they will buy more. However, sometimes people do not have enough money for this and that makes them feel insecure about food. Zintle (2017):

'Under normal circumstances, I buy 25 kg of mealie meal. But sometimes I don't have enough money so I buy 12,5. And then, that is never enough for the whole month, before the month is over I feel food insecure. And I don't have enough money, because if I have enough money I would have already bought the 25 kg'

#### *Type of food*

Many participants mentioned they found it hard to answer the question 'when do you feel food secure'. They know the term 'food security' but find it hard to apply this to their own situation. The question asked after when they feel food secure is what kind of food products they need to feel food secure, to get the participants to think about what it means to them. Nofoto (2017) answered here that she feels food secure as long as she has food available that she can eat, it does not matter to her to be able to get certain foods or not. If she cannot eat her favorite food (umvubo), this does not make her feel insecure for food, as long as she still has other foods to eat and can fill her stomach

with something. Uuka (2017) agrees with her that certain types of food are not necessary, as long as you have food. He states:

‘It is more important to have food than to have very tasty food’

He also says he feels food secure and never has to worry that he won’t have enough food. Anathi (2017) first mentions that it does not matter to her what kind of food she eats, as long as she has something to fill up her stomach, but later suggests that she needs ‘basic things’ in her home to feel food secure. To her, these basic things are mealie meal, flour, cabbage, potatoes and sugar. Other participants all have certain types of food that are necessary to them to feel food secure. These food products are similar between different people, but small differences can be seen. The products needed to feel food secure mentioned by most people are mealie meal, rice, flour, sugar, oil and some vegetables. However, some people also feel the need to have things like salt, tea, beef stock, eggs, amasi, soup and tea to feel food secured. Bongani (2017) explained:

‘Flour, rice, samp, mealie meal, fish oil, cabbage, potato, soup, fish, sugar, salt. If I have all those things I feel like I’m food secured. It is important to have a variety, because I cannot be able to always cook pap every day, I have to change sometimes’

It is notable that mealie meal is usually the food product that is mentioned first. Mealie meal is the food product that is most consumed in Number Five and gives a feeling of satiation after consumption. Most people do not feel the need for processed foods to feel food secured. Babalwa (2017):

‘For me to feel secure I have mealie meal, rice, flour, potatoes, fish oil, beefs tock, amasi. I think I’m food secure without processed food like tinned stuff. I don’t need tinned stuff’

Some people also mention that in order to feel food secure, they want to be able to eat different foods on the weekend, but this was not for everyone. Only one participant mentioned that she needed to have meat to feel food secured, others still felt secured for food without the presence of meat in their regular diet. Eshle (2017) explained that meat is important in special occasions, but not on daily basis:

‘It is important for meat to be there on special occasions. But as for me, I don’t care if I have it or if I don’t’

This is in line with the results from chapter 4, where the importance of meat during celebrations and rituals is explained. When performing certain rituals, some kind of animal needs to be slaughtered, otherwise the ritual cannot be performed. This means that people sometimes need to save money for a long period of time to be able to perform a ritual or other type of celebration, or they have to delay the ritual or the celebration they would like to have in order to be able to serve the right types of food.

### Agriculture

When asked about the types of food people in Number Five need to feel secured, many people did not mention vegetables at first. However, with further questioning it often came up that many

people do need vegetables to feel secured, but forgot to mention them because they grow in the garden and do not need to be bought. Fezeka (2017) said when she was asked about vegetables:

‘I need vegetables also, but it is always present with my garden’

Agriculture helps many people in Number Five to feel more food secure. They can grow part of the food they consume, which makes them feel more comfortable. Khwezi (2017):

‘My garden makes me very comfortable and feel more food secure’

He also says he can use food from his garden as a substitute if he does not have money to buy certain foods. For many other people, having a garden with vegetables also helps them to feel more secured for food. Cebisa (2017) mentions that getting vegetables from the garden helps her to save money.

‘I save money sometimes over summer to buy food in winter. I always save, normally, but sometimes I don’t save. Because even in winter I run short of food even though I think I have saved but I still run short of food’

This suggests there are differences in the access, availability and use of food types in different seasons. People in Number Five only know two seasons: summer and winter. Interestingly, when people are asked whether there is a difference in food security between the seasons, some people mention to be more secured in winter, whereas others think there is more security in summer. There are a few reasons for these differences. Firstly, the maize is harvested before winter, which gives some people the feeling to be more secure in winter. Through the winter season, people with a field can rely on maize they have produced themselves. However, most vegetables are harvested in summer, so in summer there are many vegetables available from the gardens. This is the main cause for the differences in opinions about the seasons. Some people feel like they have plenty in summer with all the fresh vegetables, others feel that being able to consume their own maize makes them more secure. Daluxolo (2017):

‘In summer there is enough food, winter eeh, not enough food. Because in winter we cannot plant vegetables in the garden. So there is not enough food in the winter. There is enough in summer, because I can get food from the garden’

Zintle (2017) feels more secured in summer as well. According to her, the food is in abundance in summer but is scarce in winter:

‘In summer, there is food abundance, there is a lot of fruit in the gardens, lots of vegetables, and all things are thriving. In winter they are sparing (scarce), the soil produces nothing, the food from the ground is always scarce in winter, except spinach. So we have to buy the vegetables’

Uuka (2017) is one of the people who feels more food secured in winter, because he can eat the maize from his field during winter season:

‘In winter we have more food, because then we harvest maize. Seasons affect food security, because when it’s dry there’s no.. You don’t get, you get very little food or maybe you don’t get anything because if there’s not rain... But if there’s enough rain it’s fine’

Which brings us to the next reason for differences between seasons, drought. During summer months, there is more rain than in winter months. In winter, the rains are more scarce and many plants don’t thrive during the dry winter months. It is easier to plough in summer when the rain is falling and the ground is easier to work on. Another reason mentioned for the feeling of food security is the shelf-life of food products. In summer, it tends to become very hot and this makes food spoil more easily. Since there is no electricity in Number Five during the research period, the residents are not able to use a refrigerator to keep their food products in. Many houses also become quite warm when the outside temperatures start to rise, which means that many people do not have a cool place to store food products. Esihle (2017) explained how this affects him:

‘In winter, the food is not that much scarce. In summer the food is scarce because if you buy a lot it can spoil easily. In winter it does not spoil easily, so we can keep it for a long time. Food is more available in winter than it is in summer because of the temperatures’

The last reason that was mentioned during the research, was only mentioned by Gcobani (2017):

‘In summer, there is a lot of meat, because livestock, grass is green, so livestock is fed in summer. But food is not such, so much. But in winter a lot of livestock is... Not surviving’

The survival of livestock makes a difference in the availability of meat that can be consumed. The survival of livestock is also related to climatic conditions. In periods of long drought, more livestock does not survive because there is not enough water and food for the animals to survive. Some people feel badly affected by seasonal and climate influences. Most people cope with a lack of food from their own production by going to the shops and buying the food there. Cebisa (2017):

‘Winter affects us badly as far as food availability and access to food because the land cannot produce any vegetables and the beans that we had harvested runs out quickly. In winter you need a lot of money to cope’

## 6.2 Coping

Uuka (2017) explained what he does when there’s been a lot of drought:

‘When there’s enough, you’re able to plant, and the livestock has grass. When it’s dry, we can’t plant anything. We cope with this, by just buying from shops, and try to ask support from the government. They promised support, but sometimes it doesn’t come. You can see all this change, there is a lot of change. Sometimes they do help, sometimes they don’t. When they help, they send food, they give the people who are most affected’

People in Number Five can feel insecure for food because of bad harvests and not getting enough vegetables of their land, but also if they feel like they have a lack of money to buy food. They have different strategies to cope with these insecurities. Firstly, people adjust themselves by simply eating less food. This can either be by taking smaller portions during mealtime, or by having less meals a day. Daluxolo (2017):

‘When we are low on food, maybe we eat twice a day instead of three times. Instead of three times a day, I cook twice a day if the food is not enough. But we still eat the same foods’

Others eat different, cheaper, types of food. Zintle (2017):

‘I normally stick to eating what is at disposal. I endure the situation until the month end, because I don’t want to borrow money from outside’

When people eat different types of food and try to endure until the end of the month, they usually stop eating a shebu with their meal and rely on eating mostly the staple foods. People consume more rice and mealie meal when they have little money, because these are cheap foods that can be bought in bulks and have a long shelf life. These types of food are giving a feeling of satiation more easily than a shebu, like vegetables, would, for a smaller price.

But sometime people also run out of mealie meal and other staple foods. An option some people choose, is to buy food on credit in the local shops. These foods can be bought in moments of need without having to pay immediately. Once people receive money again, they go to the local shop to pay off their credit. Cebisa (2017):

‘If I get a shortage of mealie meal, maybe I can buy 5kg just to finish the month. If for instance, I run out of mealie meal, I borrow money from someone, then I go and buy that mealie meal to patch that gap’

Another way to cope is trying to get money elsewhere. Some people get so called ‘pitch jobs’, where they do some temporary work to earn money. However, it is more common that people contact their family in the city to ask if they can transfer money. Babalwa (2017):

‘When I see food is getting finished, I phone my brother in Cape Town and tell him that I’m running out of food. Then they send some money for me’

The last, but very important, way of coping is to ask help from other people. People socially secure themselves for food by sharing food with their friends and neighbors. Khwezi (2017):

‘I sometimes give food to other people, that makes me feel very happy and makes me feel very socially secured. Because I know, that whenever I am short of something, I have some social members whom I can rely on, in time of need. So it’s a bit of a social insurance’

All participants mention that if someone would ask them for food, they would give it to them. Whoever comes to ask for something usually gets it. When there is food prepared they will share the meal, but people also give mealie meal to other people who are in need of food. Lulama (2017):

‘When it gets difficult, I borrow food from other people, my sister or my neighbor. Sometimes people in the village who don’t have a lot of food go to other people and ask for food. We give them if we have, and they help me when I am in trouble, also with other things’

This reciprocity is not only targeted towards food, but also to helping each other with work. Sometimes a person gives food to another, and when they need help with a job that needs to be

done, the other comes to help there. People say they do not expect to get something back immediately, they call it 'just helping each other out' or as Khwezi (2017) describes it:

'I can ask people what I'm short of, sometimes mealie meal, I ask for it or sometimes I borrow it. So sometimes it's given to me for free, without being borrowed and sometimes they borrow me. And if my friends or neighbors or family come and they're short of something I give them. That's the lifestyle we're living, we borrow and give each other'

People in Number Five rely on each other in times of need. They know they can go to their neighbors, friends or families if they are short of something they need. People also give each other food spontaneously when they have noticed the other is lacking something. It is part of the culture to share and give each other.

### 6.3 Conclusion

Embodied food security has a different meaning for every person. Still, general characteristics can be seen when questioning people in Number Five about their perceptions and feelings towards food security. Logically, when people are asked about when they feel food secure, they first hold on to the classic definition and give answers such as 'when I never have to worry that I won't have enough food'. However, when further questions and probing questions are asked, different answers come up that also take other factors into account.

Firstly, there are certain types of food that always need to be present for people to feel secure. These food products are similar for most people in Number Five, which is unsurprising since people live in the same community and have similar food preferences. The socio-cultural environment plays an important role in food preferences, and it logically follows that these food preferences influence feelings of security. It is notable that mealie meal is usually the first food product people mention when asked about foods that need to be present in order to feel secured. Mealie meal is the most consumed food product in Number Five, has already been consumed for a long time and is part of the identity of people. They cannot imagine life without mealie meal. Next to the relevance it has in the social context, it makes people feel full for a long time after consumption. Other food products people need to feel secure that are often mentioned are rice, flour, sugar, oil and some vegetables. Some people add the more 'luxury' products to this like tea, beef stock, amasi, eggs, and soup. Meat is in general not important to feel secured for food, since people usually do not eat meat on daily basis. However, when there is a special occasion, this situation changes. On special occasions meat needs to be present, either to perform a ritual or to give a celebration, without meat it is not complete. This means that when people are not able to serve meat, the special occasion will be postponed until it is possible. This shows how the embodiment of food is important in food security situations. In the socio-cultural environment, the meat has to be there on a special occasion and if one is, for whatever reason, unable to get meat for this, he cannot continue with the celebration.

There are certain ways in which people secure themselves for food. Many people feel like buying food in bulks in town and making sure there is a lot of foodstuff in the house, makes them more secured. Once this food is finished, new foods will be bought if there is money available. However, when this money is not there, it makes them feel insecure, since they are unable to buy more food.

Using agriculture is another way to make people feel more secure of food. When people are able to grow part of the food they consume, it makes them feel more comfortable. They can see where the food comes from, how it is growing and put the work in it themselves. This means people have to rely less on money, since food from the garden can be used as a substitute for food from the shops. It gives a good feeling not having to rely on money and procuring your own food. However, during different seasons, there is also a different availability of home-grown foods. In summer, vegetables are often plenty, most people have vegetables growing that they can eat a few times per week and they feel very comfortable with. In winter, hardly any vegetables are still able to grow and be consumed. However, during winter the maize from the fields is available, because this has been harvested before winter starts. When people own a big field, they can rely on their own production of maize for the whole winter and even a few months after. When people have a smaller field, or when it has been a bad harvest, people have less maize and rely on the shops more often and earlier in the year. A bad harvest might happen due to drought, in which both vegetables as well as grass are growing less. This drought not only causes a bad harvest, but also makes the survival rates of livestock drop. If the animals do not have enough food and water, they will not survive, which is a big loss for people.

### *Coping*

When people experience a bad harvest or are for another reason unable to get enough vegetables of their land, they feel more insecure for food. For some people, this can be resolved by using the money they have to buy food, but not everyone has enough money to buy food. There are different coping strategies that people will use in those moments. Firstly, people can try to earn money by taking up pitch jobs. Secondly, People can go and buy small amounts of food at the local shop on credit, and pay this back later once they receive money. Thirdly, some people endure until the moment they will receive money again. This means they rely on eating staple foods without a shebu until the moment they get money again. The last way is using their social security net, in times of need people can rely on others to procure food. Sometimes this is given spontaneously, if someone sees another person being hungry. Many people feel bad when others are going without food, so they will support these people. It is part of the culture to give to those who are in need and it makes people feel good to help each other. It is the social norm to help each other and part of the socio-cultural environment. Next to being supported by people within the village, sometimes family members who live and work in towns or cities are asked for money. These family members often earn more income than people in rural areas and are able to transfer money and help out their family in times of need.



## 7. Embodied food security

In this thesis, we have looked at the relation between food security, food networks and the embodiment of food. We have investigated the foodways in a rural South African village and how these foodways have changed over time. The nutrition transition is visible in these changing foodways and also changes the embodied food experience. Using the approach of food embodiment tells the story of the people living in the area through food. In this final chapter I will combine the findings from the results and go back to the research questions. I will first answer the main- and sub-questions based on the findings from the fieldwork. After that, I will try to go a bit deeper into the subject and discuss the relation between food security and the embodiment of food. Some reflections on the research will be discussed before I end with the conclusion of this thesis and give a recommendation for further research.

### 7.1 Answering the research questions

I will start by answering the main research question and afterwards the sub-questions will be addressed. These questions are answered by using the results that have been collected during the period of fieldwork.

#### 7.1.1 Main question

My main research question has been:

***How did foodways in rural South African communities change over time?***

Foodways have changed on different aspects, including the types of food, procurement of food and the way of cooking. The nutrition transition is clearly visible in the changing foodways of this rural community, where there is a general shift in dietary patterns, away from the traditional maize-based foods and towards a higher consumption of saturated fat, sugar and refined foods. These foods are increasingly bought in supermarkets and other shops instead of grown by people themselves. The arrival of social grants has brought about more available money to the people in a rural village, which allows them to buy food at shops. Fields and homestead gardens are still being used, but in lesser quantity and with the aim of having an additional food source instead of as a main way of procuring food. The way of cooking differs slightly from the old way, since most people still prefer cooking on a wood fire, but other ways of cooking have been introduced and are used when weather conditions are bad. However, bigger differences are visible in the amount of time people invest in cooking. This is both due to expenses when cooking foods that require much cooking time and the fact that people nowadays do not want to invest as much time in cooking as they used to. When there is the possibility to cook less time-consuming foods, people are inclined to go for the quicker option.

#### *Consequences*

Foodways are dynamic and continually changing, but what are the consequences of these changes? Most people have negative feelings towards these changes. They feel like the food that is eaten nowadays is making them sick and weak. Since the introduction of shops and the possibility for people to buy their food in shops instead of growing all of the food themselves, there are more food products available. However, people inside a rural community view the shops as taking a lot of their money and a cause of poverty. They feel like the food coming straight from the soil is a lot healthier

and procuring food used to be easier and less stressful. Some people would like to go back to eating and procuring food the way they used to, but they do not know how and they feel trapped in the current system.

#### *A small look into the future*

Looking into the future is, obviously, impossible to do, but there are certain expectations about the near future that are interesting to include here. They show how people imagine the future and this is especially interesting because a big change will happen in the near future in the research area. This change is brought about by the installment of electricity. Once the electricity is up and running, many people intend to buy a refrigerator, which will allow them to store perishable food products for a longer period of time. Some people see this as very positive, because they will be able to buy cheap meat in bulks and store this in the refrigerator, which means they can eat it more frequently. Others are scared of what will happen and how this will change the social-cultural environment. The culture of sharing food in the village might be damaged, because people will not have to finish their food immediately, but can store it safely inside the refrigerator, where it will not spoil as easily.

#### *7.1.2 Sub-question 1*

Now I have answered the main question of this research, let's have a look at the two sub-questions I have formulated in this research. In chapter 4, the findings about the first sub-question are reported. This sub-question was formulated as follows with the aim to give an overview of the current situation in rural South Africa and get an idea about the cultural context in this research.

#### What are current foodways in rural South African communities?

Factors such as money, culture, health, taste or traditions are shaping current foodways. Different types of food are eaten on different occasions, but maize products are very prevalent in the food patterns, and are important in the local food culture. More than half of the meals consumed in Number Five use maize as an ingredient. Mealie meal can be eaten at breakfast, lunch and supper and in different shapes. If people are not consuming maize products, there is often rice or bread available in the case of lunch and supper, and some other type of porridge at breakfast. Meat products have cultural importance as well, mainly during special occasions in the village. Meat is of crucial importance during celebrations and rituals, where it is served together with vegetables, some kind of staple (often maize) and many alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Traditional beer, which is brewed with flour, maize and sorghum, is viewed as a food product and is often present on special occasions. It can also be brewed with the purpose of inviting people over to either ask for help or to have a meeting. The underlying reason of taste to decide for a certain food type is of different importance for people. For some, it is very important to eat food that is tasty and they will get food products that they think taste good, others are guided less by the taste of food but care more about other factors. When food is healthy, for some people the taste becomes less significant and they will still get, prepare and eat food that is less tasty if they believe this is good for their health.

Currently, the main share of food is bought at shops in towns or cities that are close to the rural villages. To buy food in town means having to take a taxi bus to get there, which costs a small amount of money. However, when buying food in bulks and bringing it home, it is eventually still cheaper than buying food at a local shop. Local shops have a smaller product range than shops in

town and are more expensive, but have the advantages of proximity and the ability to buy on credit. It is common to take a taxi bus to town once a month to buy the biggest part of groceries and buy at local shops once people run out of certain things. Next to using supermarkets and local shops as food sources, part of the food consumed is grown by people themselves. Many people have a homestead garden to grow vegetables and some people also own a field where they can grow maize, sometimes intercropped with pumpkins and beans. Growing food is seen as an additional source of food, there are no people who are self-supporting anymore and everyone relies on shops as the main food source. However, home-grown food is often perceived as better, tastier and healthier than foods bought from the shop. Occasionally, food is procured by getting it from others. This can be eating a meal at another person's place during a visit, as well as going over to ask for food when one is running short. It is the cultural norm to share food with others, so when someone comes to ask for food or happens to be present at mealtime, food is always given to this person.

The primary heat source for cooking is to cook over a wood fire. This way of cooking has the benefit that it is cheap, but the wood needs to be collected at the forest, which is labor and time intensive. Another disadvantage of cooking on a fire is the sensitivity to weather conditions. When it is cold or raining, people prefer to cook inside. This can be done at a fireplace inside the house, on a gas stove or on a paraffin stove. Cooking, and other food-related tasks, are mostly done by females. It is common that women are the ones who do the shopping, cooking, dishing, cleaning and often also do (part of) the work in the garden. When another person is doing the shopping, a shopping list is often made, so she gets the right products. In big households, where multiple generations are living together, the older ladies do not need to cook, as well as kids, but other women take turns in cooking. It is part of the culture to cook and serve the males, elderly people and children first, before eating themselves. The exception to preparing food by women is when animals need to be slaughtered. A female is allowed to slaughter and prepare a chicken, but other animals are slaughtered by males and often put on the braai by them. On special occasions, males take care of the meat, but the other foods for a special occasion are cooked by women. Newlyweds have the obligation to help out with cooking, serving and cleaning at every special occasion in the community.

Finally, the setting to eat is very similar between different households. It is common practice to take a moment to consume a meal and sit together inside the house while consuming this food. Everyone who is present at that time will eat together, because this is the cultural practice. When there is a visitor, he or she will be assumed to eat together and get a plate of food. Food is dished by the person who has done the cooking and served to each person.

### **7.1.3 Sub-question 2**

The second sub-question was formulated with the aim to look at when people feel food secure and how they secure themselves for food. I have looked at what people do to make sure they are food secure and how this is different for each person. I have also looked at when people feel insecure for food and how they cope with this situation. The question to answer here has been:

#### **How is food security incorporated in foodways?**

To answer this question, we first need to take a look at when people feel food secured. Of course, this has a different meaning for every individual, but general characteristics can be observed when

looking at the results. It is unsurprising that many similarities can be seen between people's needs, since they live in the same socio-cultural environment that influences food preferences. To be secured for food, food is bought in bulks in town and big amounts of food are kept in the house, which gives people a feeling of security. They feel comfortable when they know there is food available inside the house and which types of food these are. Next to buying food from shops, additional food is grown which also makes people more relaxed about their food security status. When they know fresh food is growing on their property, and they can actually see the food becoming ready, they feel very good, knowing they'll have healthy, fresh food. The type of food that needs to be present in order to feel food secure, is for every person mealie meal. Next to mealie meal, most people also feel the need to have other products, like rice, sugar, flour, oil and vegetables, but these products differ per person. Some people need a big variety of food in order to feel secured, whereas others already feel secured as long as they have some kind of food and are able to 'fill their stomach'. However, on certain occasions, people need certain types of food to feel secured for food. On special occasions, it is important for meat to be served, and if this is not possible, the occasions will be postponed. This shows an important link between the embodiment of food and food security. The consumption of meat is so important on such cultural occasions that it cannot be performed without the presence of meat.

### *Coping*

It can happen for different reasons that people get into a situation where they do not feel food secure. For example running out of money at the end of the month, or unexpected circumstances happening. There are different coping strategies used: trying to get money from pitch jobs, going to the local shop to buy on credit or using social safety nets. In this last strategy, the concept of reciprocity comes up again. People rely on others to acquire food in times of need and are willing to share with each other. However, when someone is constantly running out of money, at a certain point others are less eager to help this person. It is the cultural practice to share food with other people, but if there is one person who is always lacking food and is constantly asking other people, at a certain point others will become hesitant to help. The social safety net is mainly used within the community, because people can simply visit another and ask for food which they will get immediately. Another way can also be to call family members who live and work in cities, to ask them to transfer money. In this, the norms of obligation towards family members are shown, if a family member is needing support, this should always be given.

## **7.2 Preliminary conclusion**

Governments and food security research focus mainly on the production side of food. By focusing only on the side of production, other sides of food, like the desires of the community are often overlooked. Increasing production does not necessarily increase food security. I have argued that the 'social side' of food should be taken into account by the government when making policies, and is important in research about food security. This thesis has shown how people in a rural South African village perceive food, how food shapes their lives and how this has changed over time. Embodiment of food has shown that there are many important aspects of food apart from the production side. People build lives around food, have networks on which they rely and use food on special occasions. This thesis shows how foodways have changed and are still changing and how this influences people. In these changing foodways, the nutrition transition is visible. Maize products are still consumed frequently, though a decline in the consumption is visible and other food products have been

introduced. The consumption of processed foods is increasing, though attitudes towards these products are still various. Many people in Number Five have negative feelings towards changing foodways and feel trapped in the current system. Due to the changes, they need money to buy food, but they lack the money to buy certain products and feel like they are unable to get out of the situation. Food is causing both stress and relief and is important in the socio-cultural environment. When people do not have the means to procure food, they rely on others, since it is the cultural practice to share and help each other.

### 7.3 Discussion

In this section I will argue about the importance of the embodiment of food for food security. I will use literature to enter into the debate about food security. I use the term 'embodied food security' to show the importance of the embodiment of food for the concept of food security. I will use the different concepts of embodiment to show how each of these concepts relate to food security. Embodiment means giving a form to something (Carolan, 2011) and the embodied food security is thus giving a form to food security. This way of looking into food security considers food security to not only be about the ability to eat food, but also the types of food, meanings of this food, ways of procurement and the social and cultural environment in which this happens.

#### 7.3.1 Socio-cultural environment

The socio-cultural environment shapes how, when and what people eat (Pachucki, 2014). Most food consumed in rural South African villages is bought in shops, where people usually go to town once a month to buy food in bulks. Buying food in bulks gives people a feeling of being secured for food, since they can put the food inside their houses and see there is food available (Thembeke, Zintle, 2017). Own production is seen as an additional food source, and people rely mostly on foods from the store. These results corroborate the ideas of Baiphethi & Jacobs (2009), who suggested that rural households are becoming more reliant on purchasing foods instead of producing. However, agriculture is used as an additional food source which makes people feel more comfortable about their food situation (Fezeka, Khwezi, 2017). Growing food is used as a way to save money and foods from the garden are sometimes used as substitutes for foods bought from the shops (Khwezi, Cebisa, 2017).

The way food is eaten is also shaped by the socio-cultural environment. In Number Five, it is important to always sit down and take a moment together to eat the meal. Meals are never eaten 'on the go' but are always consumed while people are seated and preferably together. People seem to enjoy the food more when they are eating together and are often inclined to eat a bit more (Thandiwe, 2017), which is in line with the findings of Pachucki (2014). However, other research suggests that the amount of food eaten is not always increased when eating together. It is dependent on multiple factors, like the social norms around eating in a certain place or the relation between the people eating together. There is a general consensus that eating together alters behavior, but in which way is dependent on the situation (Cruwys, Bevelander & Hermans, 2015; Herman, Roth & Polivy, 2003; Higgs, 2015; Vartanian, Herman & Polivy, 2007). Eating together is good for the social interaction of people (Thembeke, 2017), and people enjoy having food together and talk during the meal (Lulama, Nofoto, 2017). This shows how social relationships can be sustained by eating practices, as Corr (2002) has stated before.

### *Special occasions*

Important parts of the socio-cultural environment are special occasions, like celebrations and rituals. On these special occasions, meat has a crucial importance, and when there is no possibility to acquire meat, the occasion will be cancelled. This is in line with Marshall (2005), who talks about how certain guidelines about food need to be taken into an account during official ceremonies and events. This shows how the embodiment of food is important in food security situations. In the socio-cultural environment, the meat has to be there on a special occasion and if one is, for whatever reason, unable to get meat for this, he cannot continue with the celebration. In this, the social functions of food are denied to people because of food insecurity, as Hamelin, Beadury & Habicht (2002) have found previously in other contexts. Coates et al (2006) talk about how it can be socially unacceptable to not being able to consume the types of food that are preferred in a certain situation, as is happening here when there is no possibility to get meat for a special occasion.

### *7.3.2 Identity*

Habits people have around food and eating are part of their identity (Corr, 2002). The consumption of maize is widely visible and maize products are consumed at more than half of the meals in Number Five (Table 5). What we eat symbolizes who we are and in which social group we belong by eating the same things in the same way. Eating the same food products connects people and inside the village, people feel like it is the standard to eat these foods (Esihle, Babalwa, 2017). This is in line with research that suggests people within certain groups tend to eat similar foods (Pachucki, Jacques & Christakis, 2011; Vartanian, Herman & Polivy, 2007). Pachucki found in his research in 2014 that social networks are an important factor in shaping food choice. He found that the major part of food consumption shows significant association with food consumption of people in their social network. He argues it is not as simple as 'you are what you eat', but may be more 'you are what people in your social network eat'. Most people need certain types of food in order to feel food secure, but there are exceptions (Uuka, Nofoto, 2017). For a few people the presence of food is important, but not the type of food, as long as they have something to 'fill the stomach'. However, these are the exceptions, others all need certain types of food in order to feel secured. For some people there are a few ingredients they deem necessary, others just need the possibility to have a variety of foods. Nonetheless, mealie meal is seen as an important food product by every participant that adds value to certain food types.

### *7.3.3 Taste*

The type of food is not only an identity marker, it is also influenced by the taste of these foods. For some people, the taste of food does not seem important, as long as there is food (Uuka, Nofoto, 2017), but most people value the taste of food. Tastes in the village are very similar, which shows how taste is a social construct that is influenced by one's community, which is in line with Marshall (2005) his findings. Pachucki (2014) has similar findings in his research, where he states that networks are important in the formation of taste preferences. He adds to this that there are male-female differences visible in taste preferences, but these have not been observed during the research in Number Five. However, this could be caused by the fact that the focus of this research was not on gender, and it could that it would become visible with a different approach. For some people, taste is a motivator to produce food, since they think of home-grown foods as tastier than food from the shops. This shows what Carolan (2011) already suggested, that taste can motivate and move people, in this case in the literal sense of planting and ploughing food.

#### 7.3.4 Materials

Foodstuff can be transformed from 'raw' products into meals with the help of materials (Steel & Zinn, 2016). During the process of cooking and eating, many materials are used. Knives to cut and peel food, pots to cook in, a source of heat to cook on, dishes to serve the food and often a spoon to eat the food. These materials are similar in rural South African households, but different sources of heat are used on different occasions. Cooking over a fire is the preferred way of cooking, since this is cheap and people feel comfortable with this way of cooking. Gas or paraffin is often used when a wood fire is not possible due to weather conditions, but is more expensive and some people are scared of these heat sources. Since some source of heat is needed to prepare foods, the absence of these materials can make people feel food insecure. They might have mealie meal and other food products present, but if they are not able to transform these into a meal, these food products are useless. Without materials to prepare food, one will still be insecure for food.

#### 7.3.5 Changes

The distance between producer and consumer changes the lived experience of food, also because acquiring food has changed. Where people used to work on the field to be able to get food, they can now decide to buy their food at a store, which is a completely different lived experience. Another factor influencing the embodiment of food is technological progress and new tools, like ovens (Carolan, 2011). They have changed the way in which we transform foodstuffs into food we like to eat, which results in a different process, different taste and a different embodied experience.

#### 7.3.6 Reciprocity

Direct, indirect and generalized reciprocity are all visible in relation to food in rural South African communities. Direct reciprocity can be observed when people borrow food from each other, or when one helps in the garden of the neighbor, and he or she is then allowed to use the neighbor's oxen to get wood from the forest for himself. Another type of direct reciprocity commonly seen in Number Five, is when someone is brewing traditional beer. People can come and drink this beer and are then asked to help with a certain job, or sometimes people brew the beer to invite people over for a gathering.

Indirect and generalized reciprocity is visible when people come to visit someone and get a serving of food. People who serve others food will not get something back for this immediately, but they trust that in the long term it will balance itself out. Borrowing and giving each other things is the way of living in this village and people trust that this behavior will be reciprocated eventually. These results are in agreement with those of Surma (2006), according to whom immediate or equal exchange is not expected, but a balanced exchange is assumed in the long term.

Reciprocity is not a major way of procuring food, but people do occasionally get food from other people and give food to others. This mostly happens when someone is in need of food and needs help to acquire it, when one asks someone to give something, they will. This is in line with McGuire (2008), who states that there is the unconditional response to assist others when acute problems arise. Having a good social network makes people feel more comfortable about their food security situation. In times of need, people rely on each other and go to their friends or neighbors to get food if they are lacking. People feel bad when others are going without food and it is part of the culture to give to people in need. This is part of generalized reciprocity, where people are behaving kindly and



trusting that in some way, this kindness will be rewarded. It builds strong social bonds between the people (Surma, 2016), but is also a moral obligation.

#### 7.4 Reflections

There are several considerations that should be taken into account in this study. First of all, it is hard to know whether the sample is a good representation of the target population. The sample was chosen by the interpreters and researchers together and had to include certain people, because of their important position in the village. This might give a bias in the results, since these people are all living in the same part of the village and might be better off financially than some other people in the village. The researchers asked for the second sample specifically for households of a younger age, with less income or living in another part of the village to try and get a representative sample.

Secondly, the researchers didn't speak the local language and thus needed the help of an interpreter. Although the interpreter was tested before the study period, certain things can still get lost in translation. People cannot talk as freely when things have to be translated in between, because they have to stop after each sentence so it can be translated. It is also harder to ask probing questions when the researcher is not able to ask these questions directly to the interviewee. A few times the interpreter also explained clarifications of questions himself, without consulting the researchers. When this happened in isiXhosa, the researcher cannot be sure it was explained in a clear manner without sending the answer in a certain direction.

When interviewing people, there is always the chance of getting social desirable answers. The researcher tried to minimize social desirable answers by making sure the interviews were held in a private place, as well as establishing a good relation before doing the interviews. According to Boeije (2010), a good relationship between researcher and participant can help to minimize bias interviews. This is one of the reasons the interviews with the participants were conducted at the end of the research period, after the observations had been done and people were used to the presence of the researchers.

When doing observations, a researcher can never be sure whether the participants behave in exactly the same way as they would have done without having the researcher around. It also happens that interviewees give a response that they think is wanted from them, or give socially desirable answers. According to Silverman (2006), this obstacle can be overcome by applying triangulation of methods. When one uses different types of data collection, he is more likely to get a reliable result. In this case, it was sometimes quite obvious that some people were cooking differently because of the presence of the researchers. In the food diaries we could see which types of food were usually eaten by a certain household, but when we would do the observations, this could be a different type of meal. Even though we had explained explicitly that we didn't want people to make any changes because of our studies, they sometimes got meat when we had planned the observation, while the food diaries showed us they usually only eat this during the weekend. Triangulation of data was helpful here to immediately notice this bias and being able to deal with this accordingly.

## 7.5 Final conclusion

Embodied food security offers a way of looking at food security that incorporates multiple aspects of food and eating. It does not focus only the production side but is inclusive of many features, like the meanings food has for people, the way people procure food, the types of food that are consumed and the environment in which this happens. What is eaten symbolizes who people are and how they are connected to others. Networks shape food choice and consumption, but eating practices also shape the network. Food and eating is important because it can form and sustain relationships, but can also damage relationships. Exclusion can be a result of socially unacceptable eating practices. This shows how important food is in people's lives and when food security only focusses on the side of production, a huge part of the role food plays is missed.

## 7.6 Recommendations for further research

Since this research has been conducted in a village without electricity and tap water, the results might differ from those collected in a village that does have these features. For further research, it could be interesting to have a look at a rural village where electricity is already available. Most participants in this research expect many changes related to food and eating to happen once the instalment of electricity will be finished. It can be valuable to conduct a similar research in a village that already has electricity and see if and how this really makes a difference. Does the presence of electricity actually bring multiple changes to foodways and how does this affect the social and the cultural? If it really brings so many changes, how do people feel about these changes, are people content with these changes or do they prefer the way it was before electricity became available.

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## Appendix

### Interview guide

- Basic information questions
  - Size of the household
  - Is there a vegetable garden?
    - If yes, what is grown here?
  - Do they have 'a field'?
    - If yes, what is grown here?
  - Do they have cattle/livestock
    - If yes, what kind and how much approximately?
  - Do you receive grants (social welfare)/other income?
  - What is your age?
- Introducing questions
  - What is your favourite kind of food?
- In depth questions
  - Social food habits
    - Where do you get your food from?
      - What about shops?
        - How often?
      - What about friends/neighbours/family/community members?
      - Who gets the food/who does the shopping?
      - What about farming practices. How do you engage in these?
        - How often do you eat something from your field/garden?
    - Could you describe what it normally looks like to eat a meal in your house?
      - Who cooks?
      - Who cleans?
      - Who eats together?
      - Where do you sit?
      - How does food you eat during the week, differ from food you eat during the weekends?
    - We heard that in December a lot of celebrations will be going on. How do you engage in these celebrations? (e.g. do you give one/do you attend/help with cooking)
      - Why do you have this celebration at your house?
      - Could you describe what this celebration will look like?
      - What will you eat during this celebration?
      - How many people are coming?
        - How are they related to you?
      - Do you attend other celebrations?

- Meaning of food
  - In what ways is food important to you?
    - What about taste?
    - What about tradition?
    - What about culture?
    - What about rituals?
    - What about health?
    - What about social connections in relation to food?
      - What does it mean for you to eat together?
  
- Change over time
  - Do you recall any change over time that is related to food in Number Five?
    - Do you think that people eat differently now than a few decennia ago?
    - Do you think that you still have the same diet as when you were a child?
      - What changed?
      - Why do you think this has changed?
    - How do you perceive new food products (e.g. processed foods/convenience food)?
  - How do you think eating and food will change in the future?
    - Do you think the instalment of electricity will change anything?
  
- Food security
  - How would you describe food security? (*when are you food secure?*)
  - Do you always have enough food to feed the household?
    - How do you ensure that there is enough food?
  - How do seasons influence the availability of food and access to food?

## List of participants

Given name	Size of household	Interview	Age	Garden/field	Livestock
Thembeke	6	Female	66	Garden, inside field	2 cows, 12 goats, 8 pigs, 14 chicken
Uuka	3	Male	60	Garden, inside and outside field	16 goats 13 sheep 7 chicken, 1 ox
Thandiwe	3	Male	65	Garden and inside field	2 cows, 18 sheep, 12 lambs, 36 chicken
Gcobani	3	Male	61	Garden (not in use), no field	7 pigs, 11 chickens
Lulama	4	Female	61	Garden, inside field	15 chicken (23 chicks), 1 pig (9 piglets), 1 goat
Daluxolo	10	Female	48	Garden and field	38 cows, 15 chickens, 3 pigs, 18 goats, 53 sheep, 4 horses, 5 turkeys
Nofoto	3	Female	79	Garden and inside field	19 goats, 30 chickens (24 chicks), 1 pig
Esihle	4	Male	72	Garden (not in use this year), Field	8 cows, 24 sheep, 30+ chicken
Sisipho	3	Female	25	Nothing	3 pigs, 2 chickens, 2 geese
Fezeka	5	Female	87	Garden, inside field	5 cattle, 14 sheep, chicken
Zintle	2	Female	70	Garden, inside field	5 chickens, 11 chicks, 1 pig
Khwezi	8	Male	27	Garden, inside field (not in use)	3 goats, 3 chickens, 8 chicks,
Bongani	4	Female	31	Garden is new, haven't eaten from it yet, inside field	4 cattle, 5 sheep, 1 pig, 2 chickens, 7 chicks
Anathi	2	Female	96	Inside field and field far away	Unknown numbers of Cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, 1 pig
Babalwa	4	Female	49	Garden, no field	1 Pig
Cebisa	6	Female	39	Garden, inside field	4 goats, 2 pigs (2piglets), 30 chickens