Enacting Social Practices of Food: Performing Food and Nutrition Security

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Enacting Social Practices of Food: Performing Food and Nutrition Security

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The picture on the cover page shows a respondent that is showing grinded maize for preparing samp using a 5litre bucket instead of a traditional samp grinding stone. (Own photograph)

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Image 1 Me on top of 'the mountain', Number Five in the background (own photograph, photo made by co-researcher)

Executive Summary

Rural residents in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa nowadays have to deal with high poverty rates, limited employment opportunities and a dependency on a social welfare system of grants (Westaway, 2012). Furthermore, two other changes are influencing the rural context of this province which are the nutrition transition (Vorster et *al.,* 2011) and a process of agricultural decline (Westaway, 2012; Neves & Toit, 2013). All in all, these processes and characteristics influence the food culture and it furthermore leads to new questions in the domain of food and nutrition security.

The food and nutrition security (FNS) debate is very extensive and a lot of research has been done regarding this topic however, this has remained very quantitative in nature and often aims at technical solutions that depart from a productionist point of view (Foullieux et *al.,* 2017). Even though it has been acknowledged that food is embedded in social relations and part of culture (Chamberlain, 2004), these aspects are not integrated in the FNS debate. The aim of this report is therefore to approach the FNS debate more qualitatively by applying a social practice approach in order to move towards a new unit of analysis within this study which allows to study the enactment of food. This means that this thesis report takes a rather qualitative approach to FNS. In order to do this, the theoretical framework is composed of three elements which are a food culture approach, the Bourdieusian concept of taste and the social practices approach. By linking these three theories, a framework for qualitative research was constructed that analyses the enactment of food practices within a situated context. Consequently, this allows to make cultural factors more explicit within debates of FNS.

The methods used for achieving the aim of the report were desk research, participant observations, interviews and food diaries and these correspond to the qualitative case study design that is used for this study. For the latter three mentioned methods, data was gathered in October and November of 2017 in village Number Five (Eastern Cape Province). For analysing the data, the theoretical framework of this thesis has been at heart and alongside the theoretical framework, a coding tree has been composed. The theoretical codes were enhanced by including some more contextual codes which allowed for a more in-depth analysis.

The analysis of the data resulted in the following findings:

1. A local food culture carries distinct characteristics which have an influence on the way that people enact certain practices and therefore, these need to be taken into account when making a qualitative assessment of food and FNS.
2. Social practices of food are enacted in ways that correspond to the local food culture and this can thus differ depending on which geographical location is chosen in the world. The type of practices that make sense of the world of food are thus context-specific and making a generalized overview of this would thus make little sense.
3. People perform FNS because they enact certain practices that allows them to follow their own strategies rather than imposed strategies. Social aspects are also important for the performance of FNS.

Based on these findings, the report concludes that social practices of food may vary but they all share a deeper understanding which is embedded within the cultural. Due to wider societal changes and transitions, social practices of food can change because of adjustments or variations within the elements (materials, competences and meanings). However, these kind of emerging changes do not happen overnight because certain practices are culturally appropriate and embedded and therefore leave little room for rapid change.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introducing the debate

How to feed nine billion people? This seems to be a question that has kept researchers of food and nutrition security (FNS) busy for some time now (e.g. Godfray et *al.,* 2010; Béné et *al.,* 2015). So far, these kind of questions are mainly focussing on the supply side of food and the problems that are related to the availability of food (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009; Noack & Pouw, 2015). On the one hand, economists often hold such a supply side view in which they focus on production as a mean to solve FNS issues whereas nutritionist, on the other hand, pay closer attention to supplying the appropriate amount of nutrients that the body demands (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). These kind of approaches are quantitative in nature, aiming to achieve certain desired numbers and targets. Since the FNS debate is rather focused on quantities, it has remained quite technical in nature, overlooking the social and cultural dimensions that are important for the enactment food practices (Noack & Pouw, 2015).

Even though it has been widely acknowledged that food is shaped by social relations and that it is culturally embedded in society (Chamberlain, 2004; Lang et al., 2009; Lang & Heasman, 2015), current approaches to FNS still tend to ignore the social side of food and also overlook how food plays an important role in culture (Noack & Pouw, 2015). Food and culture are interrelated concepts since culture can shape the food practices that a person enacts and in turn, food can express certain shared rules and norms that are embedded in a culture. Both food and culture are always in a state of flux and therefore, they should not be seen as something that follows a linear pathway (Chamberlain, 2004; Lang et *al.,* 2009, p227). This can be mainly attributed to the fact that food and culture are exposed to wider societal processes such as mobility or globalisation (Lang et *al.,* 2009, p227).

Over time, some research has been done about how (food) culture relates to FNS. It has been acknowledged that within the FNS debate, culture matters but how exactly and to what extent remains unknown (Alonso et *al.,* 2017). However, despite this growing awareness, cultural aspects still only play a marginal role in the broader FNS debate especially among researchers and policy makers (ibid.). Instead of remaining with the very technical debate of FNS, the debate could be pushed further and beyond what we already know by aiming to include cultural and social aspects (Noack & Pouw, 2015). Essentially, a food culture encompasses the 'shared practices and meanings relating to food' (Lang & Heasman, 2015). Including these aspects would mean that everyday practices and enactments are incorporated into the wider debate which in turn leads to more context specific interventions that are related to food and these are more likely to be effective (ibid.). Doings, sayings and things make up an ensemble of practices (Arts et *al.,* 2012) and by looking at this, the cultural becomes more explicit.

1.2 South African Context

South Africans living in rural parts of the Eastern Cape Province are nowadays subject to high poverty rates, limited employment opportunities (Westaway, 2012) and a dependency on the social grant system (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015). Alongside these characteristics, two more profound changes have occurred over the past years namely one regarding dietary change (Vorster et *al.,* 2011) and the other regarding the agricultural decline in the region (Westaway, 2012; Neves & Toit, 2013). These changes and characteristics all have their own influence on food and cultural practices because they bring change to the dominant ways of living.

1.2.1 Changing food environment

Regarding dietary change, South Africa is subject to the so-called nutrition transition (Vorster et *al.,* 2011). The nutrition transition occurs when dietary patterns and nutrient intake change because populations adopt modern lifestyles during processes of economic and social development, urbanization and acculturation (ibid.). Nowadays

this means that South African diets are often rich in energy but poor in micronutrients (Hendriks, 2014; Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018). In general, the food groups that South Africans most frequently consume are cereals and these can be seen as energy dense, starchy foods (Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018). Following the consumption of cereals the frequent consumption of oil, fat and butter, sugar, sugar products, meat and eggs follows (ibid.).

Regarding agricultural decline, there is now a trend in rural South Africa to leave the fields fallow (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). This means that people living in the rural areas do not solely depend on agricultural practices anymore to obtain their foodstuffs. However, they still tend to adopt strategies of homestead gardening to supplement the groceries that are bought from supermarkets (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). The main driver that is often given for this change in agricultural activity is the existing system of social welfare grants (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015; Trefry et al., 2014; Connor & Mtwana, 2017). This allows people to be able to buy their foodstuffs instead of growing their own foodstuffs (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015) and thus consequently people have less incentives to perform subsistence agriculture.

1.2.2 Food Security in South Africa

At the national level, South Africa appears to be food secure since it can produce its own main staples, export surpluses and import whatever is needed to meet other food requirements (Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018). However, zooming in to other levels such as the community level, it is apparent that wide spread food insecurity still exists (ibid.). In the past, a lot of policies targeting FNS have focused exclusively on agricultural productivity (Hendriks, 2014). Even nowadays, this tendency to focus on agricultural production is still in existence while the retail sector is gaining more and more ground (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). Especially rural areas are often assumed as areas of production, where farmers live an agriculturally led lifestyle (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). Rurality thus often comes with the assumption of ongoing agricultural practices but the extent to which rural households are able to provide themselves with food depends also on non-farm income and activities and not exclusively on subsistence production (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009).

1.3 Problem statement

FNS has been dominantly researched from a very quantified perspective and from a productionist point of view (Fouilleux et al., 2017), ignoring to incorporate more qualitative aspects such as culture (Noack & Pouw, 2015). FNS has often been about reaching certain targets or goals either in production (e.g. yields) or in nutrition (e.g. macro- and micronutrients) and thereby, aiming via those means to improve FNS situations (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). Thus, there has been a tendency to view FNS as something that can be measured and that ultimately, FNS can be reached if the measurement reaches a certain target (Fouilleux et al., 2017). It can be argued that this technical view impedes efforts to take a more holistic approach to the problem because it mainly focusses on quantitative aspects and tries to measure whereas the qualitative should also be included.

Instead of remaining with the very technical debate of FNS, the debate could be enhanced by a move towards the incorporation of nontechnical aspects. Within this rather technical debate, culture is one of the qualitative aspects that is overlooked within the FNS debate (Noack & Pouw, 2015). Qualitative in nature, culture is hard to define (Alonso et al., 2017) and thereby it cannot easily be measured. Even though culture is becoming more and more acknowledged within the FNS debate, it is still unknown in what ways it matters and to what extent it matters (ibid.). However, improving this understanding is important in order to move towards more sustainable and healthy diets for all people (ibid.).

In rural South Africa, food culture is subject to change because two profound changes have occurred over time within the domains of production and consumption. Previously, rural livelihoods were highly associated with

production spheres, whereas now, this is not as much embedded anymore in rural daily life (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). People from the rural areas can be increasingly seen as people of consumer spheres who choose to buy their foodstuffs over growing their own foodstuffs (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015). However, policies targeting FNS still tend to focus on agriculture or production (Pereira et *al.,* 2014). Two underlying, intertwined processes that fuel this production-consumption sphere change are the nutrition transition (Vorster et *al.,* 2011) and the agricultural decline within the rural areas (Westaway, 2012; Neves & Toit, 2013). In turn, this influences the daily diet and thereby, the broader food culture.

In order to capture the abovementioned and to deal with this problem, this thesis research uses social practice theory as a lens for food studies in which cultural and contextual aspects can be captured within the FNS debate. Whereas previously quantitative approaches have been used to study FNS this report incorporates a qualitative approach by departing from a social practices perspective. Taking a this approach departs from the assumption that culture is internalized in the routines and practices that people enact. Taking this approach allows to move further in the FNS debate because it goes deeper than the measurable aspects such as the proximity of supermarkets or the nutritional composition that can be found on a plate. A social practice approach has the potential to show everyday life (Shove et *al.,* 2012) which means that the cultural and contextual can become evident. The social practices that are enacted now become the unit of analysis rather than the global, communal, household or individual level (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009). Furthermore, taking a social practice approach within the domain of food studies has added value because it allows for more comprehensive studies that leave room to touch upon multiple aspects of food (Domaneschi, 2012) which provides the opportunity to move away from a productionist focus. The meanings and assumptions that people have surrounding food are not always directly related to food but rather they are related to the practices around food, which shapes food behaviour (Lang et *al.,* 2009).

1.3.1 Aim and relevance

The aim of this study is to approach the FNS debate more qualitatively by applying a social practice approach in order to move towards a new unit of analysis within this study which allows to study the enactment of food. This thesis builds on the arguments that have been made by authors such as Noack & Pouw (2015), Alonso et *al.* (2017) and Fouilleux et *al.* (2017). The main contribution of this thesis lies in the incorporation of a social practice approach because that has not been proposed by any of the aforementioned authors and thereby this thesis aims to push the existing debate of FNS further and to add a qualitative aspect to the general, quite technical view of FNS. This thesis departs neither from a structuralist perspective, nor from a existentialist perspective but tries to make a move towards a more holistic view on food culture and describes it relation to food security. Allowing this turn of approaches is relevant because meanings, understandings and social practices associated with food gain a more prominent role and can thereby become more central in any policy processes that are related to food (Lang et *al.,* 2009, p228). In order to do this, a case study has been conducted in a rural South African village in which the enactments of food practices were explored by using social theory as has been explained by authors such as Schatzki (1996) and Shove (2012).

This research holds societal relevance because it contributes to a different understanding of FNS in relation to the cultural and the societal and thereby, indirectly, addresses issues such as public health and poverty. It departs from the point of view that we should look at what people on the ground actually want and that we first need to ensure that qualitative aspects also gain the attention that they. Thereby, more context specific policies can be constructed, increasing potential benefits for people. Whereas policies now tend to focus on agricultural fixes, the people on the ground could benefit more if the local actualities would be incorporated within policies and within the broader FNS debate. Next to a societal contribution, this research also contributes to the academic

debate because it helps to fill what Noack and Pouw (2015) have called 'the blind spot in food and nutrition security', which is culture. This thesis contributes to the academic debate by linking food culture to food security and incorporating social theory to stress the importance of qualitative aspects in FNS. Scientifically, a gap within the dominant research on FNS is addressed and a first attempt is made to examine and fill this gap by studying a specific case.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report follows a structure of a funnel in order to move from the more theoretical and conceptual level towards the more contextual level by which the core of the research is in the end targeted. The chapter that is going to follow now will provide more in-depth information about the background and context of this thesis. It will elaborate further on the South African context and the concepts as FNS and the nutrition transition. Thereafter, the theoretical framework is presented in which the theories at heart of this report will be explained and operationalised. From the theoretical framework, the report will flow into the methodology in which the methods are explained and also how they were used in reality.

After the methodology, empirical results will follow in a coherent set of four chapters. The first of these will provide an overview of village Number Five as it is situated in its wider context. Then, chapter six will provide an extensive elaboration of the dominant food culture in Number Five. Chapter seven is going to show the enactments of food as they happen in the village. The last of the empirical chapters, chapter eight, will elaborate on the performances of FNS.

The final chapter, chapter nine, is going to present the concluding remarks by answering the main research question and the corresponding sub questions. Finally, a critical reflection is given in the discussion section about the findings, the methodology and the presence of the researchers.

2. Background and context

From the contemplations of chapter 1, it already becomes clear that several context-specific concepts play a role in this report which are FNS, the nutrition transition and agricultural decline. These are now going to be explained in some more detail in order to clarify the contextual background of this report. First, the changes regarding rurality and agriculture are going to be elaborated which will flow into an elaboration of FNS. Lastly, the nutrition transition is explained more in-depth and also applied to the South African context.

2.1 South African rural livelihoods

Some academics that have done research in South Africa explain that the country is undergoing a process of de-agrarianisation (Westaway, 2012; Neves & Toit, 2013) which is defined as a process of occupational adjustment, income earning reorientation and a move away from strictly agricultural-based livelihoods (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). Some evidence indeed points towards agricultural decline but in the former Transkei area, there is a tendency towards using homestead gardens over outlying maize fields (ibid.). This is also the area that this thesis focusses on more specifically and it is where agricultural production for private use is still popular and especially in places where betterment and villagisation did not occur (ibid.). The main reason for this is that homestead gardens are regarded as more manageable since they are smaller and closer located to the homestead and therefore, they are easier to irrigate and protect from livestock (ibid.). In general, three types of land used for agricultural purposes can be distinguished, namely, (1) the homestead garden, (2) the field at a distance from the homestead, and (3) the field within close proximity of the homestead (e.g. a field within the yard). (ibid.). Respondents in the study of Connor and Mtwana (2017) also mentioned the significance of homestead garden production as a crucial element of people's lifestyles and outlooks and not just as an economic option that possibly improves income.

A lot of people that live in the Eastern Cape Province, depend on social grants as a source of income and sometimes, the grant is even the only source of income for some households (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015; Trefry et *al.,* 2014; Connor & Mtwana, 2017). The Eastern Cape Province is the second highest province of South Africa, receiving the most grants after KwaZulu-Natal (SASSA fact sheet, 2017). The most received grant is the Child Support grant (1.887.079 people), followed by the Old Age grant (556.105 people) and the Foster Child grant (84.500 people) (ibid.). Many informants in the study of Shackleton and Luckert (2015) agreed that with the prevalence of these grants, they would rather use the monthly income to purchase food items than to cultivate crops. On the one hand, the social grants help to ensure people for food since it is less risky and less time consuming to purchase food than to cultivate food (Shackleton & Luckert, 2015). However, these grants also create a certain dependency since many people are often depending on one recipient of a grant (ibid.). For example, when the grant that people depend on is a pension and the person registered for this grant passes away, there is no source of income left (ibid.). Thus, in general, many people depend on welfare by the state and this contributes to the income of the poor, whereas the contribution of wages from employment, remittances and agriculture are almost insignificant (Westaway, 2012).

2.2 Food and nutrition security

Over time, the concept of food security has been discussed extensively in the academic literature (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009). In general, the agreed upon definition of food security was coined at the World Food Summit of 1996 and is as follows: *"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life"* (ibid.). Furthermore, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) developed the widely used 'pillars' framework for assessing food security where four main dimensions (pillars) of food security are identified (FAO,

2008). These pillars are (1) physical availability, (2) economic and physical access, (3) food utilization and (4) stability of the three aforementioned pillars (ibid.). In order to achieve food security according to the FAO pillars approach, these dimensions must be fulfilled simultaneously (ibid.).

At the national and global level, the use of the term food security tended to focus on the supply side of food, mainly dealing with food availability (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009). However, food availability does not mean that there is also adequate access to food and simultaneously, enough available calories does not assure a healthy and nutritious diet (ibid.). Thus, nutrition should and can be seen as an integral part of food security (Midgley, 2013). This was also agreed upon at the thirty-ninth session of the UN Committee on World Food Security, where the terminology of 'food and nutrition security' was endorsed because it is believed to be more encompassing than the use of the term 'food security' (Pritchard et *al.*, 2016). Previously, nutrition and food security were addressed by different sectors where nutrition was dealt with by the health sector, and food security more from the agricultural sector dealing with supply (Noack & Pouw, 2015).

Whether food security really deals with both food *and* nutrition security remains debatable and the extent to which nutrition is taken up in the concept of food security has changed over time (Midgley, 2013). Initially food security was more concerned with meeting the basic needs, whereas this has moved towards a more complex requirement for sufficiency, safety, nutrition, and dietary health (ibid.). Important to note is that adequate nutrition, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), is a cornerstone of good health in people (WHO, n.d.) and the relationship between food (the diet) and health is quite well established (Lawrence et *al.,* 2013, p190). Patterns of health and wellbeing, in turn, are influenced by the practices that people enact (Blue et *al.,* 2016).

2.2.1 FNS situation in rural South Africa

South Africa appears to be food secure at the national level since it can produce its own main staple crops, exports its surpluses and imports what it needs to meet its food requirements (Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018). However, when looking at the community or household level, it can be argued that there is still wide spread food insecurity (ibid.). After the apartheid-era ended, *the Reconstruction and Development Programme* outlined the need for action in order to achieve food security (Hendriks, 2014). In this programme, food security was seen as a basic need whereas food insecurity was seen as a legacy of apartheid (ibid.). After 1994, programmes targeting South African agriculture and food security, focused primarily on subsistence and smallholder farming (ibid.). In 2002, the South African government adopted the *Integrated Food Security Strategy*, aiming to integrate policies that were previously isolated and thereby tackling the challenge of food insecurity in South Africa (Drimie & Ruysenaar, 2010). This strategy adopted a broader developmental approach that aimed to move beyond an exclusive focus on agriculture and food stocks (Hendriks, 2014).

The extent to which rural households are able to provide food for themselves, depends on non-farm income as well as on their own agricultural production (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). Historically, agriculture has been very important in providing food and this is especially true for low-income households, but now household food security depends more and more on total household income and less on food production (Hendriks, 2014; Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). Food security in the rural areas is thus largely dependent on the access that people have to cash by which food can be purchased (Drimie & Ruysenaar, 2010). Regarding access to food, poorer households can get their food from markets, subsistence production, public or private transfers (Baipethi & Jacobs, 2009) or, from gathering certain wild fruits and vegetables (Yang & Keding, 2009). While the retail sector seems to play a major role in food security strategies, the policy focus still seems to be on agricultural production (Pereira et *al.,* 2014). In South Africa, the number of households engaging in agriculture as a main source of income declines, but the number of households engaging in subsistence farming as a supplementation strategy

is rising (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009). Often, subsistence production is still seen as a solution to improve food security in rural households since it increases the food supply of a household and reduces its dependency on markets (ibid.). However, it needs to be mentioned that there is a lack of international evidence regarding the impact of homestead production and the impact it has on nutrition (Hendriks, 2014).

The study of Pereira et *al.* (2014) emphasises the importance of purchasing food as a food security strategy but they also point out that it is often constrained by income or a lack of access to income. In turn, since income influences what someone can buy or not buy, it also relates to the macro- and micro-nutrients that someone is able to buy. The rural poor often depend on non-perishable food products (e.g. long-life milk) which in turn influences the micronutrients that this group can access when they are unable to grow their own produce (ibid.). The high costs of a healthy diet are less of a problem for those who are able to grow their own produce in their homestead gardens or people able to buy direct from farmers (Temple et *al.,* 2011). Those people can supplement their own diets and are not fully dependent on one strategy to secure themselves for food and nutrition. More in general, the average South African diet is rich in energy but poor in micronutrients, which puts people at risk of a so-called 'hidden hunger' (Hendriks, 2014; Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018).

2.3 The nutrition transition

The composition of nutrition intake is changing around the world (Popkin et *al.,* 2012). Throughout history, changes in dietary patterns have occurred more often but the recent changes occur at a very rapid pace (Vorster et *al.,* 2011) and therefore, this process has now been identified as the nutrition transition. The nutrition transition is defined as the changes in dietary patterns and nutrient intake that happen when populations adopt modern lifestyles during economic and social development, urbanization and acculturation (Vorster et *al.,* 2011). In general, the most evident changes in the diet include decreases in staple foods, increases in animal-based foods, decreases in plant protein sources, and increases energy-dense snack foods, carbonated sweetened beverages, commercially available alcoholic beverages, as well as added sugar, fats and oils used in the preparation of food (ibid.). Popkin et *al.* (2012) argue that diets of low- and medium-income countries are moving to a so-called 'Western diet'. The authors make the following classification to emphasize what this diet enhances:

1. The increase of edible oil in the diet fostered by the edible oils and vegetable oil revolution, which has made oils available at a cheaper price.
2. The increase of caloric sweeteners in the diet that is expressed by the intake of carbonated beverages and processed foods.
3. The increase of animal-source foods in the diet shown by major increases in the production of beef, pork, dairy, eggs and poultry across low- and middle-income countries.
4. The reduction of legumes, coarse grains and other vegetables in the diet that previously provided an important source of nutritional intake.

(Popkin et *al.,* 2012).

2.3.1 The nutrition transition in South Africa

Stimulating the process of the nutrition transition, also in South Africa specifically (Vorster et *al.,* 2011), are supermarkets and the process of supermarketisation (Hattersley & Dixon, 2010). The supermarkets make all sorts of food available to the broad public (ibid.). Overall, the dietary implication of supermarkets is that people are encouraged to eat more food, no matter the kind of food (Hawkes, 2008). In South Africa, the majority of the households now tends to buy their food products from supermarkets whereas previously, they tended to buy from local shops, farmers or grow their own food. The food groups that people most frequently consume are

cereals, which are starchy foods, and this group is followed by oil, fat and butter, sugar, sugar products, meat and eggs (Megbowon & Mushunje, 2018).

People often have to travel from a rural area to an urban area in order to go shopping in a supermarket but the advantages of this outweigh the travel costs since food is available in a larger variety and at lower prices (D'Haese & van Huylenbroeck, 2005). The shops in the village play a larger role for people that are in need of certain foodstuffs or small items in between the large grocery trips (ibid.). Next to the aforementioned negative implications of supermarkets, there are also some benefits that supermarkets provided, for example, they were leading in the development of some important technologies (e.g. ultra-heat treatment of milk), established food safety standards, solved the cold chain problem and make all sorts of foods available throughout the year (Popkin et *al.,* 2012).

2.3.2 The diet and health

The evidence for a relationship between the diet and health has been quite well established (Hattersley & Dixon, 2010). Patterns of health and wellbeing are influenced by the practices that people enact (Blue et *al.,* 2016) and thus new practices that emerge under the nutrition transition, also have their own influence on health and wellbeing. Even though more traditional diets also have their own influence on health, changing dietary patterns that occur at such a rapid pace, have an even bigger impact on nutritional health (Yang and Keding, 2009). Furthermore, this transitional change means that people start to add foods to their diet, rather than replace their traditional foods (ibid.). Scientific evidence shows that these changes in dietary patterns also pose more significant risks such as chronic diseases and non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and cancer (Hawkes et *al.,* 2009).

Those who have the least purchasing power in a society experience the effect of the price of food most strongly (ibid.). The study of Temple et *al.* (2011) shows that healthier diets are more expensive than commonly consumed foods in rural South Africa. Besides costs, another factor that limits people in their food choice is that healthier choices are possibly not available in local food stores (ibid.). However, one point that needs to be taken into account here is that high costs are less of a problem for people that are able to grow food in homestead gardens or buy direct from farmers (ibid.). Supermarkets that sell healthier food options are usually located in larger towns whereas small food shops are within closer proximity to the rural areas but they have limited food choice (ibid.). The study of Temple et *al.* (2011) also revealed that people from rural towns make regular trips to towns that have supermarkets and thus, the authors state that rural residents also have access to a wide selection of healthy food choices (ibid.).

2.4 Concluding remarks

To conclude this chapter, the abovementioned changes do not happen in isolation from each other but to some extent, they are intertwined and they can fuel each other. Regardless of which change has triggered the other, it is not difficult to see that they influence each other where agricultural decline and the nutrition transition go hand in hand. If there are more supermarkets within a closer proximity to the rural areas and most people have money either because of income or because of the social welfare grants, there is an incentive to start buying products and leave the fields fallow. This can be seen as what Vorster et *al.* (2011) call the adoption of more modern lifestyles by which people start to change their dietary patterns and nutrient intake. Within the context of the conventional FNS approach, this means that there are changes for some of the pillars such as access to food or availability of food. However, regarding nutrition, enough available foods does not immediately mean that a healthy and sustainable diet is pursued. Furthermore, this is also related to the nutrition transition in which people adopt a different dietary pattern and start to consume certain food products to a different extent.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of three main overarching concepts namely food culture, the sociological taste and social practices. The results of this thesis also build further upon these concepts whereby it mainly focusses on food culture and social practices approach. These will be examined in relation to the contextual concepts such as food security and the nutrition transition which also relates to health. After the explanation and theoretical elaboration of these concepts, an operationalisation of these concepts is made in which the translation of theory into reality is shown. Thereafter, the conceptual framework is presented which shows the links between the theoretical concepts. Lastly, the research questions are presented.

3.1 Food culture

In the field of nutrition and health, food has often been treated as a rather simple and fixed object (Chamberlain, 2004). Food used to be seen as something that is just necessary for life or just as fuel for living (ibid.). Such a definition of food is also given by our dictionaries in which food is often defined as something material and made up of different kinds of impersonal and material components (Meigs, 1997). Seeing food from such a point of view equates it as just something we need in order to survive and being nothing more than a biological need. However, it has also been acknowledged in the academic literature now that food should be seen as more than just a composition of nutrients since we are surrounded by food in our daily lives (Chamberlain, 2004). This means that food is a relational construct and that it is constituted in our social practices (ibid.). Therefore, it can also be argued that food is not static but always under construction and it is open to negotiation and change (ibid.).

Next to the aforementioned, food is also a cultural construct since culture can, for example, shape ones food behaviour and food choice (Lang et *al.*, 2009, p227). However, one thing that needs to be taken into account is that culture is acknowledged to be in transition and that it is influenced by broader societal processes such as globalization (ibid.). Just like food in itself, culture is also not static or fixed. The concept of *food culture* describes the totality of food beliefs and behaviours that are socially constructed (Lang & Heasman, 2015, p221). It explains the constellation of socially produced values, attitudes, relationships, tastes, cuisines and practices that can be exhibited through food (ibid.). Essentially, food culture encompasses the 'shared practices and meanings relating to food' (ibid.). Food cultures can be inherited from family or wider society, just so as they can be made within these structures (Lang et *al.*, 2009, p228). Using this terminology of food culture carries importance because it guards against reductionist and individualised understandings of enactments of food (ibid.). Doing this leads to a move beyond the focus on the individual, family or society which should grasp the social aspects of food and rather it becomes possible to unravel the practices around food which shape the enacted food behaviour (ibid.).

Food culture is something that people share by enacting the same practices and having the same embodied understanding of food. Because people can share food culture, it is also something that can bind them as well as divide them. How this distinction works is going to be explained now by the Bourdieusian explanation of the concept of taste.

3.1.1 Sociological taste

People share a certain food culture but this does not mean that all practices are enacted in a homogenous way since differences or variation may exist and, according to Bourdieu (1984), people can distinguish themselves. The key concept by which Bourdieu in his work explains how people distinguish themselves from others is the concept of taste. At a very early age, we internalize tastes and this is what guides us towards the appropriate social positions within society and thereby, the appropriate and corresponding behaviours are enacted (Bourdieu, n.d.). What follows is that taste divides us into distinct classes by which some people are bound to the taste of necessity whereas others can adhere to the taste of luxury (ibid.). Someone who has the taste of

luxury shows the possession of capital(s) in which Bourdieu distinguishes between economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital whereas someone bound to the taste of necessity is more restrained (ibid.). In other words, this means that people develop a taste for *what is available to them* (Williams, 1995).

The division between the taste of luxury and the taste of necessity also shows how class distinction can emerge (Bourdieu, n.d.). Between classes, there tends to be certain assumptions of appropriate foods. To exemplify this, fish is a food that could be seen as not suitable by the working class because it is perceived as a light food that does not appropriately fill up the stomach (Bourdieu, 1984). In the same account, certain foods are seen as foods that would only be eaten for health reasons or only by specific groups of people that need it such as invalids and children (ibid.). To characterize this a bit further, according to Bourdieu, the working class meal is characterized by plenty and by elastic or abundant dishes that are brought to the table (1984). The working class tends to go for products that are both cheap and nutritious and they tend to focus on products that give strength (ibid.). On the other hand, a bourgeois meal is mainly concerned to eat with all due form which implies certain expectations, pauses and restraints (ibid.). Furthermore, the professions prefer to use products that are tasty, health-giving, light and not fattening (ibid.).

Next to the concept of taste, Bourdieu also explains what makes up social practices for him in his well-known field theory in which the field, the habitus and capitals are described (Bourdieu, 1984). This thesis will not depart from this Bourdieusian explanation even though he has been at the heart of shaping this theory but rather this report draws from his concept of taste since it shows distinction and how people themselves can distinguish within the field of social practices. The social practice approach used for this thesis mainly follows the explanation of Shove et *al.* (2012) and is now going to be explained.

3.2 Social practice approach

Social practice theory departs from the longstanding sociological debate between agency and structure. This theory proposes that we should not use human agency nor the social structure as a unit of analysis but we should take the actual social practice as a unit of analysis (Shove et *al.*, 2012). Early thinkers in social practice theory, such as Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) make it clear that social structures do not just simply exist but that they are produced and reproduced in practices through interaction between actors and structures (Arts et *al.,* 2012). Bourdieu mainly contributed to this field of thinking by presenting his work on habitus whereas Giddens is known for his structuration theory (Arts et *al.,* 2012; Shove et *al.*, 2012). Practice theory regained attention at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century with work from Theodore Schatzki (1996) and Andreas Reckwitz (2002), exploring this approach in further depth (Shove et *al.*, 2012).

A practice, according to Reckwitz (2002) is a routinized type of behaviour consisting of several elements that are interconnected to each other. A practice forms a kind of 'block' that exists through the interconnectedness of these elements and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements (ibid.). What makes practice theory stand out from other theories is the place of the 'social' in the theory (Reckwitz, 2002). The social is not placed in mental qualities, discourse or interaction but in the practices and therefore, the practices are the smallest unit of analysis (ibid.). Schatzki defines practices as 'spatially-temporally dispersed, open sets of doings and sayings organized by common understandings, teleologies (ends and tasks), and rules' (Shove et *al.,* 2012; Schatzki, 1996). For the purpose of clarity throughout this thesis, henceforward the definition of Arts et *al.* (2012), building on Theodore Schatzki, will be used throughout this thesis. A practice is defined as *'an ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity'* (Arts et *al.,* 2012).

The observable behaviour of social practices is referred to as practice-as-performance but it is important to note that this is just the tip of the iceberg (see figure 1) (Spurling et *al.,* 2013; Shove et *al.*, 2012). Through actual performance, doing or carrying out the practice, we can see the pattern that is provided by the practice-as-entity (Shove et *al.*, 2012). The practice-as-entity is about the non-observable, macro aspects of practices (ibid.). It is that what is socially embedded that underpins the behaviour of the practitioners (Spurling et *al.,* 2013.). Over time, practices can emerge, persist, shift and disappear when connections between the elements of practices are made, sustained or broken (Shove et *al.*, 2012).
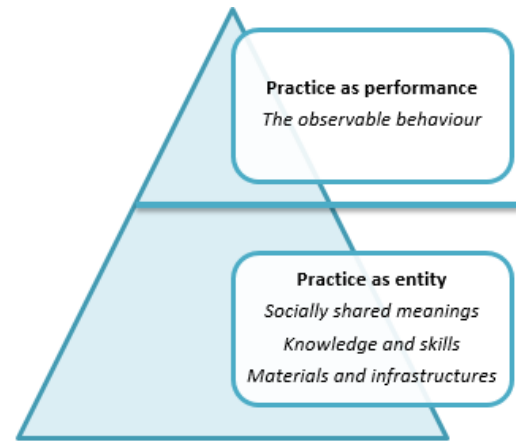
Figure 1 Tip of the practices iceberg (Adapted from (Spurling et al., 2013)).

Elizabeth Shove has provided three elements of social practices that are empirically helpful for understanding practices (Hargreaves, 2011). These elements are dynamically integrated in repeated performances that are carried out by skilled practitioners (ibid.). The three elements of social practices are:

1. Materials (or things) that make up social practices. These can be objects, consumer goods and infrastructures for example.
2. Competences needed to carry out the practice. A practitioner needs to have an understanding of the situation and practical know-how of how to carry out an activity.
3. Meanings that give direction to the practice. This includes embodied understandings of the social significance of the practice and past experiences of participation.

(Shove et *al.*, 2012; Hargreaves, 2011).

3.2.1 Taking a social practice lens to examine food and nutrition

In order to sociologically examine food, and thus see beyond food as a simple, material and fixed object, it is possible to look at food from a social practices lens. Domaneschi (2012) in this field also proposes the application of practice theory to food studies in order to get a better understanding of the increasing complexity of food issues. Furthermore, applying practice theory is helpful to investigate production and consumption of food within the same framework, bridging the gap between the sociology of food (mainly focussed on knowing food) and rural sociology (mainly focused on growing food) (Domaneschi, 2012). Taking a social practice approach to food studies thus has added value because it allows for comprehensive studies that leave room to touch upon multiple aspects of food. Furthermore, taking a social practice approach leaves room for the changes and processes to which food is exposed and thus it has the potential to show the dynamics of everyday life as well as how it evolves or changes over time (Shove et *al.,* 2012).

The consumption of food has already become a field for application of practice theory (Fonte, 2013). This practice perspective of food consumption also implies that food consumption must be understood as a much broader phenomenon that has to be examined as an integral part of daily life (Holm, 2013). Taking such an approach to consumption implies a certain shift in focus away from the individual perceptions of food to the logic of situations where food is purchased, cooked, served and eaten (ibid.). Even though consumption encompasses more practices than only the practice of eating food, it still limits the understanding of food and narrows the perspective on food. Henceforward this thesis focusses on social practices of food in order to consider all the relevant practices that are related to food. This allows for a broader and more holistic understanding about

practices that make sense of the world of food. For the purpose of this thesis practices that are enacted around food, are seen as a critical component of a specific food culture.

Food and nutrition in itself are not activities that can be carried out, but there are many activities related to food and nutrition such as cooking, eating and harvesting. Food is enacted because people carry out practices that revolve around food. Practices are made explicit because they are carried out or enacted by the competent practitioners that engage within the field. Furthermore, taking a social practices lens to food as a general concept allows for the fact that all practices surrounding food can be included within the constellation of food practices. This gives room for a more open exploration of food without developing a tunnel vision and thus the sociology of food and rural sociology can be brought closer together.

3.3 Operationalisation of the concepts

Within a designated area, a dominant food culture exists which encompasses the shared meanings and practices that relate to food (Lang & Heasman, 2015). Even though this is deeply embedded, it does not mean that every practice is enacted in the same way. Partly, this report explains this difference by borrowing from Bourdieu's concept of taste which explains that people can distinguish themselves (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus, food culture guides people towards culturally appropriate behaviour but people can also distinguish themselves by exploiting their own, internalized taste and from this, in a broader sense class distinction can emerge. However, taste is not the only concept that can show differences because differences can also occur in the ways that people enact their social practices of food. By having different elements of social practices at disposal, differences regarding social practices of food also occur. Focussing on the enactment of social practices of food is crucial because this makes it possible to unravel the meanings and assumptions that are attributed to food (Lang et *al.,* 2009) and thus it relates again to the shared food culture. Using a social practice approach to look at food can bring added value to the debate of FNS because it identifies daily food practices that are embedded in the wider nexus of daily practices and it furthermore allows for more comprehensive food studies (Domaneschi, 2012). Once a picture of daily food practices is sketched, it can allow for a more holistic and encompassing understanding of a specific food culture. Consequently, incorporating food culture within the domain of FNS can allow for approaches within this debate that are more context specific and move beyond the quantitative approaches that are currently dominant.

In order to be able to translate these concepts of the theoretical framework into reality, an operationalisation of the above defined concepts has been made. This is more especially important because there is no measuring line along which food culture, FNS or social practices can be measured and thereby said to be existing or absent from reality. Since measuring is exactly what this thesis tries to move away from, rather it uses a translation of the concepts to show how they are made explicit without presenting a checklist of boxes. Table 1 shows how the concepts of the theoretical framework were operationalised. The concepts encompass characteristics that made the abstract more concrete and thereby, identifiable in real life throughout the fieldwork phase.

Table 1 Translation of concepts for empirical observations.

Food Culture	Social Practices
What is eaten, where it is eaten, whom are eating, source of the food.	Materials used to enact practices of food.
Views regarding the importance of food and culture.	Competences needed to enact a practice of food
Important markers such as celebrations and ceremonies throughout the year.	Meanings that people attach to food and food practices.
Changes in food culture over time to identify the state of flux (agriculture and nutrition transition).	The shared understanding that is embedded in enacted food practices.
Differences by which people distinguish themselves according to their sociological taste.	

3.4 Conceptual framework

Because of the changes that form the context of this research (the changes are explained in chapter 2 of this report), a theoretical framework has been built to show the enactment and performance of food in a changing context. Furthermore, this theoretical framework and the corresponding conceptual framework are corresponding to the aim of this thesis because it constructs a way of making a qualitative assessment of the enactment of food. The conceptual framework is visualised in figure 2.
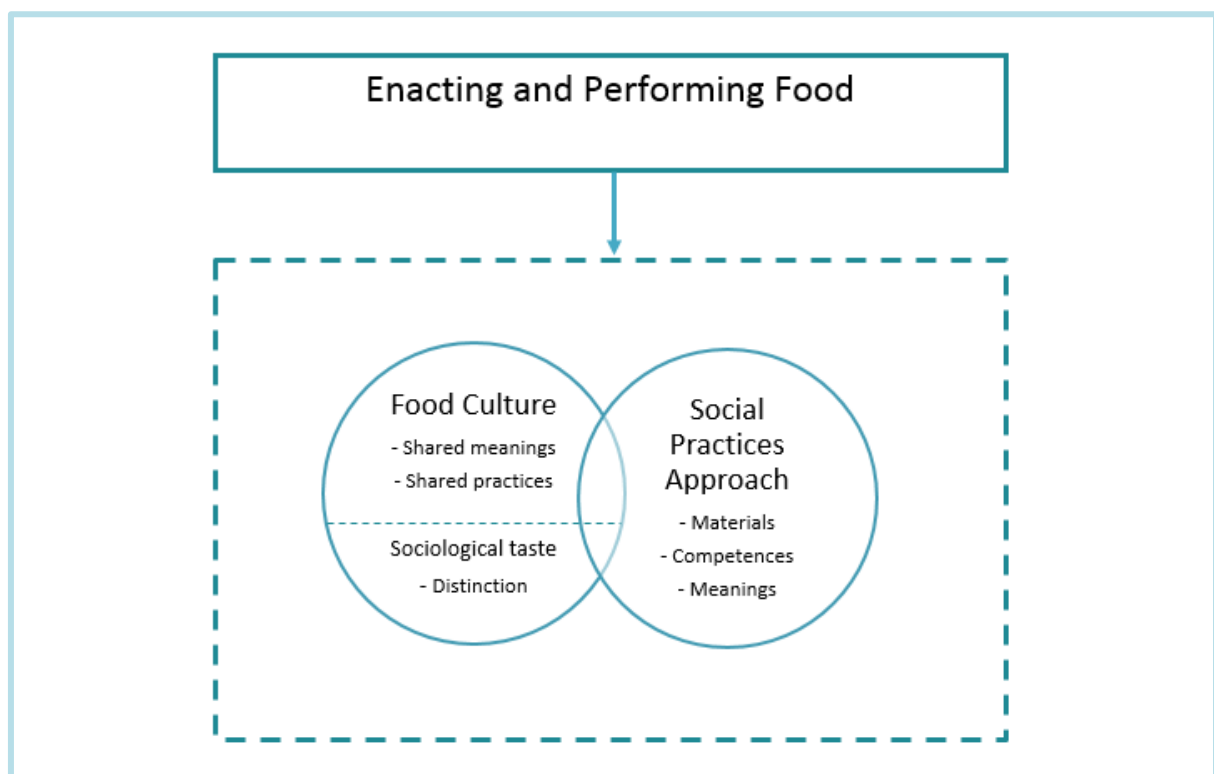
Figure 2 Conceptual framework

The visualisation of the main concepts and theories that are used for the analysis of this report shows some important links between the concepts. First of all, the dashed line that is shown as a box around the three main concepts shows the openness to negotiation and change which leaves room for inputs that come up from the context or from reality. It shows that these concepts are not static or fixed but that they are possibly influenced by outside processes.[1] Furthermore, the concept food culture and the theory about social practices should not be seen as homogeneous but rather differences or distinction can occur which is explained by the incorporation of the Bourdieusian explanation of taste.

The conceptual framework shows that there is something that people share which is explained by the concept of food culture, however within this differences exist due to the fact that people distinguish themselves according to their sociological taste. The fact that people share something does not mean that there are no differences. This also means that even though there is a shared aspect to social practices, the actual enactment can still be different and does not always have to include the same strict elements (materials, competences and meanings). This is shown by the part in which the three concepts overlap since they come together here.

3.5 Research questions

From the contemplations above, the following main research question is composed: ***How are social practices of food enacted within the changing context of rural South Africa?***

The main research question has been composed to alongside the aim of this thesis, which is to approach the FNS debate more qualitatively by applying a social practice approach in order to move towards a new unit of analysis within this study which allows to study the enactment of food. Thereby, this question also moves beyond FNS debates because it does not immediately target coping strategies or imposed policies but it really looks at what people themselves can enact. Furthermore, posing the question in this way allows to study the people from their context and leaving space for them to reflect reality without being pushed in a direction of FNS strategies.

The main focus throughout these questions and the report as a whole, is towards enactments and performances of food. Throughout this thesis, I use these concepts almost interchangeably and it needs to be pointed out that there are no real conceptual differences for the purpose of this report. Enacting will be mostly used to refer to food whereas performances will be used to refer to FNS but, as mentioned, there is no real conceptual distinction for the purpose of this thesis. Both these concepts express a *doing* of food or FNS.

3.5.1 Sub questions

In order to answer this main research question, the following corresponding sub-questions have been constructed:

1. What does the local food culture of the rural South African area look like and how has this changed over time?

The first sub question aims to gain insights in the local food culture. In order to know the context and the food environment in which this research has been carried out, it is important to sketch a clear picture of the local actualities and the happenings on the ground. In relation to the main research question this sub question targets enactment that is locally appropriate within a specific food culture. Furthermore, in order to gain more insights in the contextual transitions and changes, the element of time has been added to this question, allowing to look

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[1] In this case the nutrition transition and de-agrarianisation.

into historical accounts and into future expectations. The element of time allows to consider the fact that people are enacting and not the subjects to some kind of existing structure.

2. Which social practices of food are enacted within a specific food culture of rural South Africa?

The second sub question targets the identification of the most important enactments within the social practices of food. It allows to make an overview of the social practices of food as they emerge from its context. The enactment of practices are central to this question and by identifying the types of practices, it fills a part of the main research question. It is important to make a clear overview in order to give a more concise answer to the main research question.

3. How do people living in rural South Africa perform food and nutrition security themselves?

The third sub question aims to how people enact and perform food and nutrition security themselves. It tries to find an answer to the performances of FNS in which the social receives special attention. This question targets more what people demand and how they enact their demands by themselves. This sub question aims to generate an answer to the culturally appropriate enactment of social practices of food that people pursue to secure themselves.

4. Methodology

This chapter explains the methodology that was at the heart of this thesis research. In this chapter of the report the research design, methods, sampling strategy and data analysis will be explained. Additionally, the strengths and limitations and ethical considerations are discussed and finally, the case study site is introduced.

4.1 Research design

For conducting this master thesis research, a qualitative case study design was used which allows to holistically understand the problem that was studied, from its context. Corresponding to this design, the research makes use of qualitative data collection methods and draws from multiple data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Using a variety of data sources allows the phenomenon to be studied from multiple lenses whereby a variety of facets can be revealed and understood (ibid.). All data sources have their own value and are believed to contribute to this research in their own ways. The specific case study at the heart of this research is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Multiple qualitative data collection methods (interviews, participant observations, food diaries) and data sources (primary and secondary) were used in order guarantee method triangulation and data source triangulation. Method triangulation helps to expose information that would have remained undiscovered when merely relying on one method, whereas data triangulation helps to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a problem (Thurmond, 2001).

4.2 Methods

In order to collect data for this thesis, four data collection methods were used. Desk research was conducted in the Netherlands whereas fieldwork has been conducted in South Africa by using food diaries, participant observations and semi-structured face-to-face interviews. First, the desk research is explained and then the fieldwork methods are going to be explained as a threefold approach forming a coherent trajectory to which respondents were exposed.

4.2.1 Desk research

Desk research has been conducted with a twofold goal. First, it was useful to conduct desk research in order to explore the context prior to leaving for fieldwork. Second, it allowed to engage with the academic concepts and to explore these in order to be able to collect relevant fieldwork data. Amongst other things, the desk research has been at the core of chapters two and three.

For the desk research, literature has been read of relevant contextual literature in order to explore the research topic and research site even before entering the actual field. From the literature relevant background information was obtained in order to get a better understanding about the research specific situation in the Eastern Cape of South Africa and thereby, allowing the researcher to gain insights in some of the sensitivities beforehand. After returning from the field, more literature was read about sensitivities that occurred to the researcher whilst being in the field (e.g. understanding rural livelihoods in the Eastern Cape from the literature). In order to find relevant literature, different search engines were used such as Google Scholar and the online library service of Wageningen University and Research (WUR). Relevant search terms for the literature review, used in combination with 'AND' and/or 'OR', were: "food security", "nutrition transition", "health", "food culture", "rural livelihoods", "South Africa", "social practices" and "Eastern Cape".

4.2.2 Fieldwork methods

The fieldwork phase lasted for two consecutive months during October and November of 2017, allowing the researchers to gain more in-depth, context specific information. Two master thesis researchers from the WUR conducted fieldwork at the same time and therefore, henceforward, the co-researcher will also be mentioned

sometimes. Even though we managed our own data there have also been overlapping tasks and since all the interviews were conducted together, transcribing tasks were shared among both researchers.

The following data collection methods that are described below (food diaries, participant observations and semi-structured interviews), formed a coherent trajectory during the fieldwork phase, in which the respondents were exposed to all three methods. The trajectory (see figure 3) begun with the introduction of the food diary book to the household and thereafter, the researchers regularly passed by to check on the book and to see whether the respondent had any questions. No appointment was made for the introduction of the researchers or the research since it was explained that it is not needed to make appointments and it is culturally just to pass by someone's house whenever you want to speak to them. This first phase of the trajectory was simultaneously important to build a relationship between the researchers and the respondents that was based on mutual trust. After some days, an appointment was made and the participant observations were conducted with the respondent in which the researchers participated in a food related practice. In most cases, the final step in this trajectory was to conduct the semi-structured interview. Over the course of the first four weeks of fieldwork, eight households were included in the trajectory and during the latter four weeks, another eight were included. In total, sixteen households were thus included in the trajectory method. Figure 3 visualises the fieldwork trajectory over the course of four weeks.[2]
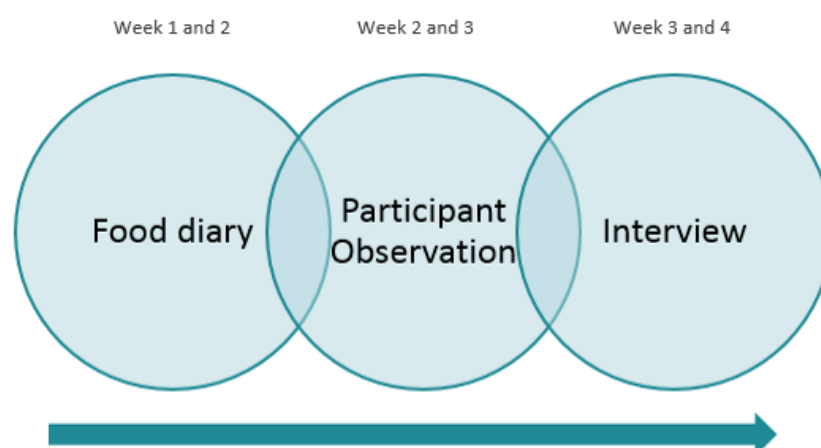
Figure 3 Visual representation of the fieldwork method trajectory

4.2.2.1 Selection of the research respondents

In order to conduct this research, a nonprobability sample was drawn. Nonprobability samples are perceived as being suitable for labour-intensive, in depth-studies (Bernard, 2011). Furthermore, these kind of samples are also appropriate for collecting cultural data (ibid.). A twofold sampling method was used, that consisted of convenience sampling and snowball sampling in order to get a representative list of respondents. The first set of eight households, included in the trajectory method, were sampled in consideration with the sub-headman of Number Five and the translators. They included people which they considered relevant for our study purposes after explaining our studies to them. They mentioned that some people had a field or a grinding rock which would be interesting to see for people that are studying food. The second set of eight households were sampled in consideration with the translator. In this set, some inclusion criteria were drawn in order to make sure to include households that are geographically less centrally placed in the village, households that are considered poor and

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[2] There were some exceptions to this visualisation due to people having limited time available but in general, this was the trajectory followed over time with most of the respondents.

households consisting of 'young families'. These household characteristics were not found in the first sample and therefore, these inclusion criteria were necessary in order to make the sample more comprehensive and representative.

4.2.2.2 Explanation of the methods

Sixteen food diaries were collected in order to gain insights in the diet of the respondent and his or her household. A food diary is a well-known method that is used to gain insights in a person's or a household's diet (Bellisle, 1999). During the first introduction of the researchers and the respondent in question, the food diary book was handed to the respondent (together with a pen) and left at their house. The respondents were asked to keep a food diary book for seven to ten consecutive days. The food diary book contained standardized forms about the household food consumption (see appendix A). In order to guarantee for data loss, the food diaries could be filled in either in English or in Xhosa, depending on the preference of the respondent. Furthermore, the researchers regularly checked upon the respondent in order to deal with difficulties, answer questions or help with filling in the diary. Some respondents needed more help than others (e.g. being unable to write) and therefore, were visited on a more regular basis. For the second sample group, the food diaries were not only explained but the researchers also made sure to fill out the first meal with the respondents. If the researchers passed by at a time where the participants just had breakfast, it was made sure to fill in that meal together. In that way, the respondent always had an example to look back into when he or she needed some support with filling in the diary. Before going to the field, relevant literature about conducting food diaries was read and also a draft of the food diary form was composed and discussed. In the field, the form was altered and finalized. Also the Xhosa translation of the categories was added in the field. Thereafter, the forms were written down by hand and handed out to the respondents.

More than sixteen participant observations were done during the fieldwork phase. At least sixteen of these were conducted with the respondents included in the full trajectory the others just happened over the course of being there and people wanting to show us more food practices. The use of participant observations allowed the researcher to get close to the people involved and making them feel comfortable with the presence of the researcher, so that the researcher can observe and record information about the daily lives and activities of the subjects (Bernard, 2011). For this master thesis, a special focus was put on the activities that regard food and therefore, appointments were made with the respondents to, for example, cook and eat with them or help them do groceries. The researchers were considered a participating observer since they were outsiders who participated in some aspects of daily life that they were surrounded by and recorded what they could (ibid.). One limitation was that it was advised against going to the field during the evenings, nights and weekends. Therefore, the participant observations were all conducted during the weekdays in daylight.[3] From the participant observations, field notes were drawn on a daily basis in order to prevent data loss by forgetting important impressions. Throughout the day, field jotting were kept in a notebook in which notes or impressions could be written down on the spot (ibid.). This allowed to remember happenings more clearly and make more comprehensive field notes at the end of the day.

Sixteen semi-structured interviews, approximately lasting one hour, were conducted in order to gain data from the people living in the field that are being exposed to the research problem on a daily basis. Before going to the field, the WUR modular skills training *interviewing techniques* was followed to prepare the researcher for conducting interviews in the field. This allowed the researcher to practice with setting up interviews and conducting interviews, knowing the important characteristics of interviews and what to take into account. Semi-

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[3] Since method triangulation applies to this research, data about food practices during weekends and evenings was still gathered.

structured interviewing is based on the use of an interview guide, a written set of questions and topics that are going to be covered in a particular order (Bernard, 2011). Before going to the field, a list of relevant topics and themes was drafted which corresponded to the research proposal in order to ensure collection of all relevant data. Consequently, this guide was discussed and altered. After being introduced to the field, some more context-specific questions were added to the guide (e.g. about the December celebrations). Before conducting the first interview, the final interview guide (see Appendix B for further notice) was composed by the two researchers. The final interview guide has been the leading thread through all the conducted interviews of the households included in the full trajectory. The guide was composed in a way that aimed to avoid question-order bias by trying to create a funnel. First posing the big, open questions and only thereafter probing certain more specific issues.

For each individual interview, appointments were made in which the expected time of the interview was being mentioned to the interviewee. At the beginning of each interview, a standardized introduction was given to each interviewee mentioning the purpose of the interview, confidentiality and what would happen with the results (see appendix B). At the end of each interview, respondent specific questions that arose to the researchers from either the food diary or the participant observations, were added and asked to the respondent as well. Each interview was recorded, with the consent of the respondent and thereafter transcribed by one of the two researchers. The transcribed interviews were consequently shared among the researchers.

4.2.2.2.1 Additional fieldwork methods

Three additional (semi-structured) interviews were conducted that did not fall within the scope of the trajectory method but could still enhance the research because it allowed to gain more insights in the context of the research site. Two of these interviews were history interviews with local authoritative individuals and the other was an interview with the elders from the elderly project. For these interviews, some questions were also drafted (see appendix C). These interviews were not recorded but intensive notes were kept throughout the interview. This way, a more informal setting was created and less of an interview atmosphere was established.

As these interviews were more informal, the composed set of questions mainly served to be prepared for the interviews as a researcher and to guide people when they did not know what to tell anymore. However, as researchers, we did not follow these guides too strictly. For example, not all questions that were drafted beforehand could be asked in the interview with the elders. In the end, only three broad questions could be asked since there were multiple people at the same time and they all needed time to give their answer. However, throughout giving their answers they already touched upon many aspects that would have been asked in follow up questions. By conducting the interview in this way, it almost resembled to be a focus-group discussion.

4.2.3 Operationalisation of the fieldwork methods

Table 2 gives a more concrete operationalisation of the concepts that were targeted by each fieldwork method. Furthermore, the factors that indicate a certain concept and by which it can be exposed are revealed and an example is given how this was eventually put into practice in the field.

Table 2 Concepts that were explored per method

Fieldwork method	Concepts	Factors	*Example*
Food diaries	Food and Food Culture	What, who, where, where from	*See appendix A.*
Participant observations	Food Culture	Shared understanding	*Experiencing shared cooking practices.*
	Social Practices	Materials, competences	*Using appropriate materials and understanding needed skills.*
Semi-structured interviews	Food Culture	Change	*How do you perceive new food products?*
	Social practices	Meanings	*In what ways is food important to you?*
	Food Security	Health, food groups, feeling	*How do you ensure that there is enough food in the household?*
Additional interviews	Food culture, culture	Change over time in Number Five (also in relation to food) and historical matters	*How has Number Five changed over time? Could you describe food from 'the olden days'?*

4.3 Data analysis

Throughout the data analysis, qualitative researchers attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what they studied and it serves the purpose of critically and continually refining the interpretation of this data (Basit, 2003). The recordings of the conducted interviews were all transcribed and thereafter, coded. Coding has an important role during analysis for purposes of organising data and making sense of contextual data (ibid.). To begin, all interviews and field notes were categorized and highlighted intuitively, allowing the researcher to get a first grip on all collected data and creating an overview of categories. Furthermore, this allowed the researcher to read over all the data again and thereby allowing to make a first rough analysis. Subsequently, the interviews and field notes were coded using the same conceptual coding tree (see Appendix F). The categories were composed to match the most important concepts of this thesis (e.g. food culture, FNS, social practices). Additionally, some categories were added that came up as important during the first intuitive coding session. All coding was done by using a coding tree that was composed in Microsoft Excel. The coding of the transcribed interview document and field note document was done using the codes of the coding tree and adding them to a column next to the text in Microsoft Word. This system of coding relied on using textual codes as well as colour codes. The colour codes allow the researcher to see the main category that the piece of text falls under, whereas the textual code divides this further into a more specific sub code.

The food diaries were also analysed more qualitatively since the diaries are not statistically relevant to draw any conclusions from and quantitative conclusions are outside the scope of the research. All of the diaries were analysed in order to gain insights about whether people differentiate between weekends and weekdays. This analysis was simply a matter of inclusion criteria and thereafter counting the meals that matched with the criteria. These criteria were that a meal should consist of a staple, meat or fish and vegetables. In order to gain insights about the food groups that people generally consume in their diet. Six of the diaries were coded in order to get insights in the food groups that people consume throughout the week. The coding format used for these

six food diaries can be found in appendix D (additionally an example is given of how the codes were used in the recorded meals). From the codes, the food groups most eaten could be counted and analysed.

4.4 Ethical considerations

When the researchers entered the field, the local authorities were taken into account in order to enter the field correctly and not to undermine the locally appropriate structures. The research was fully explained to the sub-headman of the village whose consent was asked and thereafter given to the researchers. During this meeting, both parties involved (the researchers and local authorities) had a chance to ask each other questions and clarify their expectations. In this meeting the researchers placed an emphasis on the fact that we did not come to 'bring' anything and if anything, the research results would potentially only have an impact after a considerate amount of time. After this meeting, the sub-headman took the task upon him of talking to higher local authorities and letting people in the village know about our presence. This way, people in the village would also know that the local authorities were respected and that we tried not to disturb any local rules.

Regarding response, all respondents were asked informed consent verbally by the researchers. Firstly, consent was asked from the respondents to participate in the trajectory as a whole. Secondly, when the semi-structured interviews were conducted, consent was asked again from the respondents regarding the recording of the interview and the use of information in the final report (see Appendix B, introduction of the interview). Furthermore, the research respondents are anonymized in such a way so that their words cannot be traced back to them directly (See Appendix E for pseudonyms and anonymization). The translation of the anonymization into the given names of the respondents remains with the researcher and will never be shared to other parties. Next to the informed consent and the anonymization of the respondents, the respondents were also told that we were not coming to bring something and that the research that was being conducted, would have no direct benefits for them. The research can only have an effect in the long run and thereby it was explained that their participation was on a voluntary basis. At the end of the fieldwork phase, a get-together was organised for all the respondents in which Dutch food (amongst other things stamppot and pannenkoeken) was cooked for them and a speech was held. This way the researchers also showed them something of our food culture and it was also a way of expressing our gratitude.

The main translator for this study was of critical importance and therefore he was paid a locally appropriate wage and also given a personal gift. The wage was calculated in consideration with some of the involved parties. The working hours during the fieldwork phase were not fixed since some days there were more activities scheduled than others. Additionally, working hours were always open to discussion and this left room for the translator to fulfil his obligations that he had next to helping us. As we were not working in the evenings and the weekends, this also allowed for and respected the appropriate personal space and time for the translator.

4.5 Limitations and strengths

There are three limitations which can be identified for this research that may have an impact on the overall quality of this report. First of all, there is no baseline study that this research can draw from in order to put the nutrition transition and agricultural change into perspective. Therefore, this research relied entirely on the changes that have been identified by the respondents themselves. Secondly, working with a translator leads to a 'double interpretation'. The answer was in most cases first given to our translator and then given to us and only a few interviews were conducted in English. Thereby, the answer is first interpreted by the translator and thereafter, by the researchers. Thirdly, the fact that the researchers where white people, could have influenced this research. People found it quite special that white people were coming to their houses and this has had an

influence on the behaviour of some people. For example, some people expressed that they cooked meat because we were around even though we asked them specifically not to do anything special.

Even though this research has its limitations, it also has its strengths. First, the collaboration with Rhodes University has made it easier to access the field by which the researchers were trusted and introduced to the field in a locally applicable way. Furthermore, by presenting our proposals in Grahamstown, I also got feedback from people that know the field and thereby got valuable feedback. Secondly, a strength of the research is working with a local translator that is good in translating and has a good connection to other community members. This allowed for a good atmosphere and no constraints due to the fact that people did not want to be around the researchers or the translator. The enthusiastic commitment of the translator was very valuable and one of the core strengths of this thesis since there were no disturbances or difficulties. Thirdly, data source triangulation and method triangulation allowed for a more holistic understanding of the problem. Primary and secondary data sources were used and multiple methods were enacted. This allowed to crosscheck information but also to complement information.

4.6 Introducing the research site

Henceforth, this thesis will funnel down to the issue that has been researched within its context. First, the Ntabelanga Lalini Ecological Infrastructure Project (NLEIP) will be explained and how it relates to this thesis. Then, the sampling process of the research site is going to be explained and thereafter, basic information about the actual village, called Number Five, will be given.

4.6.1 NLEIP

The Ntabelanga Lalini Ecological Infrastructure Project (NLEIP) was launched in 2014 and it mainly revolves around the construction of two large dams in the Tsitsa River catchment (Botha et *al.,* 2017). The construction of these dams should help the area to move towards a new future by improving institutional capacity, leadership, ecological infrastructure, agriculture, independence and resilience (Fabricius et *al.,* 2016). The construction should bring more productive agriculture to the Ntabelanga and Lalini area (ibid.). One indirect outcome of NLEIP should be *"to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"* (ibid.). This thesis contributes to the project because it adds to the research on the area and it contributes to gaining insights in the assumed indirect outcome that was just mentioned.

One of the themes that NLEIP wants to look into in order to gain knowledge of the catchment is livelihoods. A research topic concerning this theme is *current livelihood strategies and their changes over time* (Fabricius et *al.,* 2016). This thesis aims to contribute within the field of the aforementioned research topic since it deals with livelihood strategies that people pursue in order to make themselves sure of food and nutrition. In order to contribute to NLEIP, the sampled village was situated within the Ntabelanga-Lalini catchment.

4.6.2 Sampling the Research Site

The research site was selected purposively in collaboration with Rhodes University (Grahamstown, South Africa) and the researchers working for NLEIP. The sampled village had to adhere to some specific demands. First of all, the village had to fall in the catchment of the NLEIP project (see figure 4) since more research in that area was, and is still, needed. Secondly, the village had to be accessible without the use of a four-wheel drive vehicle, allowing the researchers to consider the budget and to enter the field on a daily basis without having to worry about infrastructural issues. Thirdly, the village needed to be safe and have a trustworthy headman in order for the researchers to enter the field. Fourthly, the issue of trustworthy and good translators was taken into account when selecting the research site. Lastly, research fatigue or respondent fatigue was taken into account so that

this would not lead to unexpected difficulties in the field. Considering all this, Number Five was selected as a good research site that corresponded to all the selection criteria for conducting the study.

Figure 4 The NLEIP catchment, situated in South Africa just below Lesotho

4.6.3 Number Five

The village where the research has been conducted is called Number Five and situated in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Figure 5 shows the location of Number Five within the NLEIP catchment. Number Five is part of Hlankomo, which consists of fifteen rural villages situated along the Hlankomo River. The Hlankomo River is an integrating element for these villages. The headman[4] that takes care of all these villages is living in Number Five, as well as the appointed sub-headman for the specific village of Number Five.
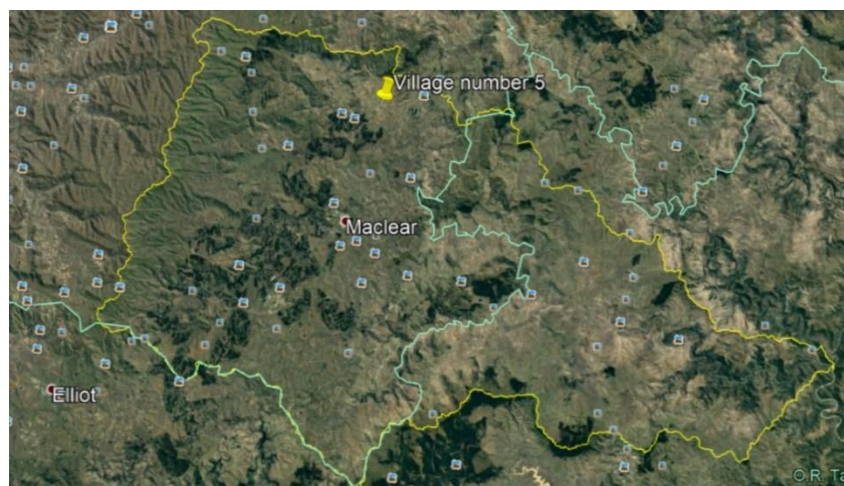
Figure 5 Number Five in the NLEIP catchment

4.6.4 History of Number Five

The history of Number Five is transmitted orally and therefore, the story that you will get when you ask about the history depends on whom you ask it. Furthermore, stories are not necessarily attached to a specific date but remembered by what kind of year it was (e.g. a lot of floods that year). What is clear from these stories is that when people started to settle around the years 1901 and 1902, originally it was a mixture of Xhosa and Sotho

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[4] The use of headman and chief are almost used interchangeably in Number Five.

people. From the 1960s onwards, more people started to settle down and Number Five became a convenient place to do so since there was already an established settlement. During this time, the place also became more civilized since the independence of the former homelands brought a lot of changes. People had to move away from traditional ways of living. In the past, there have been some political struggles over the topic of chieftaincy, fights in which people died and plagues that exterminated livestock. Another memorable event that happened was the visit of Nelson Mandela to the village who helped building the high school after being moved by the attempt of the people themselves to build this school. Thereafter, he also came back to open the school.

4.6.4.1 The name Number Five

The reason behind the name *Number Five* also remained mysterious throughout the entire fieldwork phase. Several people were asked why Number Five was given this name since the surrounding villages did have more indigenous names and it strikes as being a bit odd. In the end, multiple stories were told about Number Five and its name but no one could confirm anything about the actual naming of the village. The first story that goes around about the name of the village is that the early settlers established five houses and therefore, was given its name. The second story that goes around is that Number Five was the fifth bus stop along the route and when you had to go there, you had to tell the driver you were going to bus stop number five. The third story is that Number Five was previously called Number Three but that this has somehow changed over time. Additionally, we were told that naming the village was important in order to differentiate between Number Five and its neighbouring village since they were first sharing the same name. For the purpose of sending letters, the villages had to be renamed.

4.6.5 Characteristics of Number Five

Throughout the fieldwork phase, no one could tell us the exact number of people living in Number Five. However, we were told that approximately 200 homesteads are situated in Number Five. One of the key informants got this information from the counting that was done for the electricity works. At the time of fieldwork, there was no electricity in the village but at that time, Eskom[5] was installing the infrastructure for electricity. The residents of Number Five had been promised to have electricity at the end of September but at the end of November there was still no electricity in people's houses. In order to have electricity, some people used generators for their own purpose whereas others used electricity services from the school to charge their phones. Furthermore, paraffin was used to have light and for stoves to cook on.

Next to the fact that there was no electricity, there was also no infrastructure for tap water but there are multiple wells in the village that people use for collecting their water. It is assumed that this water is ground water coming from the mountain against which Number Five is situated. Image 2 demonstrates the village that is located at the foot of a so-called 'mountain'. One might conclude from the picture that it is not really a mountain but more like a very steep hill. Due to this mountain people living in Number Five always have access to water. Sometimes they may not have enough water for purposes of irrigation but at least there is always water to cook, drink and

Image 2 The mountain against which Number Five is situated (Own photograph)

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[5] The South African electricity public utility
http://www.eskom.co.za/OurCompany/CompanyInformation/Pages/Company_Information.aspx

wash. Water coming from the wells seemed to be of good quality as it was really clear. However, no samples were taken to prove that this water is indeed safe drinking water since that was outside the scope of this research.

During an initial talk with local authorities, it was mentioned that there are two small shops (spaza's) in the village. In these shops, foodstuffs are sold such as cooking oil, mealie meal, sweets and fizzy drinks. Additionally, some other items are also sold such as toilet paper or aspirins. These two shops are the more formal shops and are not owned by people that reside in Number Five but it became clear that there are also more informal shops owned by people from Number Five. These are kind of tuck shops that people have at their home from which they sell foodstuffs but also additional small items such as matches and toilet paper.

Furthermore, there are taxi busses that depart from Number Five in the direction of Maclear or Mount Fletcher. This means that there is a daily flow of mobility with people that come into the village (e.g. to visit someone) and people that leave the village (e.g. to do groceries). It costs approximately 30ZAR to take a taxi to town and if you buy big groceries, you have to pay a bit more when you want to return. Since there is a constant flow of mobility coming in the village and going out of the village, Number Five does not only express intra-communal relations but also intercommunal relations. Number Five is shaped by the forces of mobility, by its surrounding towns and villages that mutually shape each other due to exposure.

Regarding health care facilities, Hlankomo has a clinic where people can go that are in need of medical support or medical advice. If a person is unable to go to the clinic, the clinic also has some facilities to arrange a home visit. Next to the clinic, there is also a social care project for elderly people for which people are eligible from the age of 60. Elders can come to this project that takes place every weekday, except for Thursdays. The project does get some funding from the government but it is carried out by locals. Initially, the project was also a local initiative and it only got funding after it was already a running project. The aim of this project is to beat loneliness in elderly people. During the weekdays, the elders share a meal together. In the project, the elders get breakfast upon arrival, a snack in between served with tea and lunch. Throughout the course of the day, the elders do some activities such as making some crafts or even some physical activities as throwing a ball. Additionally, the elders can also get their medicine at the project so they do not have to go all the way to the clinic.

5. Number Five within the larger context

Village Number Five is not isolated but it is connected to the region, the province, other parts of South Africa and even to other parts of the world due to the fact that in this case there are ongoing flows of communication and mobility. This chapter is therefore going to elaborate on the context in which village Number Five is situated whereas the following empirical chapters will focus more on what is happening within Number Five. First this chapter takes a different lens and thereafter the report will zoom in on Number Five more specifically and really dive into the core of the research.

5.1 Connections

As mentioned, Number Five and its residents are connected and not living in isolation. First of all, it is connected because it forms a part of the wider Hlankomo community which consists of fifteen villages within the same geographical proximity. Secondly, Number Five is connected because there are certain flows that go out of the village and that come into the village which are for example flows of people but also flows of communication. All of this is made possible by a wider infrastructure such as taxis and roads or a telephone network. This is now going to be explained in more detail.

5.1.1 Communication flows

Communication is important for the residents of Number Five and this also connects them. They communicate with people from the community but also with people living elsewhere. There are also flows of communication that do not require a lot of physical effort in the world of today and that can still connect people from different geographical places. Even though there was no electricity installed at the time of fieldwork, a lot of people were still able to use mobile phones that connect them to people at a distance. To connect with somebody all that is needed is a charged and working phone, network and some airtime which allows you to actually make the call. Most people did have access to these three aforementioned necessities. Mostly, the residents of Number Five did not depend on smartphones but on *older* models that do not connect to the internet. Therefore, most communications either happened through phone calls or through short text messages.

That people are busy with their phones and that they use them on a frequent basis was not difficult to grasp throughout the fieldwork phase. From the sixteen transcribed interviews there are six times that an interview was being interrupted because a phone was ringing or buzzing. Some people decided to pick up their phones whereas others decided to turn it off or to ignore it. In a casual conversation with one of the residents of Number Five (mister Wonga), he emphasised that phones on the one hand connect people but on the other hand, at the same time, also disconnect people. As he explained it, nowadays it is possible to sit with several together in one room but being disconnected from each other because people are busy with their mobile phones, connecting to other people in other places.

> When I see it [the 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. (Interview with Khanyiswa).

The foregoing quote exemplifies further that people connect to others and not only to have some small talk or to catch up but also in times of need. In this case, there are two family members of which one needs help. If the phone infrastructure would be non-existent or not working in this example, it would cause some problems because if the person asking for help would need to find an alternative way of communication such as sending a letter. If this would be the case, the communication flow would be much slower and the help would maybe come when it is not needed anymore.

5.1.2 Mobility flows

As mentioned, Number Five is not isolated and next to the aforementioned communication flows this is mainly due to the fact that there are daily flows of mobility. Next to being connected by communication, people are also connected by mobility. On the one hand there is an outgoing flow of mobility from Number Five. There are various reasons for people going out of Number Five and multiple examples can be found to show this. Sometimes people have to leave Number Five by taxi or car and go to town for example to withdrawal money from an ATM or to use the post office. There are certain services in town that cannot be found within the village and this forces people to leave the village and use the wanted service elsewhere. At other times, people leave the village on foot because they have to look for their livestock that is grazing somewhere in the communal lands. Either way, people are mobile and this carries new experiences into the village on a daily basis.

Next to the outgoing flow of mobility, on the other hand, there is also an incoming flow of mobility into the village. Just as there are various reasons for people to leave Number Five, there are also various reasons for people to come into Number Five. For example, people can come into Number Five because they return home from their shopping trip, want to visit their family members, see friends or because they work in Number Five such as the electricity workers of Eskom. Again, people coming into Number Five also carry their own experiences and understandings into the village and in a way thus carry something into the village that was not there the day before.

> Sometimes I do receive food from my daughter. **She doesn't live in this town (Number Five), right?** She lives in Mount Fletcher. **So when she comes to visit, does she bring something, or how does it work?** Whenever she's coming to visit me, she'll bring stuff like banana, long life [milk], apples, those kinds of nice things, whenever she's coming to visit me, she brings them, chicken and meat also. (Interview with Esihle).

The preceding quote shows that, in relation to food, flows of mobility can carry food or other goods into the village or out of the village. Especially when people come to visit someone, they are likely to bring some food with them. It does not per se matter what they bring and it does not have to be something that people from Number Five cannot get themselves but the gesture in itself is very important. Therefore, flows of mobility carry more with them than just a movement of a person. It can also become an exchange of experiences or goods which influences the parties that are involved.

5.1.3 Going to town

One expression that has often come up throughout the fieldwork phase, which also relates to mobility is that of *going to town.* Because people have several opportunities for mobility, they are able to go to, what they call, town. Most of the times, people talk about Maclear when they talk about town but Mount Fletcher is also referred to by using the same expression. These two towns are closest to Number Five and there are taxi services from Number Five going to both of these towns. Maclear and Mount Fletcher are both located along the R56 which is a provincial road.

> Yes, sometimes even in the week, when you get a chance to go to town, because it's cheaper.
> **The meat is cheaper?** Yes, most of the groceries are cheaper in town. Buying in town is cheaper than in the local shop. (Interview with Jikela).

Town thus fulfils some important functions since it provides goods and services that are not available in Number Five and furthermore, these goods and services are available at a cheaper price. This also seems to be an incentive for people that corresponds to the ongoing nutrition transition and the agricultural decline. During the

olden days, people did not use money and it also had little value then whereas now this has changed. People use money and therefore it makes it possible to use the services and goods from supermarkets for example.

5.1.4 Taxis

In order to go to town and enact this mobility, most people depend on taxis that actually function as public transport and only a few people have their own car available in order to go to town. It is possible on a daily basis to take a taxi from Number Five in the direction of Maclear and Mount Fletcher and sometimes also in other directions (e.g. Cape Town) and this trip takes approximately half an hour. From Maclear or Mount Fletcher it is then possible to take another taxi to the next town or city or to take a bus to the next destination. However, sometimes people do not take the taxi directly from Number Five but they decide to walk to Mdeni, which is a neighbouring village and take the taxi from there. Mdeni is located directly along the R56 and therefore taxis stop there on a more frequent basis.

October the 18th was a sunny day but most importantly, it was payday which is something that people look forward to. For a while now, we were just standing there in the sun looking at the dynamics of payday. On the opposite side of the road, people that had been standing in line for a while now, started to get their grant. Also on the opposite side of the road, some taxis were parked with the drivers casually leaning to the side of their taxi and chatting a bit to each other. After a while, once most people had received their grant, people started to scatter. Some went to the taxis, others went to buy something on the flea market and a few people went home directly. One of the taxi drivers came over to us and asked whether we also needed to go to town. Yes, he was right, we did want to go to town by taxi. He started to laugh and told us that first he had to pick up some people from the other village but then he would come back to pick us up. When he walked away he said: *"This is the first time that I will have white people in my taxi!"*

Vignette 1a Taking a taxi (Adapted from field notes, October 18th, Wednesday)

Even though a lot of people depend on these taxi busses, within South Africa, there is a bit of controversy about this way of transportation. Often these taxi busses are involved in a lot of accidents and sometimes these accidents have deadly consequences. Assumingly, this could be even more the case for taxi drivers that work on long drives. In Number Five, there were also taxis that arrived all the way from Cape Town which is approximately a fifteen-hour drive. Throughout the entire year but more especially during December time, the drivers want to make money and therefore they do not sleep properly. The key informant of this study told that often there is only one driver present on such a long distance so there is no opportunity of alternating and having some proper rest. In order to deal with this, the taxi drivers often consume energy drinks to be able to perform their task.

When the taxi returned from picking up other people, we got in the taxi and left. Some other people joined us as well. After five minutes or so, we headed off and gospel music started to play loudly from the speakers which left little opportunity to talk to some people. I did not feel unsafe and even on the contrary, I felt that the driver knew what he was doing and therefore I could enjoy the beautiful drive between Number Five and Maclear in the same way as everyone from the village does it.

Vignette 1b Taking a taxi (Adapted from field notes, October 18th, Wednesday)

5.1.5 Migration

Next to short term mobility and communication coming in and going out of the village, there are also migratory flows which are longer term flows and can even become permanent. From the previous quote it becomes evident

that this migration sometimes also comes with flows of remittances by which people still depend on each other. In times of need, people thus depend on their family members or friends that live elsewhere in the country.

> *How many members are currently living here?* *Currently only three, others are working in Cape Town. (Interview with Jikela).*

> *Ok, so your grandchildren also do not want to plough?* *No, they stay in Cape Town with their fathers. They don't want anything to do with that. (Interview with Cikizwa).*

These migratory flows also have some influence on the family composition in which people live together in the same homestead since people do not tend to live together as a nuclear family very often. For example, grandparents function as caretakers for their grandchildren or the father of a family is working in a city and therefore lives elsewhere. It is difficult to identify the amount of respondents for this research that live together as a nuclear family because there are a lot of variations in composition. However, even though families tend to live a bit scattered around the South African country, during December time they all come back together to Number Five which is exemplified in the following quote.

> *The whole family comes, yes, even the ones who come from Cape town, or those from Durban.* *And then you eat together?* *Yes you eat together, and you slaughter a pig and do some braai outside there [...], invite nearby people, enjoy ourselves, those who like music, they play a lot of music and young ones they keep on jiving, dancing. (Interview with Wonga).*

5.2 Grants

The social welfare grants are not only important on paper in the Eastern Cape from the statistics provided in Chapter 2, but being in the village for a while it is easily noted that the grants play an important role in the daily life of the residents in Number Five. The unemployment rate is high in Number Five and therefore, a lot of people depend on the social welfare grants as their main source of income. Out of the sixteen trajectory respondents, thirteen people mentioned the fact that they receive a grant. Ten of these were old age pensions and the other three are child care grants.

5.2.1 Payday

There are two ways by which people can get their grants that have been explained throughout the fieldwork phase, either they can get it in the village or they can go to town and withdrawal their grant from an ATM. Once a month the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)[6] comes to the village with their payday cars and from there, the payment is arranged. Others have the money deposited on their bank account and have to collect their money from the ATM in town. Most people know exactly when they will get their pay and therefore, payday does resemble an important marker in the month. Most probably, payday is not only important for the people but also for the retailers as it was not difficult to notice in Maclear that it got busier around this time of the month.

> *Sometimes I have to wait for the payday. Sometimes, I have enough money. It differs, it is not always the same. (Interview with Sonwabo).*

> *If I buy everything I need during the payday, I pay everything I want and need and put it here [in the rondavel], to buy again on the [next] payday. (Interview with Sisipho).*

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[6] http://www.sassa.gov.za/index.php/about-us/our-vision-mission-and-values

In a way, people live a bit from payday to payday which was also evident during a casual conversation. In December, people that normally get their money around the fifteenth of the month, would now get their grant earlier in the month whereas in January people would get their grant again around the normal payday date. This means that they would have to bridge a bigger gap with the same amount of money in a month of festivities which also brings obligations to people (e.g. contributing by bringing a gift). Throughout the casual conversation about this, it became clear that this caused worry to the person mentioning this problem. Normally, she knows exactly how to use her grant for the usual time span but when this is extended she starts to feel anxious.

5.2.2 Problematic aspects of the grants

> *I was born in 1968 [so that is 49 years old], still too young for an old-age pension*. ***Are you looking forward to that?*** *I don't want to die before I get it.* ***You want to benefit from it****? Yes! (Interview with Khanyiswa).*

Already resembled in the preceding quote, some problematic aspects regarding these grants can be identified and these also came up throughout the research. First, the dependency on the grants and the desire to receive a grant can be seen as problematic. For example, a household can be dependent solely on an old age pension but when this elderly person would pass away, the others receive no grant anymore to buy their groceries from. Furthermore, people have a certain fear for losing their grants because nowadays there is such a high dependency on them. One of the key informants of this study explained that this is evident due to certain rumours that go around. For example, people are told not to vote for the Democratic Alliance because it is said that when they gain power, they will take away the social grants and the food supplies. One thing that is for sure which came out of the fieldwork is that people do not want to lose their grants.

Second, the grant does not always seem to serve its purpose. For example, in the elderly project it became clear that a lot of elders act as a caretaker for their grandchildren. However, the child support grants often go to the parents and thus not to the actual caretakers that need the money in order to use for the children. In a way, it can thus not always be guaranteed that the money from the grant is actually used in some way to support the children for example through paying school fees or for nutritious food. There was one case in Number Five where the caretaker of three children was not the recipient of the child care grant. However, the recipient of the grant would each month buy food for the children using the grant money and bring it to the caretaker. In this way, the grant does serve its purpose but it cannot be guaranteed that this is always the case since it remains to be a matter of making personal arrangements.

Third, when payday has just passed, more people are likely to get drunk. The key informant explained that by getting drunk, people can show that they have money and this is something that they do want to show to others. Furthermore, people do not just drink one or two beers just because they enjoy the taste but when they drink alcohol, they drink to get drunk. This is problematic because the purpose of these grants is probably not to stimulate peoples alcohol consumption. However, after people have received their grant, it is not possible to regulate what they do with the grant.

5.3 Supermarkets

Because people have the opportunity to use a taxi that allows to be mobile and also because most of the people receive social welfare grants or have some sort of income, they have the possibility to buy their groceries from the supermarkets in town. In general, the product range is bigger in the supermarket than in the local shops that Number Five has. Furthermore, prices are a bit lower in the supermarket which provides another incentive to buy from the supermarket.

Yes, sometimes even in the week, when you get a chance to go to town, because it's cheaper.
The meat is cheaper? *Yes, most of the groceries are cheaper in town. Buying in town is cheaper than in the local shop. (Interview with Jikela).*

The supermarkets are not used by people from the village on a daily basis and by most people not even on a weekly basis. As has been elaborated on before, a visit to town or the supermarket often goes together with the time of the month, when it is payday. They use the supermarket to buy in bulk and they try to stock themselves for a month with the foods that do not expire quickly (e.g. cooking oil or mealie meal). This also saves costs of taking a taxi to town.

> *"I need ten KG of sugar, beans, samp..."* Ndiliswa was mumbling the groceries that she needed out loud while I strolled my way behind her around the Jumbo supermarket. I was looking around and anyone could tell that it was a mess in there since the supermarket was under construction but it was still open to the customers. Things were randomly stocked somewhere in the part that was not under construction which made it hard to find what we were looking for because there was no logic whereas usually, coming more often to the same supermarket, people know its logic and have their own ways of manoeuvring around. This also made it difficult to navigate our way with the shopping cart which actually looked more like a cart that you would get at a construction market. All in all, this made grocery shopping quite a challenge and time-consuming task but to me, it felt nice to be able to help Ndiliswa with her shopping trip. It was not only us helping her, but the employees were also very kind and willing to help which was a relief during this shopping trip.

Vignette 2 Going to the supermarket (Adapted from field notes, October 18th, Wednesday)

5.4 Concluding remarks

Connections between Number Five and other places or people exist mainly through communication and mobility for which the infrastructure such as roads, a taxi system and phone network are of importance. Next to the infrastructure, the material importance of taxis and phones also becomes evident because if they would not be present, these connections can hardly exist. These existing infrastructures and materials are also important in relation to the social grants for example because, if SASSA would be unable to come into the village and people cannot go to town, the residents of Number Five are unlikely to actually receive their grants. Therefore, this chapter shows that the material and infrastructural components that people from Number Five can exploit, are of critical importance to them and this also means that Number Five cannot be isolated from its context.

To conclude this chapter, Number Five cannot and should not be seen in isolation from its wider context. On the contrary, the wider context in which communication, mobility, grants, infrastructure and materiality becomes of critical importance and this is also true when we are going to start looking at more food specific issues in the following chapters. By including all these aspects and zooming out a bit first, an important step is taken because it shows that without the aforementioned aspects it would be hard to start exploring the core of this research.

6. Food Culture in Number Five

This chapter presents the results that explain the food culture of Number Five. Important aspects and perceptions of food in relation to culture are described. Furthermore, the changes in food and agriculture are presented in this chapter.

6.1 Important aspects of food culture in Number Five

The food culture of Number Five has some distinct characteristics that really shape it as unique. In order to identify the important aspects of food culture in Number Five the most important foods are first going to be explained. These foods and dishes are inherent to the food culture of Number Five because they express a shared, embodied understanding of the appropriate ways to deal with food. The course of the week and how these important foods fit within a 'normal' weekly diet is thereafter presented to put it more into perspective.

6.1.1 Important foods

> Yes, yes, yes! They [the maize products] are very, very important. Even the traditional beer that we always brew to honour our ancestors, is coming from that maize. (Interview with Langa).

Several foods carry importance for the existing dominant food culture in Number Five. First, maize is important and many dishes are prepared using some form of mealie meal[7] or white or yellow maize (see table 3). Maize is mainly important because it is used as a staple food that people either can produce themselves or buy in bulk at a relatively cheap price. Maize is one of the main staples used in Number Five and this is also expressed from the ingredients list of traditional dishes that is given in table 3. The table shows the main dishes and drinks that

people can make out of (grinded) maize or mealie meal. As the table shows, some dishes (e.g. inqodi, pap and soft porridge) are made by using the same two main ingredients namely, water and mealie meal. What makes the difference in these dishes, is the way in which they is prepared. Inqodi for example, is left to ferment whereas pap is cooked in a pot. Soft porridge is also cooked in a pot but with more water than pap, providing a different texture to the dish. Salt is usually added to pap whereas sugar is usually added to soft porridge. Whether this is done and how much is added is simply a matter of organoleptic preferences and taste. The use of maize based products is highly embedded in the food culture that is dominant in Number Five.

Image 3 Pap and spinach mixed with potato (Own photograph)

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[7] Mealies or mealie meal refers to a maize product. Usually, porridge or pap is made out of it and it is a staple food among black South Africans (Mwakikagile, 2008)

Table 3 Explanation of traditional dishes and drinks referred to in this thesis (drawn from field notes).

Name	Type	Ingredients	Additional ingredients (if preferred)
Inqodi	Non-alcoholic maize drink	Mealie meal, water	Sugar
Maize bread	Bread made out of maize	Intlama (dough from grinded maize), salt, yeast, water	Sugar, flour
Pap	Traditional maize meal	Mealie meal, water	Salt
Samp (and beans)	Traditional maize meal	White maize, sugar beans	Salt, spices, onion
Soft Porridge	Breakfast dish made out of maize	Mealie meal, water (more water than in pap)	Sugar
Steam bread	Bread made out of white or brown flour	Flour, yeast, salt, water	Sugar
Umqombothi	Traditional maize beer	Grinded maize, mealie meal, flour, water, sorghum (king corn)	X
Umvubo	Dish made out of papa or bread and (sour) milk	Mealie meal, water, sour milk or bread and sour milk	Salt

Second, next to maize, meat also fulfils an important role in the food culture of Number Five. Next to the fact that many people express that they like meat for its taste, meat also serves a more meaningful function in daily life since it is perceived as something special and not consumed on a day-to-day basis. Meat is often perceived as something special, having a deeper meaning than other foodstuffs and it serves as a meaningful food when a traditional custom is enacted. Next to having a deeper meaning, meat is also considered more special because it is not available on an everyday basis for everyone. Especially animals such as goats and cows carry special meaning since their spirits are valued highly. When such an animal is slaughtered, this is often done because there is a traditional custom going on such as an initiation ceremony. After slaughtering, all edible parts of the animal are prepared and consumed, nothing is left to waste.

6.1.2 The course of the week

Maize and meat are two important foods in the food culture of Number Five where maize or maize based products are used more on a daily basis but meat is often a bit more special and endorsed with a deeper meaning. Whether people perceive the weekend as something special differs from household to household. Some people change what they eat from day to day without distinguishing whether it is a weekday or a weekend. They just eat whatever they feel like eating and make a more special meal whenever they can afford to do so or whenever they feel like cooking. Others perceive the weekend as a time to eat more special food, mentioning that in the weekend they eat a *full meal.* A full meal consists of a staple (mostly maize or rice) vegetables and meat or fish and thus consists of three elements. Those people see the weekend as a time to enjoy themselves and they put a little bit more effort in their food in order to make a more special meal.

> *Of course, in the weekend I cook a full meal* **Oh, full meal, and what does a full meal look like?** *Rice, meat, potatoes, spinach.* **Ok, and then what does a week-meal look like?** *I just eat normal food, like umvubo, cabbage and pap, ordinary food. [...] Normally, this ordinary meal does not have meat, it is just pap and cabbage or this umvubo, but there's no meat. When I'm cooking meat in the weekends, I must have things that go along with meat, all*

the things that I mentioned to you, the source of vegetable that I said. That's why I don't consider it a full meal, if it doesn't have meat. (Interview with Esihle)

Table 4 shows the amount of week- and weekend days on which a full meal was consumed or a non-full meal. This analysis has been derived from all sixteen food diaries, in total 110 weekdays were recorded and 37 weekend days were recorded over these sixteen food diaries. Furthermore included in table 4 are the amount of times that meat was eaten together with a staple but without adding any vegetables. From the table, it can also be seen that meat does not restrict itself anymore to weekend days. It would be wrong to conclude that the amount of full meals consumed are much higher during weekdays because of course there are more weekdays than weekend days in a week. However, the table does confirm the feeling of some people that full meals are not restricted solely to weekends anymore.

Table 4 Weekday or weekend day (Food diaries, all sixteen)

Type of meal Type of day	Full meal (staple + vegetable + meat)	Non-full meal (staple + meat)	*Total amount of days*
Weekday	23	17	110
Weekend	10	5	37

6.2 Views on Food

How people perceive food differs but all respondents agreed that food is needed in order to live life. On the one hand, many respondents see food as fuel for living but when they were asked further about whether food also fulfils a social role, they also agreed to this. Next to fulfilling a biological function, food also fulfils a role that is culturally important.

6.2.1 Fuel for Living

All the respondents agreed that food fulfils an important function in daily life. At large, the respondents viewed food as fuel for living. Initially, most respondents did not really attach any other meaning to food such as that food is important for their cultural practices. To a certain extent, by having this fuel for living perspective, food was indirectly linked to physical health since crucial elements of a healthy feeling were mentioned such as that people feel stronger when they eat and they have more energy. They need that feeling to enact their daily activities.

It is important in such a way that if you do not eat, you can never survive, can never be able to live. You lose energy if you do not have food. (Interview with Khanyiswa)

Food is very, very, very important, very important. Because I live, I survive because of food. Because when I'm hungry, I want food and then when I have food, then, yeah, food is very important. (Interview with Langa)

I eat to make my stomach full and drink water. The benefit I get from eating is that I get full, my stomach is full. (Interview with Sisipho).

Throughout the interviews, some respondents expressed that they felt pushed to think about food in ways that they never thought about before. They really had to make their understanding of food explicit whereas normally it remains more implicit. The understanding is there but food has become something very ordinary in life,

something we do not think about very consciously on a regular basis, which made it hard for some respondents to translate their understandings into words. Because of this, it is no surprise that when people are asked about the importance of food, initially it is viewed as something needed to survive, as a biological need. All in all, helping us to survive is the first and foremost biological function of food since it helps people to grow, develop and have energy. In general, talking casually about food to someone, it is often about the organoleptic properties, the aspects that food brings to our senses. It is much easier to express this because what one senses, is more consciously experienced and therefore, easier to form an opinion about.

This view that the respondents express furthermore shows that they have to deal with the taste of necessity. Initially the respondents see food as an important supplier of strength and people want to obtain a satisfactory feeling of fullness after they have finished their meals. In this sense, eating is more equated with its biological function without taking for example social functions of food into account or health-giving properties of food. Being restrained by their available capitals, the respondents prefer to choose a meal that fuels them rather than choosing a meal that is composed of multiple organoleptic properties or fulfils other tasks.

6.2.2 Social Perceptions of Food

Even though food is initially seen as a biological need, being asked about it more specifically, probing the question about whether food is important in a social way, respondents also emphasize the importance of food for social life. Practically all respondents express positive feelings regarding the relationship between food and their social life. Food affects social life because people get a happy feeling when they eat together with others, it makes them feel warm inside. When you have a conversation over a nice meal, it gives a positive contribution to the conversation because in the meanwhile, you are sharing some food. This is the case when people eat together with their family members and relatives but also during more special occasions such as traditional ceremonies. In the latter case, food brings people together, it binds people because they are sharing the same food and enacting the same practice. Food is integral to special occasions such as weddings, funerals and initiation ceremonies, because it is not just about the people that show up but there must also always be food.

> *It has a happy effect, it touches my heart. [..] , I chose having my meal with other people [rather] than having my meal alone. [..] That is how I do it. It makes me feel happy to share the food. (Interview with Sonwabo)*

> *Yes, I think food has a positive effect on our social life. [...] If someone comes here and asks for something to eat and I happen to be at home, I give him. Our friendship then grows because of that thing, because of that food. (Interview with Fezeka)*

6.2.3 Perceptions of food in relation to culture

Most respondents expressed that they see food as an important part of culture. They see certain food products as important for their own culture whereas it might have less significance to people that have another cultural background. Others mention that food is important for culture because you must always have food in your house so in the case that someone comes over, you can dish for that person.

> *The food is always [important] in the way we are living. In whatever culture you're living, food is always the integral part of it. We can never go on with our lives without food. [...] Things I must always have for my culture are mealie meal, rice, flour, samp. (Interview with Khanyiswa)*

However, there were also two respondents that did not see any relationship between food and culture and this is exemplified in the two following quotes.

There is no food that reflects my culture. I just eat. I do not relate my eating with my culture. I don't know if what I eat has any meaning to my culture. (Interview with Thozama).

*They [foodstuffs] don't mean anything to me as far as culture is concerned. **Ok, do you think that people in other cultures eat similar foods?** I think they eat the same food. (Interview with Sonwabo)*

Even though some people do not see the relationship between food that is eaten in Number Five and culture, food is still an important and integral part of culture in Number Five. Vignette 3 shows how culture can still be seen as a shared understanding in which food plays an important role. Food shows an important part of culture because it is so inherent for people.

> We were about to leave Number Five and it had been a productive day. Me and the co-researcher went over to tell our host that we were leaving and that we would be coming back the following day. We asked her how she was doing while using our best Xhosa. Mama Noxolo was laughing and told us that she was proud because at least we had learned some Xhosa words and can have very small, basic conversations with people. She told us that she would love it if the two of us even 'Xhosalise' further so we can have a decent conversation together. Our translator started laughing and addressed mama Noxolo in Xhosa, then he turned to us and said: "At least, when you know something about our food, you know something about us. Xhosa language is not the only thing that represents our culture, it is only a part of our culture."

Vignette 3 Xhosalising (Adapted from the Field notes, November 7th, 2017)

As a researcher, having a different cultural background, it became quite clear that certain food practices are embedded in culture and that people do not even think that certain practices can be done in a different way. Certain perceptions about how to consume something are internalised and people simply do not know any other way in which something can be consumed. To exemplify this, the practice of drinking tea was interesting throughout the entire research. Often, coming to people's homesteads, the researchers and the translator were offered some tea that was most of the times accepted. However, the way in which we were drinking our tea, always led to surprise. In Number Five most people drink their tea with milk and sugar. Some people do not even boil water but they just boil milk in which they put their tea bag. For us, having different cultural backgrounds, we are used to have our tea without milk or sugar and we drink it by boiling water and adding a tea bag. Vignette 4 exemplifies further how such a practice can be rooted culturally and why people feel so surprised to see this daily practice, happening in another way than what they are used to.

It was a very hot day, the sun was burning outside and when we arrived, we were happy to get inside the rondavel to cool down for a bit. Mama Sisipho offered us inqodi, this is what they also call African Yoghurt, and we drank it willingly. The taste of inqodi keeps surprising me and even though It is not my favourite drink, at least it was somewhat refreshing on this burning hot day. When we had enough inqodi, mama Sisipho still looked at us worriedly. According to her, we did not drink enough of it to have energy to continue our day. I explained to her that our bodies are not yet used to inqodi because we do not have these maize products where we are from and therefore, we have to be a bit careful drinking it. I did not have the guts to tell her that I simply do not like it that much, it would probably have broken her heart. We proceeded to fill in the food diary book together, trying to find out what she ate over the past few days. After a while, Luxolo looked up at us and he said that mama Sisipho had been offering us tea now several times. He rejected the offer for us but now he felt that it was not appropriate anymore and that we should accept the offer and drink some tea so she could find her inner peace again. Mama Sisipho said that she would like us to drink from her new, special cups. She left the rondavel to get the cups for us from the other room. She came back and asked us whether these cups were appropriate to drink tea from. I told her that they looked beautiful and we would be happy to drink our tea from these cups. She still looked a bit worried, 'will they not break? Because the water is hot?' she asked us. Again we comforted her because after all, these cups were meant for tea or coffee so it would be rather strange if they would break from hot beverages. After the water was boiled and we poured ourselves some tea. Her face looked even more worried than before, she could not understand how it was possible to drink tea without milk or sugar. She shook her head. We explained to her that we are used to drinking our tea this way and that we actually prefer to drink tea without any milk or sugar. We like it like this! It even makes us happy if we can drink our tea without any milk or sugar. We were almost begging her to let us have tea in the way that we like it but she kept shaking her head. How could we like our tea like this? It was impossible to like tea without either milk or sugar. This time, we were unable to take away her worry and mama Sisipho kept looking at us while we were drinking tea, shaking her head. She expressed that she was sorry for us. How could we drink tea that does not have taste? Did the doctor advise us to drink our tea like this? This tea of ours, it must just taste like water, like nothing. Even when we finished our tea, and expressed our gratitude, she still worried.

Vignette 4 Drinking tea, a cultural embedded practice (Adapted from field notes, November 1st, 2017)

Vignette 4 was not the only time that people reacted surprised or worriedly to us drinking our tea. Some people started to ask more questions, for example, whether sugar is bad for people and if that was maybe the reason that we did not drink tea with milk and sugar. Clearly, there were different cultural understandings of the appropriate way in which you drink your tea.

6.2.3.1 Cultural differences

Next to drinking tea as a culturally different enacted practice, being a researcher with a different culture, two more things struck me. First of all, in my own culture I feel that there are more strict categories that classify a meal in the breakfast, lunch or supper domain. For example, yoghurt with muesli is appropriate to eat as a breakfast but to most people it does not classify as supper. In Number Five, this is more blurry and there is quite a big grey area about what classifies as breakfast, lunch or supper. Pap can be eaten for breakfast, lunch and supper and does not necessarily fall into one of these categories. This is also evident from the food diaries where pap is recorded as either three of these meal categories. However, on the other hand, soft porridge is a meal that does classify primarily as a breakfast dish even though it was also recorded as a meal for supper in one of the food diaries.

Next to the classification of meals, coming from the Netherlands, in which the potato plays a central role in the traditional diet, the usage of potatoes also struck me. In general, Dutch people do not see potato as a vegetable in the Netherlands but more as a starchy food whereas people in Number Five see the potato as a vegetable. In Number Five potato is often eaten with pap for example or it is mixed with spinach, cooked in oil, and then eaten together with a staple (also see image 3). In general, it is only a relatively small amount of potato that people add to their meal. They do not consume potato to get their stomachs full but really treat it like any other vegetable.

6.3 Sharing culture

One of the core characteristics of Number Five food culture is sharing. Sharing has always been an important characteristic of the dominant food culture and solidarity is an important underlying value in daily life. These norms and values show themselves when a food practice is enacted. One more practical example of sharing that shows eating practices of older times is eating from the same dish or plate. Before, at home or even during community events, people were all eating from the same dish and this would teach people how to share since it has a deeper meaning of combatting selfishness. Selfishness is normatively regarded as something bad because people would feel guilty when they would eat in front of others that are not eating. Eating in front of someone and not sharing this food would show a diversification between the haves and the have-nots. By sharing food, the haves and the have-nots are brought together, since no one can show off or feel less respected because everyone is eating the same food, in the same manner. Nowadays, sharing is still important but the way in which people share food has undergone changes. It does not happen very often anymore that people eat from the same dish. One underlying factor driving this change has been health reasons since the practice is perceived as unhealthy and you can transmit diseases to one another more easily if you eat from the same dish.

People may not be eating from the same dish anymore on a frequent basis but people still value the act of sharing food. Sharing is rooted in the food culture of people living in Number Five because throughout time it has been one of the most important values. The majority of the respondents also mentioned the fact that when you have food in your house and someone comes over, you dish up for this person. You do not have to ask whether the person wants something to eat or what he or she would like to have, you just serve whatever you have to them and only thereafter, they can decide for themselves whether to eat it or not. Furthermore, it is not only about sharing cooked food, but people also give certain foodstuffs when someone comes to ask for this. Respondents also mentioned that when they do not have certain foodstuffs and they do not have money to go and buy it, they go to their neighbours or family members and ask for whatever they are short. Usually, it is then given to them. Sometimes it is a matter of exchange, sometimes of giving it for free. However, nowadays sharing practices are changing and a bigger animosity occurs between the haves and the have-nots because, now it can happen that while entering someone's house, people will now cover their plates that they dished for themselves until the meeting is done instead of dishing up for the visitor. This neglects the traditional norms and values that are deeply rooted in people.

> If I had food, now that you are here, we should have dished some food, so we can eat together while talking, while eating. Food is good because it brings people together. [...] Then in terms of our culture, when someone comes, you give them food and then you can have a nice conversation over that, while eating and having a nice conversation. (Interview with Cikizwa).

> It is important in our culture because, in our culture if someone gets inside your house she must not go out without having something to eat. So it is important in our culture to give

someone something to eat. More especially if you have done something culturally in your
house, so everyone that attends sleeps with a full stomach. (Interview with Fezeka).

6.4 Celebrations and ceremonies

All over the year, a family or household can perform a traditional celebration but they are especially prominent during June and December. During these months, people living in South Africa have public holidays and family members that have migrated out of Number Five come back to visit their family and honour the celebrations. A celebration or ceremony can serve different purposes such as circumcision, initiation, honouring the ancestors, marriage and more. These celebrations bring people together because they are culturally very important and people respect them highly.

Having food at a celebration is quite crucial. Food is important to such an extent that if you cannot afford to have food during a celebration, it is better not to give a celebration and to budget it for the following year. People do not know how many people are coming to attend their celebrations because you do not send invitations to people living close by but at least there must always be enough food. This is also why the costs of a celebration can be quite impactful for the host of the celebration since there has to be food for a lot of people. Partly due to this, people help each other at times of celebrations.

Helping others throughout the preparations of their celebration and throughout the celebration itself is quite crucial and this is not restricted to the practice of slaughtering. On the one hand, some people contribute to others' celebrations by donating something tangible like money or some food (e.g. a bag of rice, alcoholic beverages or soft drinks). Some people keep lists of these donations that people have made to their celebrations and when they attend a celebration of that specific person, they give the exact same donation for that celebration back. On the other hand, some people help by delivering a service such as helping cooking or cleaning. Especially newlywed woman are expected to come and help with cooking because of the stage of womanhood that they are in. The mother or mother-in-law can decide when you are allowed to leave this stage of womanhood and you are thus no longer expected to help. Other respondents also mentioned that they contribute to a celebration because of their attendance or they contribute by singing or dancing.

> ***So you also don't need an invitation?*** *No, usually, it just goes around, we tell each other.*
> *You tell a few people and they tell others. (Interview with Jikela).*

Community members know what is going on due to the fact that the community is living in close harmony and therefore, they know when someone is having a celebration (hence they do not need an invitation). People are able to tell when someone is brewing traditional beer because they can see it by the smoke. That kind of smoke is in itself already an invitation for the people from the community or village. Once you have seen the smoke, you can come over to drink the traditional beer whenever it is ready. Traditional beer is one of the important 'foods' that must be present during such a celebration. It is brewed by mixing grinded maize (corn), mealie meal, flour and water. In a later stage, after the natural boiling or fermentation process has occurred, King Korn[8] is added. Traditional beer is deemed so important because it also has the same function as food namely, bringing people together.

Especially important for a celebration is meat and even more so this is the case for meat that comes from home-slaughtered animals. Not only eating the meat carries importance but also the slaughtering rituals are inherent to a celebration. During slaughtering practices, the animal must make a specific sound. When it does not make a

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[8] "King Korn is a traditional sorghum homebrew brand, and the number-one selling home-brew malt in South Africa." http://www.tigerbrands.com/our-brands/grains/#KingKorn

sound, the celebration or ceremony is seen as unsuccessful. What kind of animal has to be slaughtered is often exposed to people in some sort of vision, and dream. Furthermore, it is relevant to know which kind of animal must be slaughtered because of their specific meanings. Slaughtering a goat for example, is more meaningful than slaughtering a chicken. Goats are special because of their character and because of the food they eat. They eat grass and herbs and thereby it is a healthy animal whereas a pig just eats everything and this is not deemed as pure.

Regarding slaughtering practices, what kind of animal can be slaughtered by whom is gendered. Chicken are animals that belong to women and therefore, women can slaughter these animals. Goats, sheep and cattle on the contrary belong to men and thus must be slaughtered by men. In addition, the consumption of some parts of the animal is gendered. Some parts of the animal are reserved for men to consume (e.g. organs) whereas others are meant to be eaten by women (e.g. ribs).

6.5 Food Culture Change

Over time, there have clearly been changes regarding agricultural practices and these changes are also food related. These changes in agricultural practices are closely linked to the changes that indicate the ongoing nutrition transition.

6.5.1 Lifestyle changes

Changes have not just appeared in the domains of agriculture and nutrition but also more in general changes have occurred in relation to lifestyle. The elders of the elderly project described to us how people used to live before. During olden days, people were living in tribes and their lifestyles were different from what you can observe nowadays in Number Five. There were no real settlements yet and because people lived their lives differently, more nomadic, their food was also different. Those people had to survive by hunting their meat and gathering edible foodstuffs, there was no such thing as planting and ploughing back then. Over time, this has changed due to the introduction of equipment such as pots, the introduction of certain foodstuffs and due to the fact that people started to live less nomadic and settle down. When life became less nomadic, food culture changed and people started to practice agriculture since they were now bound to one place. Changes that happened since then regarding agriculture and the nutrition transition are now going to be described.

6.5.2 Agricultural change

> *The land is there, people are there, but they don't do the thing that has been done before,*
> *so 20 years ago, and I don't know why, I don't know why. (Interview with Madoda)*

One of the main changes that the respondents and the elders describe in relation to agriculture is that the fields at a distance from the homestead, previously mainly serving to plant maize, are no longer being ploughed. They see the fields laying fallow and people buying their maize products more and more often. During the olden days, maize from the fields was in abundance because people were ploughing their own fields and growing their own produce. To some extent, the olden days are somewhat romanticised by most respondents as being better than the lifestyle that people pursue nowadays (buying from shops). People relate that lifestyle to being less lazy, less dependent (on money and shops) and healthier.

Often, 'the rural' is seen as something that is intertwined with the sphere of production rather than consumption (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). People living in rural areas are often seen as farmers, they are seen as producers. This strict distinction cannot be made anymore and this shift has also become evident in Number Five. One of the respondents (Sonwabo) described that there has been a profound change in lifestyles, moving away from a

lifestyle that is lived agriculturally. Nowadays, people more and more have the desire to be merely consumers and getting a disinterest in being producers. The key informant of this study also spoke about this phenomenon, mentioning that some foods simply are not 'sexy' anymore. Especially foods such as maize bread, which used to be prepared in the olden days by using maize from the field, is not something that people can show off with. To some extent, people *want* to show others that they can eat a Westernized, European kind of diet meaning that they want to bring their KFC with them on the taxi drive and not their lunch that was prepared at home. People do not feel proud anymore when they have to consume foods that reflect their traditions and customs.

> *Such as [squash], we grow it from our fields, and we [used to] sell it, to people [living] away from us, in the towns. But we do buy from them now, situations have changed dramatically. (Interview with Madoda).*

6.5.2.1 Laziness

Laziness of today's generation is mentioned as one of the factors driving this change. The generation of today is perceived as not being interested in ploughing the fields anymore and prefers to spend their time doing other things. Alongside this laziness comes the increased dependency on money and shops where people can buy their foodstuffs and thus there are less incentives to plough because people simply do not have to do it anymore. Quite some people are entitled to get a grant and therefore they can allow to be 'lazy'. From the sixteen trajectory respondents, thirteen mentioned to receive a social welfare grant from the government. Ten of these were old age pension grants since the sample consisted mostly of people that were sixty plus. Three of these grants were childcare grants. Three respondents stated that they do not get a grant however, two of them mentioned that they do get additional income.

> *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. [...] You know, if you look, there, at that vast land, outside there, you will find that there is not a land that is ploughed. Meaning that the people are lazy, they don't plough, they go and buy. That is the change. (Interview with Wonga)*

> *Money is more accessible to the people now, because we have the social grants from the government now and the laziness from the people, people are no more planting and ploughing nowadays. So people just receive money from the social grants from the government to buy them for themselves. We are lazy [laughter], we are lazy. (Interview with Cebisa)*

6.5.2.2 Weakness

Next to being perceived as lazy, people also perceive today's generation as weaker than previous generation and this should be partly due to the fact that this generation is not eating food anymore that comes straight from the soil but rather eats foods from shops. Therefore, this agricultural change also relates to health. Own produce is generally perceived as more fresh and thereby giving more energy and power to people. People from the olden days are regarded as stronger and more active which is seen as being due to the food that they were eating. Furthermore, within today's generations people see diseases such as diabetes which were not there during the olden days. They know that these kind of diseases are related to food and consumption in some way and thus the link between weakness, food and health is established.

> *This new generation is not the same as our mother's generation, they were strong and they were planting bigger, bigger fields. For us, the generation of today, is not as strong as the previous generation. (Interview with Fundiswa)*

In relation to the taste of necessity (Boudieu, 1984), strength is getting a bit less priority nowadays because even though people still enact labour-intensive tasks, these are now a bit alleviated. Being able to buy mealie meal requires one intensive task which is the shopping trip to town. Previously, the maize needed to be planted, harvested and grinded before it could be used to make pap which requires a lot more strength. In some way, the grants thus provide a shift along the lines of necessity or luxury because people now have multiple options. The first option would be to buy whereas the second would be to do it agriculturally. There is an incentive to go for the option that is most convenient for people.

6.5.3 Perceived future changes

Regarding the future of agriculture and eating practices, most people believe that as long as the grants are in existence, people will continue to buy their foodstuffs from the shops. In some way, it is a desire to have money, different kinds of food, not to plough and to live life in a way that is perceived as being easy. The underlying normative element of this claim differs. There are respondents that mention it is a good thing that their kids will have money and be able to buy all different kinds of foods but there are also people that see it as bad. People that have a more sceptic attitude towards the future generally describe the dependency as a negative factor and as an expensive lifestyle to maintain. Only a few respondents mentioned that people in the future, will go back to what they have been doing in the past. They see benefits in the way that people in the olden days were living and they have hope that the people of today will also have the insight that they can benefit if they go back to these practices.

> Now there are new [maize] projects that are existing, which were not existent before. I see
> it is more beautiful and it could be more beautiful if all the fields could be ploughed again.
> (Interview with Bongani)

6.5.4 Nutrition transition change

The agricultural change that has been described above goes hand in hand with the process of nutrition transition. People rely more on the shops and thereby get more incentives to buy foodstuffs that are outside the traditional diet of a food culture (e.g. more processed foods). As there is no baseline study that this research can draw from, it is hard to tell where Number Five is exactly on the nutrition transition in perspective of where they are coming from. This also makes it impossible to know whether the four indicators of the nutrition transition indeed increased or decreased over time. However, from the food diaries it does become clear that people use oil, animal-source foods and a lot of staples that makes the diet in general, energy dense. Furthermore, from the participant observations it became clear that people use cooking oil, sugar and salt in quite large proportions.

The meal that is presented in figure 6, obtained from one of the food diaries, shows some of the characteristics of the nutrition transition within one meal. Oil is used to bake the fish, the fish and bouillon cube can be seen as a processed food, fish is an animal based product and even though potatoes are seen as a vegetable, there is limited consumption of legumes in the meal. Of course, one meal does not represent an ongoing transition but figure 6 does exemplify that the characteristics of the nutrition transition can be found in Number Five.

Day, time, kind of meal Lunch	Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten? One family member In this rondavel
What was eaten (ingredients)	**Source of the food**
Pap and tinned fish with potatoes Fish	
- Tinned fish	Mount Fletcher
- Potatoes	Mount Fletcher
- Salt	Local Shop
- Beef stock *(Bouillon cube)*	Local Shop
- Fish oil	Local Shop
- Onion	Local Shop
- Water	Tank (rainwater)
Pap	
- Mealie meal	Mount Fletcher
- Water	Tank (rainwater)
- Salt	Local shop

Figure 6 Meal from a food diary (Food diary, Eshile, November 4th, 2017)

6.5.4.1 Processed foods

The attitudes of people living in Number Five towards processed foods are mixed. Normatively, some people perceive them as good or positive whereas others perceive them as bad or negative. People that perceive them as positive have different reasons to think so. It has been said that it makes life more interesting, that they taste good and that they have to undergo certain food safety standards due to inspection which is perceived as positive. People that perceive them as more negative say so because they believe that processed foods are a reason for sickness, they are not enjoyable or they are suspicious because you can never know about their freshness. There are also people who are a bit more divided in this debate and who do not directly take a normative side. They said that they never thought about it as good or bad and that they just buy them, that they are ok but that people must not depend on them because they are expensive or that they like some of them but dislike others.

> 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. (Interview with Neliswa).

> My attitude is very positive towards them [processed foods], their taste is very good and personally I like a lot of them. (Interview with Langa).

6.5.4.2 Nutrition transition and electricity

As has been mentioned in the paragraph *4.6 introducing the research site*, Number Five had no electricity at the moment that the research was conducted, meaning in relation to food that people could not store certain foodstuffs in a fridge and therefore they also rely on non-perishable food products. Furthermore, having no electricity also shapes life in the rural areas because people cannot simply kill time by turning on TVs. This is further exemplified in vignette 5.

Nobomi was doing some dishes before we could start our breakfast. We asked her whether she was doing this specifically for us, because she had to dish up for two mlungu's (whites). She sighed and looked at us. Then, she and her mother, started to explain about their days. They go to bed quite early because, put simply, they have nothing to do anymore. Throughout the day they have to keep themselves busy. They wake up, wash themselves, do some chores, cook and then they go to bed again. So, these dishes that Nobomi was doing now, was not because there were visitors in the house, it was simply a matter of keeping busy, killing time. "What can we do?" mama Cikizwa asked to no one in particular. There is no electricity, they do not have lights in their homesteads which makes it difficult to do anything after dark. She looks at us a bit helpless and then mentions the fact that there is no TV. They feel that they basically have nothing that helps killing time except for all the necessary tasks that they have to enact.

Vignette 5 Electricity and killing time (Field notes, October 12th, 2017)

To some extent, there is a certain desire for some people to be able to live a 'town life' that comes with conveniences such as electricity and equipment such as TV, fridges and internet. However, people also express some scepticism about fridges and some even express this feeling towards electricity more in general. On the one hand, a fridge is perceived as convenient because it can keep foodstuffs fresh and thereby people expect to buy foodstuffs such as meat also in bulks from town. On the other hand, some also express their concerns because of ignorance towards the time span that something can be kept fresh in the fridge. Additionally, concern is also expressed regarding the core values of the existing food culture that can be deteriorated because of electricity and equipment such as fridges. To exemplify this, at the moment when an animal has been slaughtered and you have excessive meat, having no fridge, the meat would have been given away to people to make sure that it is finished instead of spoiled. When people do get fridges, they are more likely to put the meat in the fridge and keep it to themselves. Therefore, the communal mind-sets and the core value of sharing can change further under these circumstances.

When electricity comes, we will live that life that is in town. So, we will be highly affected. Instead of going to buy these things, we will take these things from the garden, straight into the fridge, instead of from the garden to the pot. (Interview with Wonga).

The [electricity] change will be brought by the facts that people will want to buy more things from town that are storable in the fridge. They want to eat the kind of food that is eaten in the town areas now. People will change their lifestyle. Their eating style will, they eat like people living in towns. (Interview with Sonwabo)

Possibly related to the fact that there is no electricity, people in Number Five also use non-perishable foodstuffs such as tinned meat, fish and vegetables. Tinned stuff does not expire quickly and usually does not have to be kept in a fridge because the food is sealed under airtight conditions, additionally, it is often also relatively cheap compared to its fresh variant. Tinned products thus provide people in some way with an alternative for a certain luxury that they desire to have in their lives every now and then. Furthermore, opening a tin of meat provides them with an appropriate amount of meat to use for one meal whereas slaughtering just for one meal would probably lead to excessive meat. Next to buying tinned products, some people also enact the practice of preservation themselves (see vignette 6).

> After the meal, mama Esihle stood up and got out a can of homemade preserved peaches. She looked at us and asked whether she could open it for us. We told her that she could but only if she would like to. After all, we like fruits but we did not want to 'rob' her from her peaches. She laughed and said that she would love to share these peaches with us. In the meanwhile, she also put the kettle on the stove to boil some tea. She relaxed a bit because before, she was a bit tense, feeling pressure because of the interview. Mama Esihle started to explain the process and purpose of canning peaches to us. "When the peaches from the tree are ready, I peel them and take out the seeds and in the meanwhile, I cook water and sugar in a pot. When the mixture of sugar and water boils, I add the peaches, but only for two minutes! Then, it is ready to go in the glass jar. But first, the glass jars have to soak in warm water and only then it is possible to put the peaches in the jars. Most importantly, you then have to close the jar very, very tightly. For one day, I place the jars upside down and cover them with a blanket. Then, the process is finished and you have your own fruits for the rest of the year." The process sounded more simple than I imagined, it just takes some patience and enough jars. According to mama Esihle she can make up to thirty jars with the peaches and 12,5 kilograms of sugar. Unfortunately, now was not a good time to show us the entire process because the peaches were not ripe yet. Otherwise, she would have loved for us to be present during the canning process.

Vignette 6 Canning peaches (adapted from field notes, November 10th, 2017)

6.6 Concluding remarks

To conclude, initially the residents from Number Five see food from its biological function and that it is something that fuels them to have energy but after some time, they also see the importance of food socially and culturally. The dominant food culture of Number Five carries some distinct characteristics due to the importance of specific foods and due to specific characteristics that attribute a meaning to the understanding that people share. Maize and meat are the foremost food items that can be identified as important whereas sharing and traditional ceremonies can be seen as some of the most important characteristics of food culture.

Even though the food culture of Number Five seems relatively stable over time, there are also outside processes that have an influence on it. The agricultural decline and the nutrition transition (also outlined in chapter 2 of this report) are also evident in Number Five. These processes do influence the local food culture which becomes explicit through the doings and sayings of the people. In this specific case, people relied less and less on agriculture and more and more on shops and money. Even though food culture is open to negotiation and change and thus also leaves room for these two processes, it does not transform overnight. Changes and transitions seem to be adopted and eventually endorsed at a modest pace.

7. Social practices of food in Number Five

The importance of food in relation to culture is explained in the previous empirical chapter of this report. What remains now is to explain how a social practice approach can contribute to this understanding and apply the social practices lens to the study of food and nutrition. First, a list of important practices is identified of which some are already touched upon in the preceding chapter of this report. Then an elaboration of social practices of food and how they are enacted in Number Five is given.

7.1 Practice-as-performance

For the purpose of this thesis, seven interrelated food practices were identified as they emerged from the research context. These seven practices emerged as most prominent and therefore will be focused on in this chapter but this is not to say that these are the only practices emerging from the context. The seven practices are:

1. Preparation practices
2. Cooking practices
3. Eating practices
4. Cleaning practices
5. Shopping practices
6. Agricultural practices
7. Celebration practices

These seven practices constitute the so-called bundle of practices that exist around food and this bundle is situated along the wider nexus of practices. As they are presented here, these are the observable practices and thus constitute the practice-as-performance. Figure 7 shows how these seven practices are interrelated. All these practices are related to the constellation of the social practices of food and because they all come together here, they cannot be seen in isolation from each other.

Figure 7 Social food practices studied in this thesis (Identified from field notes and interviews)

The seven practices that are identified above, are all interrelated because in a way they need each other. It is impossible to cook without any food and therefore either shopping or agricultural practices have to be enacted prior to cooking. This becomes clear from the observable behaviour that forms the practice-as-performance. Cooking comes almost automatically with preparation practices such as cutting vegetables and preparing the pots and cleaning comes with eating practices for example because first plates have to become dirty in order to enact cleaning practices. These aspects of social practices of food are not difficult to observe.

That practices are interrelated is also evident in the time span in which practices play out. For example, when someone is cooking, in the meanwhile, some cleaning tasks can be done. This is further outlined in vignette 7. Vignette 7 shows five out of the seven identified practices that occur in the same time span of approximately one hour in which some practices overlap. However, some practices can only be carried out simultaneously when there are multiple people involved that can function as competent practitioners. In the case of vignette 7, shopping, preparing and cooking could not have overlapped if it had only been one person involved in the process.

A few minutes before, Menzi had just talked to his wife and told her that he was getting hungry and asked whether she could make us some food. When we arrived at the house of Menzi, he told us that we first had to go to the shop quickly to get some bread. It was only a short walk to the local shop. The shop was quite compact but it entailed the essentials such as mealie meal, bread, cooking oil and matches. The shopping went quick and it took about five minutes before we were outside the shop again. It was clearly a shopping trip with a clear goal in mind and not one where someone does not know what to get or what to eat and just wanders around the shop for a few minutes. We left with two brown breads and a bottle of coke. On our way back, we chitchatted a bit about the shop and that the time of the month is usually important for people to do their shopping trips. When we arrived back at Menzi's house, his wife had already started with the cooking. She was making a stew that we could eat with the bread consisting of butternut, beans, onion and canned meat. The stew was prepared in one pot and she did not really need any help since she already made preparations during the time that we went to the shop. In the meanwhile, some dishes were also cleaned whilst she was cooking. The stew was simmering and therefore did not need a lot of attention, leaving room for her to clean some dishes in the meanwhile. After a while of waiting, talking, and cooking by Nolitha, it was time to eat. The plates and spoons that were just carefully washed by Nolitha were put on the table, six slices of bread on the plate and the stew was presented next to the bread. The four of us ate but Nolitha was not eating with us. This felt a bit strange to me, after all she did all the hard work! In my eyes, she should sit down now for a bit and enjoy her meal. When the meal was finished, Nolitha immediately started to clean.

Vignette 7 Overlapping practices (Field notes, October 12th, 2017)

7.1.1 Same practice, different elements

People have a shared understanding of the practice-as-performance but the way in which they are enacted may differ from person to person. Table 5 exemplifies this since the same cooking practice is enacted, with the same purpose of cooking pap to consume later on, but the observable objects and competences differ.

It is also a matter of preferences and incentives that shape which materials people use for example. The lady of cooking observation 2 (table 5) expressed that usually, cooking is done outside but due to windy weather conditions the enacted cooking practice of the participant observation took place inside the house. This led to the fact that cooking was done on a gas stove even though other materials were at disposal. Others also expressed that they prefer to cook outside instead of inside the house whereas others usually cook inside the

house. Incentives to enact the practice of cooking in this way, for example, can be financial (e.g. buying gas is more expensive than collecting firewood for free) or emotional (e.g. cultural feelings in which people feel that cooking outside is the right way).

Table 5 Observable aspects of an enacted practice, the materials and competences (field notes, October 12th, 2017 & October 17th, 2017).

Observation Elements	Cooking pap observation 1 (household 8)	Cooking pap observation 2 (household 3)

Materials	1. Consumer goods
	    a. Mealie meal
	    b. Water
	    c. Salt
	2. Pot
	3. Stirring equipment
	4. Firewood
	5. Match
		1. Consumer goods
		    a. Mealie meal
		    b. Water
		    c. Salt
		2. Pot
		3. Stirring equipment
		4. Stove
		5. Match

Competences	1. Lighting the fire 2. Boiling the water on fire 3. Adding appropriate quantities 4. Stirring 5. Timely removal of the pot from the fire	1. Lighting the stove 2. Boiling water on the stove 3. Adding appropriate quantities 4. Stirring 5. Sieving the mealie meal in the pot 6. Timely removal of the pot from the stove

From table 5 it also becomes more evident that enacting the cooking practice of food is routinized but this does not mean that it happens according to a fixed pattern or always using the same materials. The same practice can thus be enacted by a different constellation of (observable) elements. There are differences in the way that the practice is enacted but also personal differences that depend on certain preferences. From the table above, observation 1 can be seen as more traditional whereas observation 2 can be seen as more modern. Even though this is the case, still the same practice can be enacted while using different materials and different competences. As it was a windy day during observation 2, cooking happened inside the house on a gas stove but if the conditions had been different that day cooking probably would have happened outside. People themselves thus enact the same practice but they can alternate the elements of the practice due to certain incentives.

7.2 Practice-as-entity

Driving these abovementioned observable aspects of practices are the more non-observable, macro aspects of practices. These are the aspects that are socially embedded within the community of Number Five and that drive the behaviour of the practitioners. First the three elements of practices as identified by Shove et *al.* (2012) will be elaborated on and thereafter, the socially embedded aspects will be discussed.

7.2.1 Materials

Although it is outlined above that practices can overlap, some practices can also scatter because of limited material resources that someone has at disposal. Throughout the fieldwork it happened one time during the participant observations that not all people present (six people) could eat at the same time simply due to the fact that there were not enough dishes. There were four similar bowls and one big bowl, restraining the enactment of a fully shared eating practice. Furthermore, eating from one dish, as would have been done in the

olden days, did not appear to anyone as a solution for this material constraint. Nevertheless, materials form an important part of social practices and especially regarding food, an indispensable element of practices. Objects such as pots and stoves are needed in order to cook for example and plates and spoons are perceived as needed to eat. Additionally food itself can be seen as a component of the materials within the social practices since it is tangible and can be classified as a consumer good.

> On the eleventh of October, we were invited to have lunch at the homestead of our village host. Almost immediately, we got served our plates and Ndiliswa cooked us pap with spinach, onion and potato. Ndiliswa sat down with us while we were eating and expressed that she had been a bit scared to serve us food that was prepared by her but then, all of a sudden, she looked at me and started to laugh. While laughing she said: "Your food is moving all over your plate!" I also started to laugh. She was right, it was difficult for me to eat this lunch without a fork and knife, having only a spoon at my disposal. My food was moving all over and I could almost not get the food on my spoon without using my hands to help a little.

Vignette 8 Spoons, forks and knives (Field notes, October 11th, 2017)

Materials show a deeper embodied meaning in the sense that their usage is culturally rooted. Vignette 8 exemplifies how certain materials are exploited in specific food cultures making them culturally applicable to use. For me as a researcher, coming from the Netherlands, I am used to eat more 'solid' food with a knife and a fork whereas more 'liquid' foods such as soup or yoghurt, would be eaten with a spoon. In Number Five, in general, everything is consumed using a spoon and if needed you can use your fingers additionally to help getting the food on the spoon. Throughout the lunch of vignette 6, Ndiliswa and Luxolo told us that when they experienced the practice of eating with a knife and a fork, they had felt embarrassed because they feel that they cannot handle that equipment properly. They feel being watched and judged when eating with a knife and fork which is clearly outside their cultural comfort zone. The use of certain materials that are embedded in a practices can be seen as culturally defined due to the fact that there is a shared understanding of the appropriate materials for usage.

7.2.1.1 Changing materials

The use of materials is likely to change over time and in the case of Number Five, has changed over time. During the olden days, cooking was strictly done using firewood either outside, or in the so-called heart of a rondavel. The heart is a pit in the centre of a rondavel in which fire can be lit to cook. Now, most people in the village do have an option to choose whether they want to cook on firewood, a gas stove or a paraffin stove, making it easier to cope with rainy or windy weather conditions. Another example of diversifying materials can be seen in the practice of preparing dough for bread. Some use the sun to get the needed warmth for the dough whereas others use a blanket that keeps the dough at temperature. The quote below shows an example of someone that has clear preferences regarding the use of a paraffin stove but at the moment, does not really have another option until the electricity will be installed.

> *Yes there will be change because [I] will throw away that paraffin stove and use [an] electric stove. [...] I am sick and tired of it. [...] I don't like it, the smoke from the paraffin. (Interview with Fundiswa).*

Due to changes in the materials, the other two elements that compose social practices are also likely to change. Changing from cooking on firewood towards cooking on an electric stove requires different competences than the ones that were needed before. Different skills and know how are needed to enact the practice properly. This can also be seen again from table 5. Furthermore, such a change can lead to new understandings about the past

experiences of enacting a practice in a certain way. People might find new ways more convenient for example, but remain emotionally more attached to the old way of enacting a practice.

7.2.2 Competences

Going back to vignette 8 and adding to this example and the elaboration of it, the use of materials comes together with having some competences, making someone a skilled or unskilled practitioner of a certain enacted practice. Being an unskilled practitioner, it feels as if you are being watched and judged due to the fact that you stand out from the other people and cannot enact the practice properly.

7.2.2.1 Knowing the competences

Competences surrounding food have a relatively big gendered element as was found from the case study in Number Five. In general, women cook and thereby possess the competences to enact this practice. Food practices that entail a masculine element are for example slaughtering cattle and collecting firewood. These feminine and masculine competences translated itself into an expression of 'knowing'. Women and men mention that they simply *know* how to enact certain practices and they have an understanding of which practice is expected from them to be enacted. During the participant observations often women could not tell us 'how long' something needed to cook or 'how much' of something needed to be added. Cooking is therefore not done by measuring all the units that are needed or setting an alarm to know when something has cooked for ten minutes exactly. Sometimes it can be seen by the eye when something is ready (e.g. when the dough begins to crack during the cooking process) but sometimes the practice is just really internalized and people *just know*. Because people simply express to know, it is hard for them to explain the actual processes due to the internalisation of competences.

> *When you're talking about food, females are the people who know, concerning food. But*
> *you can ask, maybe I can answer some of the questions. (Interview with Wonga).*

7.2.2.2 Acquiring the competences

Several competences are acquired due to the fact that people live within a culture with specific customs. Being born in a particular place of the world automatically means that there are certain appropriate competences to acquire. In general, people know the image of African women carrying goods or objects on their heads. Throughout the fieldwork, this practice also came up when it was enacted during participant observations whilst one of the woman in our study carried a bucket on top of her head. After getting water from the well, we had to walk back to the house. Mama Neliswa carried a 10 litre bucket of water on top of her head. Luxolo told us that the enactment of this practice never goes wrong and thus to some extent it is internalized. From a young age, these practices are trained using different sized of buckets. Thereafter, it is unlikely to go ever go wrong and, for this specific practice, women become competent practitioners of a culturally embedded practice over time. These kind of competences can be seen as culturally embedded because they are in existence for a long time and this way of transporting goods, is not a culturally appropriate practice everywhere.

Competences are transmitted from generation to generation, from woman to woman and man to man. People acquire certain competences for social practices of food through family members and friends. Knowledge or information is transmitted orally or by enactments from which people can see something happening and learn from this. Since reading or writing is not very much embedded in the dominant culture that is existing in Number Five people do not get their competences from books or papers. For example, recipes and competences about preparing and cooking certain foods are also shared orally. In general, people do not really use recipe books. When someone knows a new recipe, has tried something new or did an experiment, they tell others about this and this is how people obtain new recipes, by sharing. Furthermore, they also learn some recipes by listening to

the radio which can also be seen as a medium that uses oral transmission of information. In order to acquire a competence that is related to a food practice, one thus also needs to be a competent listener and able to uptake information that is shared verbally and nonverbally.

7.2.3 Meanings

Practices are enacted meaningfully and this is also true for social practices that revolve around food. It is not just food in itself that carries meaning but also the practices are meaningful which is partly due to the fact that they are embedded in within the social. As has already been discussed above, life is socially drenched in Number Five and expresses itself by practices such as sharing. Sharing is especially evident in past experiences since it was already important during the olden days. Due to past experiences of participating in social practices, people bring their habitus with them when enacting a practice that is similar. Partly because of the habitus that people carry with them, enacting a practice leads to a certain routinized behaviour.

Meanings give a direction to the practice (Shove et *al.,* 2011), a practice has a deeper meaning because it works towards achieving a certain end goal in a meaningful way. This is especially clear in the practices of cooking and eating. When the practice of cooking has achieved its end, it is often followed by the practice of eating. This new practice most likely has a different meaning and works in a new direction to achieve another goal. The practice of cooking, more superficial, serves to get food on the table. However, cooking can also give someone satisfaction when the practice is achieved and others express that they like it or that the food tastes good. This leads people to accomplish the cooking task because there is a deeper meaning attached to it. When the practice of cooking shifts into the practice of eating, the practitioners change but there is also a new meaning attached to eating. More superficial, eating is meaningful to get full. However, eating also has a meaning of sharing and having something in common.

7.3 Cultural expectations and social practices of food

Social practices surrounding food are embedded in cultural practices. This became clear through the expectations that people have regarding people with different cultural backgrounds. That the researchers shared a different cultural background was already visible by our skin colour since there were no other white people in the village, our language (English but no Xhosa or Sotho), and the way that we dressed (sometimes jeans or trousers instead of knee length dresses or skirts). One practice that we were rejected to enact several times was in the category of cleaning. Only once, after some friendly negotiating, I was allowed to help doing the dishes. Multiple times and multiple people were offered to help during the dishes mentioning that our research would benefit from it, but excuses were made up and it was never allowed. People mentioned that it was too cold for us to do the dishes or that our clothes would get dirty and we would still need to visit other households. The one time that it was allowed to help doing the dishes as a white person, is outlined in vignette 9.

Next to cultural expectations, having people from a different ethnicity in the village also caused some cultural confusion. During some of the participant observations, the co-researcher and myself got served our plates first whereas at other times, our translator got served his plate first. Our translator told us that usually in Xhosa culture, men are served first because they have a higher status which has to be respected. When two white people are around, some people had confused this custom. *"Because we are visitors?"* I asked him a bit naively. He started to laugh and shook his head. People get visitors all the time, it is not just the fact that we are visitors. People know how to handle visitors from the community or their family. It is *whites* that they do not know how to treat when serving food.

After having a nice lunch together with the elders, I knew that we had to go quickly into the kitchen before Ndiliswa would start doing the dishes again since she feels awkward to let us do it. When we made the appointment for this meeting with the elderly project, it was also agreed upon that we could help with the dishes. Making this arrangement was not that easy and clearly Ndiliswa felt a bit uncomfortable. I knew this discomfort came from our skin colours, because after all this time it was clear that we did not do any dishes yet due to a believe that white people do not wash dishes. All in all, after the lunch was finished, it was still a bit awkward and Ndiliswa clearly felt a bit uncomfortable having me doing the dishes. When I started with the dishes, she started to laugh. She laughed for quite some minutes and I felt a little bit ashamed. What was I doing wrong? I was just doing it the way I do my dishes at home, right? Could white people really not do dishes? Did I not clean them properly? To me, it felt like I was not doing anything different from what I had seen woman in the village do. During the time that she was laughing, all these questions raised through my head whilst I just started to laugh together with her. "What is it?" I asked her. When she calmed down and was able to speak again she told me that I did not rinse all the soap of the plates before I gave them to her for drying them. Ok, fair enough, I thought by myself and I started to rinse of the soap. The laughing started again and also Luxolo came to see what was happening. What was I doing wrong this time? He told me that it was funny because I could not do it like a real African woman. At least, I should have rolled up my sleeves! Oh well, at least I broke some barriers that day.

Vignette 9 Doing dishes (Adapted from field notes, November 22nd, 2017)

7.3.1 Appropriate practices

As has been discussed previously, giving a plate of food to men first, is the appropriate way of enacting the serving practice and it is not only this practice that has an appropriate way of enactment but most practices are intertwined with such a normative element. According to some people a particular practice has a right way of being enacted even though there are perfectly suitable alternatives to enact the practice. For example, there was one time where the research team was invited to have some food by a man sitting outside his house with some friends. The offer was accepted and they asked us whether we would like to eat the food outside. After agreeing, it turned out that we could not eat the food outside because people should be eating in their private spheres and not in public spheres. Eating in front of them would make the enactment of the practice inappropriate. In a way, this example relates more to intercultural appropriateness of a practice. For us eating outside in front of these men would not have been very inappropriate whereas for them, even though they offered it themselves, it would have been.

Next to intercultural differences there are also intracultural differences and perceptions about the appropriateness of a practice. The following quote exemplifies that there are certain eating practices that are perceived more appropriate according to one of the respondents.

> *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. (Interview with Thozama).*

This respondent sees eating practices of the olden days as the appropriate ones whereas now, culturally inappropriate practices are enacted. A lot of things are changing in Number Five including the foods that people eat people see this change but they still perceive another practice as more appropriate. There is an underlying

normative element in this quote which explains the perceived right and wrong way of eating even though in the end people do not always choose the 'right' way of enacting.

7.4 Concluding remarks

To conclude this chapter, there are a lot of social practices that are relevant in the world of food. Even though these practices all fall within the same food culture, this does not mean that they are enacted in the same way because this depends on the elements that Shove et *al.* (2012) outline. It does not only matter which elements someone uses but also how these relate to each other.

Food culture becomes enacted through the social practices of food that have been described in this chapter. Regarding Number Five, seven prominent practices of food have been identified which are practices of preparation, cooking, eating, cleaning, agriculture, celebration and shopping. The practices-as-performance are easily identified and these enactments are carried out on a day to day basis. They are not difficult to observe since they are so prominently present within the food culture of Number Five. However, these practices-as-performance cannot be enacted without the practice-as-entity which unravels the deeper, non-observable aspects of these practices. Materials, competences and meanings all carry importance and it shapes the behaviour of the practitioners without them even being aware of it.

8. Food and Nutrition Security in Number Five

The preceding chapters of this report have shown Number Five in its wider context, an elaboration of food culture and how corresponding practices are enacted in daily life. The coming empirical chapter of the research presents the results regarding FNS and to what extent the social and cultural play a role in this. As mentioned in the introduction of this report, FNS debates revolve around productionist views (Fouilleux et *al.,* 2017) and this chapter attempts to make a move beyond this view. In order to do so, the chapter focusses on the enactment of certain practices that people do in order to secure themselves for food and nutrition. Thereby more qualitative aspects of FNS are described instead of using conventional measuring methods. Furthermore, this chapter also elaborates on the relationship between health and food since this is important for nutrition.

8.1 Food, health and nutrition

Regarding health, which has a relationship with food and nutrition, all people see food as an important factor, where there are some foods that contribute to health and others that possibly deteriorate health. Foods that are explicitly mentioned by multiple respondents to have a relationship with health are vegetables, fruits, milk and pap. Foods that are regarded as unhealthy are the processed foods or sugary foods. However, there is also a bit of hesitation regarding the topic whether food is healthy or unhealthy, there is some confusion about what is healthy and what is unhealthy. Some people don't seem to know and are also hesitant to express themselves regarding this topic. Somehow, it is agreed upon that some foods can contribute in some way to health but how it works exactly and what foods exactly have a beneficial contribution is expressed with hesitation.

> *I can never know [..] I think all food is important when you are feeling hungry. (Interview with Bongani).*

> *I won't know, I won't be able to explain. But every food is contributing in one way or another. The indigenous vegetable [for example] is a source of vitamin and cabbage is also a source of vitamin, but I cannot exactly say what. [...] There's no food that I think is unhealthy. [...] When I'm full that's good. (Interview with Khanyiswa).*

> *I cannot differentiate which one is more better than other. I eat all sorts of food so I don't know which one is more important when it comes inside my system. (Interview with Sisipho).*

Even though people do not feel that they are knowledgeable, knowledge about healthy food is shared between people living in Number Five. For example, some people expressed that using brown sugar instead of white sugar has been prescribed by doctors, since this is perceived to be a more healthy type of sugar. Due to doctors' advice, some people therefore substitute certain foods with a variant that is perceived as more healthy (e.g. also the case with substituting cooking oil for olive oil). This kind of 'knowledge' is shared with other people in the village since they tell each other about the prescriptions of the doctor. However, a common barrier for substituting certain types of food with its perceived healthier variant, is costs. Olive oil, for example, is more expensive than cooking oil and therefore, some people are reluctant to change to another type of oil. Only when explicitly prescribed to one by the doctor, there is a bigger incentive to change.

Furthermore, these kind of prescriptions also show the distinction between the taste of luxury and the taste of necessity (Bourdieu, 1984). Most people are not that concerned with the possible health-giving properties of certain foods which shows that people have a tendency towards the taste of necessity. Food is meant to fill and to give this satisfactory feeling of being full whilst at the same time they have to be affordable this means that there are less options available to them. Only when it is really necessary, they allow themselves to deviate from

their usual habits. The fact that respondents express that they do not know which foods are healthier or not fattening means that they have certain priorities which can be recognized as the taste of necessity.

> *I do think every food is important, because I eat it with a purpose. But I can say garden fruits such as cabbage, carrots, potatoes, vegetables and milk [...] What can I say? I won't eat something that is unhealthy, not in my diet. I won't eat something that will impair my health, you know [...] If there is something that I think it is not good for my health, I would not eat it. (Interview with Madoda).*

8.1.1 Taste and nutrition

Taste is seen as an important characteristic of food. Something that is tasteful can give pleasure or enjoyment to someone whereas something that is seen as tasteless is regarded as boring and less likely to be consumed. However, what is tasty and how you can make sure that something tastes good differs from person to person. People make sure that their food is tasty by choosing products or foods that they like to eat. Additionally, people can make their food tastier because they add certain condiments to their meal such as spices, salt, beef stock or cooking oil. Another strategy pursued is to taste the food while cooking, that way, you know whether you still have to add salt or whether it already tastes properly.

> *Veg are regarded as one [as healthy food], especially cabbage. That keeps you healthy. [...]*
> *I do not care of its taste. I eat it because it is healthy, not because I think it is palatable. [...]*
> *If I eat papa and water only, I don't think I will be healthy. I have to add the other foods that*
> *I have just mentioned to you. (Interview with Fezeka)*

Even though taste is important, and inherent when talking about food, it is still subordinate to the matter of having food more in general, of having enough food in order to survive. It was explained by our key informant that in the case of people only eating pap for every meal and when they can almost never add something to that (e.g. vegetables or meat), it can also be seen as a sign of poverty. When someone is on a budget, he or she is more likely to think consciously about whether something is a luxury or a must. Even though eating is more than just fuel for living, still it is necessary, whereas good taste is more likely to be a luxury. According to one of the key informants of this research, even when you are poor or you have little money, one should always be able to make soft porridge or papa from mealie meal.

> *Taste? Yes, it is important, sometimes people cannot afford a thing. So you just take what you can get. **So it's more important to have food than to have very tasty food, do you mean it like that?** Yeah, I mean that. (Interview with Jikela)*

There is widespread agreement on the assumption that a healthy diet is a balanced diet which includes a variety of foodstuffs in order to obtain the needed macro- and micro-nutrients. In the above presented quote, people eat a unilateral diet which goes hand in hand with unilateral taste. The variety of taste in someone's diet to some extent also expressed the broader variety in the diet.

Moving away from the organoleptic properties into the sociological taste (Bourdieu, 1984), some people are subject to the taste of necessity and thus distinction occurs since there are also people that have more freedom of choice and thus shift towards a position that relates more to the taste of luxury. As shown in the quote above, some people just have to eat whatever they can get to eat and whatever they can afford to eat without being too meticulous about organoleptic properties, vitamins and nutrients. They have to eat whatever is available to them. The appropriate behaviour for someone bound to the taste of necessity is to not be too demanding and to stick with the forced choices. Thereby, again the matter of having food dominates over the matter of having

tasty food. Others that have freedom of choice and can choose to eat tasty food thereby distinguish themselves from the aforementioned group.

8.2 Examining the foods needed to feel secure qualitatively

Regarding the foods that people need in order to feel food secure, staples formed an important food group. Three staple groups were used to examine this within six food diaries, namely maize based staples, flour based staples and rice. To gain a better understanding of the food groups that people use in general in their diet table 6 is added which provides an overview of recorded food groups counted from six food diaries. Next to staples, people also mentioned their isishebo as important. Isishebo is something that is added to a staple. For example, vegetables can be seen as isishebo and sometimes, a condiment can also be seen as an isishebo. In relation to taste, isishebo can only be added when there is an option, a freedom that people have to be able to add something to a meal. All people included in this research mentioned mealie meal as an important product that they need to feel food secure. This also becomes clear when the division of staples is taken into account which can be found in Appendix D where maize based staples are the largest category.

From the analysis of the six most accurately filled out food diaries, it also became clear that staple foods (maize based, flour based or rice) form the core of a meal. In fact, all meals were composed of a staple (not counting those that only recorded drinks or were simply skipped). The second most important food group that people recorded in their diet were the additives. This is not very surprising because this food group is quite big and encompassing including salt, sugar, cooking oil and beef stock for example. The third largest food group are the vegetables. However, also if only one onion was used in a meal and the meal was consumed by five people, it counted as vegetables included in the meal. This means that nutrient wise, it is impossible to draw conclusions about whether this is an accurate or inaccurate amount of nutrients that people consume

Table 6 Amount of times that a food group is recorded (From the six most accurately filled out food diaries, household 10, household 11, household 12, household, 13, household 14 and household 15)

Food group	Amount of times recorded
Staples	141
Vegetables	82
Animal based products	54
Additives (fish oil, spice, salt etc.)	137
Other	6
Total number of meals	155
Skipped meals	14
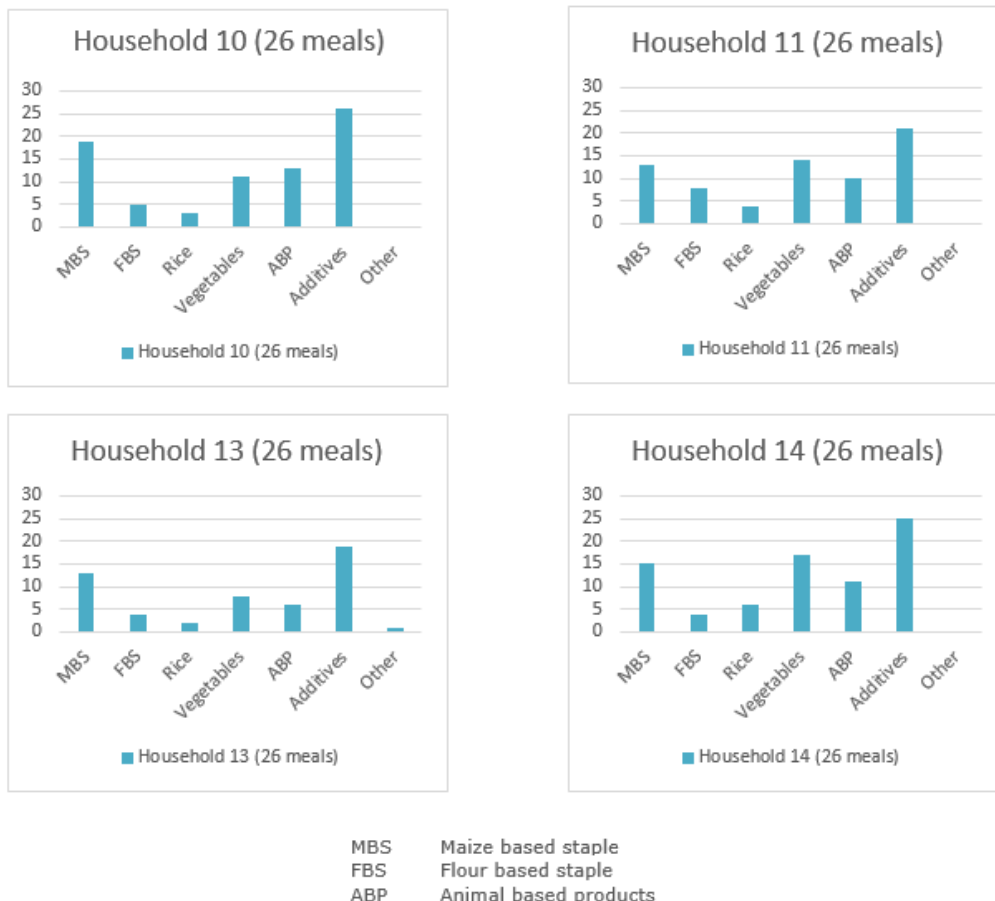
Figure 8 Recorded food groups that four household used in their food diaries (household 10, household 11, household 13, household 14)

Nutrition wise, it is not possible to measure the amount of calories or nutrients that people take since people did not have to measure exactly how much they took of something and that is also beyond the scope of this research. However, the charts in figure 8 are interesting because they can also be analysed more qualitatively. All four households record a high amount of additives in their meals, for some households even all meals contained additives. Now this is not very strange because a lot of condiments were included in this group. Most importantly salt, sugar and cooking oil were included and this makes the size of this category more understandable. However, adding data to these graphs from the participant observations, it is possible to say that this group is a bit troubling regarding nutritional intake. During the participant observations it became clear that salt, sugar and cooking oil are used in quite big amounts.

A hand palm of salt was added to the water and then, it boiled for a little while. (Directly adopted from field notes, October 17th, 2017).

The importance of staples, is furthermore interesting from this analysis because it exemplifies further that food has an important function in making the stomach full. Meals such as umvubo which is eaten on a regular basis, fill people up and these kind of meals are relatively cheap. Again, this points to the fact that people adhere to the taste of necessity. People eat what is available to them but they have certain preferences and there is a tendency towards meals that are energy-dense while at the same time cheap.

8.3 Performing food and nutrition security

In the very early stage of this research, securing oneself for food and nutrition seemed to be an individual task whereas in a later stage it was revealed to us that actually there is a big social and communal aspect to FNS. During the initial stages of the fieldwork it was emphasized that it is the responsibility of each and every household on its own to feed themselves. There are community leaders in the village but the issue of having or not having food is not one that the headmen or chief can solve. People have to make a living on their own and thereby it is their own responsibility to also make sure that they have food. A headman could give someone food but this would only be a solution for that day, a short-term solution. Giving someone food is not immediately perceived as a good solution for insecurity problems.

One of the key informants of this research explained about a FNS service that is provided by the government. The community engagement officer has the task to identify households that are in crucial need of a food parcel. When an income is lower than 800ZAR per month, the household is considered to get a food parcel with basic foodstuffs in it (e.g. mealie meal and flour). Officially, someone is only allowed to get such a parcel three times but in reality it can happen that someone exceeds this number when the need is really high. In some way, it is also a form of social welfare provided by the state and can be seen as a grant that is non-monetary. Furthermore, the key informant explained the food parcels as being a kind of start capital to help people towards the right direction and then thereafter, they have to make sure that they can feed themselves again.

8.3.1 Feeling secure

The feeling of security and the feeling of having enough food, changes over the course of the month. People receive their money either around the fifteenth of a month or around the first. As had been outlined in Chapter 5, around the time that people receive their grant, they go to town, mostly Maclear or Mount Fletcher, and buy their groceries in bulks. Around paydays, it is not difficult to see that something is happening in Maclear because it gets busy. There are queues in front of the ATM's and lines at the supermarket tills. Most people know exactly what they need to buy from town in order to make it to the end of the month. However, people also mention that it gets harder towards the end of the month, around that time, they have to make ends meet.

> Now, it's money that's securing food. So if you don't have money, you don't have food. [...] We don't have enough money for food. [...] I experience this problem, yes. [...] I think it's to make yourself used to this. If you don't adjust yourself, that is your problem. When the month is in the middle, there is no money, you must adjust yourself. Okay, there is no money, let me not eat a lot. But when it comes to the month end, money's there, then you eat a lot. That's the problem. You yourself to adjust. (Interview with Wonga).

8.3.1.1 Money

Thus, first of all, people feel that they can secure themselves regarding food and nutrition, when they have money. There are three most obvious ways by which people can receive money namely by generating income from work, by receiving remittances (e.g. family members working in a city) or through the social grants.[9] Money means that people can buy their foodstuffs which is nowadays an important factor of security in order to be able to purchase foodstuffs. Some people handle their money very consciously and they look at the different prices per shop so that they can buy the cheapest one. However, other people are a bit less conscious regarding their money and they seem to meet the same pitfall every month.

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[9] Of course there are more ways to obtain money (e.g. stealing or committing fraud) but those kind of practices did not come up during the research and is furthermore outside the scope of the research to elaborate on.

I am not starving, even now. I always make sure whenever I get money, I buy enough food for the whole month. I make one-hundred percent sure. (Interview with Sisipho).

From the shop, you know, we buy, we make groceries at the end of the month. As we get our salaries due at the end of the month, and we just make groceries, enough for the half month or for the whole month. **And do you go to town for that?** *Yes, we go to town, different shops there, they've got different prices, you know. If you buy mealie meal, or, brown flour, we check the prices. In other words, we don't buy in one shop, but we get our food from town shops. (Interview with Madoda)*

During the weekends, the children are cooking, then when I come back, cooking during the week, the groceries do not balance. They do not go the way I estimated and then it gets finished before the month is over. [...] I have enough food from the first of the month up until around the twentieth of the month. From the 20th of the month towards the end of the month, it gets difficult. (Interview with Cikizwa).

The preceding quotes show that people deal with the purchasing act in quite similar ways. In order to obtain food most people buy their food in bulks. Some spread their money more over the month, some check the food and maybe eat less when they see that it is almost finished and others mention that they borrow from their family members, friends or neighbours.

Under normal circumstances, I buy 25 kg of mealie meal. But sometimes I don't have enough money, I buy 12,5. And then, that 12,5 is never enough for the whole month, before the month is over I feel food insecure. [...] I normally stick and eat what is at disposal. I endure the situation until the month end, because I don't want to borrow money from outside. **How do you try to ensure that there is enough food?** *I normally say to myself: those that I can afford are enough, that's what I say to myself. (Interview with Esihle)*

8.3.1.2 Homestead gardening

It depends on the seasons. If the year is good I get five bags full of maize. If the year is not good, I get four bags of maize. I cannot give measurements as far as the veg is concerned, but I get enough and it is always good, the food I get from my vegetable garden. But I can't give you the measurement how much do I get but it is always of good quality. (Interview with Cikizwa).

Next to money, homestead gardening is also mentioned as a contributor to FNS. Most people in Number Five have a homestead garden which can be described as a small plot of land within close proximity to the homestead (Connor & Mtwana, 2017). Usually different kind of vegetables are grown here which is shown in image 4. Most people grow vegetables such as spinach, onion, carrot or beetroot.

Homestead gardening depends on good weather conditions and therefore, it is perceived as more difficult to rely on in terms of security. Weather conditions are

Image 4 Homestead garden in Number Five   (Own photograph)

changing, this was pointed out by the fact that snow had fallen in the mountains surrounding Hlankomo in November, which makes people feel distrustful regarding the conditions to grow produce. It is not only the weather that influences homestead garden production, alongside, the seasons are also influencing whether produce can grow adequately. During the beginning of the winter months, (July and August) maize from the fields can be harvested and therefore some respondents perceive this to be a time where food is in abundance. However, as it is very dry these months, most vegetables and fruits do not grow. They grow better towards summer and therefore, other respondents feel that food is in abundance during the summer months.

8.3.1.3 Adjusting

> *I think it's to make yourself used to this. If you don't adjust yourself, that is your problem. When the month is in the middle, there is no money, you must adjust yourself. Okay, there is no money, let me not eat a lot. But when it comes to the month end, money's there, then you eat a lot. That's the problem. (Interview with Wonga).*

In order to make ends meet, it seems that some people also choose to adjust their eating pattern or even to skip meals (to exemplify, see figure 8). From the food diaries, two households tend to eat less meals during the day than three main meals on a structural basis. Other food diaries sporadically record skipped meals. When the food diaries were handed out, some respondents also expressed this concern that they sometimes would not be able to record all meals in a day because they do not always eat them. Other reasons given to skip a meal, next to the fact that it can be a strategy to cope with insecurity, are being too busy to have time for a meal and having a small appetite.

Friday, 3/11/2017

Day, time, kind of meal	Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten?
Breakfast	3 family members Inside the house

What was eaten (ingredients)	Source of the food
- Bread - Eggs - Oil - Salt	- Shop - Shop - Shop - Maclear

Day, time, kind of meal	Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten?
Lunch, none	

What was eaten (ingredients)	Source of the food

Day, time, kind of meal	Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten?
Supper	3 family members Inside the house

What was eaten (ingredients)	Source of the food
- Rice - Potatoes - Chicken - Water - Salt	- Maclear - Maclear - Shop - Well - Maclear

Figure 9 Skipped meal (Food diary, household 9)

8.4 Social performances of food and nutrition security

From the contemplations above, it became clear that there are several strategies regarding FNS such as obtaining money, pursuing homestead production or skipping meals. In relation to the sharing culture that has been presented in chapter 6, exchanging and borrowing food also provides a way to perform FNS. People that reside in Number Five help each other in times of need, they share, as has been discussed previously. Because of this, there is always a kind of social security system that you can fall back on when it is needed. It can be argued that having this social safety net is actually the most important strategy for people when they have to cope during times of insecurity. Where money runs out and homestead production is highly dependent on variable influences such as the weather, the community is always there, year round and does not run out. Of course, social relationships are also exposed to difficulties and disruptions, but the social is deeply embedded in culture and therefore appears to be more stable over time. As has been outlined above, people share. They always have friends, family members or neighbours that they can ask for certain foodstuffs.

> 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. (Interview with Langa).

8.4.1 Social mechanisms in Number Five

Within the community, next to sharing, there are more some social mechanism in place that help people to cope in times of uncertainty. First there are certain mechanism that help people in times when they do not have money. People can buy their foodstuffs or small items on credit and this is a practice of which I would argue that it only happens in close communities, where people know each other personally or at least know each other's faces. Buying on credit happens in the local shops, tuck shops and on the payday flea market. In a way, this reflects the communal livelihoods that people live in because, the supermarkets or large retailers in South African towns or cities, would never allow such a practice. They see too many faces and cannot trace back a person that made a verbal promise to, for example, pay next week. Within the community, this is a possibility because people know each other personally and it is possible to trace back people.

> They [the customers] are more frequent, more especially in the afternoons. Not that much in the morning. **Because people are still busy maybe?** Yes children are at school maybe, people who usually go to shops, who get night food, or prepare for supper [...] I have regular customers. **Do people always immediately have to pay or can they get something on credit?** Bit of both, [...] yes, everyone is allowed to buy on credit. (Interview with Lumka).

People that own a tack shop or sell at the payday flea market, keep a list of the people that buy something on credit. At the flea market, sellers were quite busy writing down what was bought on credit. Usually, people come to pay once they have got money but if they do not, there is always the list to fall back on. The local shops may add some interest when one buys on credit.

Second, next to buying on credit as a social mechanism, there are also society groups that contribute to social FNS. This helps to secure people when a shock occurs and all of a sudden they have to make a big expenditure. When someone passes away, and you are a permanent member of a society group, one can call upon the members to contribute to the funeral by donating food and drinks. It is an extra contribution to the funeral of the family of which someone has passed away so that someone can be buried in dignity and the family can have a peaceful funeral. In order to enrol in a funeral group, a person has to pay an admission fee (approximately 50ZAR) and thereafter, the person contributes monthly by paying a vast amount (approximately 60ZAR). A

funeral comes with a lot of costs and in this way, people are ensured that they can deal with these costs or that costs can be reduced due to the fact that they do not have to buy all food and drinks themselves.

Thirdly, there are also social services exchanged within the community through which people can obtain their food. This helps people in times when they are physically restrained. To exemplify, one of the elders in Number Five, lives on the outskirt of the village which is approximately a twenty-minute walk to the local shop if you are in a good condition. For this person, it takes more time and the walk alone is already tiring but she can still manage to make her way to the 'centre' on a payday. Then, once she has received her pay, she goes to the local shop and asks for the products that she needs. As she is old, she has lost strength to carry heavy groceries all the way back and thus, the owner of the shop delivers the groceries to her house. He brings the food on the same day that she asks for them. Regarding shopping, more examples of these social services can be found among the respondents of this research. Some people rely on their family members to help them do their shopping. They give them a list and money so they can go to town and buy the foodstuffs needed. Another respondent expressed that she gives the taxi driver, driving to town, some money during the course of the month to buy her whatever she is short of.

8.5 Concluding remarks

People secure themselves for food and nutrition in various ways but what this chapter shows is that they also enact FNS themselves and this becomes especially evident in the social domain. People perform food and nutrition security because they have money, a homestead garden or because they adjust. However, next to these ways of performing which can be seen as more classical performances, there are also social performances that have crucial contributions to FNS. The community is in this specific case very important because this seems to be the most stable factor that does not run out or perishes. People can always fall back on their social ties in times of need. This is not completely incidental because again it relates to the food culture in which sharing (for which social ties are needed) is very crucial.

9. Conclusion and Discussion

From the contemplations above, the conclusion and discussion of this report are now going to be presented. The conclusions will be given by answering the research questions that have been leading throughout the report. First, the conclusions are given and thereafter the critical discussion of the results and methods will be explained.

9.1 Answering the research questions

The aim of this study was *to approach the FNS debate more qualitatively by applying a social practice approach in order to move towards a new unit of analysis within this study which allows to study the enactment of food.* Following this aim, the four preceding empirical chapter of this report do not follow the conventional path of analysing food and nutrition security. On the contrary, the chapters provide an analysis of the connectedness of Number Five, existing food culture, the performances of securing mechanisms and the practices that people enact in the domain of food. By answering the research questions of this report, the conclusions are drawn. The main research question that directed the research towards an analysis of practices was:

> ➢ *How are social practices of food enacted within the changing context of rural South Africa?*

People enact their practices meaningfully because these practices are embedded within the cultural and this also applies to social practices of food. Due to the overarching food culture, people enact their social practices of food from a shared understanding that they carry with them which emerges partly from the wider context that people they are subject to. In this specific case that means that food practices are in line with the rural livelihoods of the respondents. Certain values or beliefs that are embedded become explicit through the enactments of the social practices of food. This does not mean that all practices are enacted in the same way but just that their point of departure emerged from a shared, meaningful understanding. There is a certain deeper logic behind food enactments of which most people are not even consciously aware but still they use this logic on a daily basis. Even though social practices of food depart from the same, they can still be enacted in different ways within the same food culture which is due to the fact that different elements (materials, competences and meanings) can be exploited and used or linked in different ways. Partly, this can further be explained using the concept of our sociological taste that allows us to enact certain appropriate behaviours because these are internalised from a very young age. This means that social practices of food are also enacted appropriately since some practices are more appropriate to use than others.

Since food cultures are open to negotiation and change, social practices of food are also likely to change over time and this is especially true in contexts that are exposed to transitions or changes. From the nature of food cultures, it is completely normal and justifiable that a food culture is not fixed but rather, it has the inherent characteristic that it can stretch or adopt new aspects. This means that practices are enacted with some sort of openness towards the incorporation of new elements that change the practice or make it more convenient for people. For example, the practice of cooking in the examined rural South African village has stretched and become more inclusive over time due to the fact that new materials and corresponding competences such as using gas stoves or paraffin stoves have become embedded in the food culture. These changes do not happen overnight however, slowly but surely they become more and more prominent and at a certain point they become normalised and thereby also embedded within the dominant food culture.

Even though the elements of certain practices can change, there are limitations or restraints to the extent in which practices are likely to change or become adopted because this is also bound to the larger infrastructure and resources that people have at disposal. For example, if people do not have electricity installed, which was the case within the studied village, they cannot endorse the practice of cooking electrically even though this

might be desirable by some people due to the advantages that it can bring (e.g. no smell and cheaper). This means that the enactment of certain practices is also a matter of infrastructures and materials that people themselves can exploit. In turn, this also influences which competences they need to use these materials and infrastructures.

These conclusions are mainly drawn from the examined case study in which people enacted their social practices of food meaningfully even though the broader context was exposed to changes and transitions. In this case, the changing context is mainly represented by agricultural decline and the nutrition transition which leads to changes within the food culture and correspondingly, to the practices that people enact. Whilst people were open to include new social practices of food within their food culture, it does take time for this to happen because initially new practices also carry scepticism with them. Regarding the South African context, the nutrition transition and agricultural decline are the two foremost processes that influence the rural food culture and thereby these thus also shape new practices and give new direction to the enactment of such practices. There is thus a certain stage in which nostalgic practices, appropriate practices and newly emerging practices overlap or exist together within the same food culture.

9.1.1 Local food culture

> *What does the local food culture of a specific rural South African village look like and how has this changed over time?*

Within the local food culture there is a certain aspect of stability but still, it remains open to negotiation and change which means that new elements can be included and eventually endorsed at any time. This inserts that food cultures are dynamic and hybrid instead of static. Due to the fact that there are shared practices and meanings attributed to food, a shared understanding emerges of the appropriate ways to enact these within the dominant food culture and this is how stability occurs over time. Stability within the local food culture also unravels the most evident characteristics that are deeply rooted and these can be edible as well as non-edible. For the examined case study the most evident edible aspects of the food culture were identified to be maize and meat whereas important non-edible characteristics are sharing and having ceremonies and these characteristics are stable over time because they have acquired recognition at large by the community. These kind of characteristics do represent food culture to some extent but this is not to say that this shows *the* existing food culture because that is actually a rather hybrid mix of all kinds of edible and non-edible characteristics in reality.

When new elements are ready to become included in the dominant food culture, depends partly on the timing and the availability of certain resources that people can draw from to endorse new elements within their daily patterns. Two processes influence rural South Africa at large and this was found within the existing literature as well as from the conducted case study. The first process being the fact that people live their lives now centred less on agricultural practices. The second being the fact that people depend more and more on a social welfare system of grants and buy foodstuffs because they receive money. These kind of processes lead to changes within the dominant food culture because they require new infrastructures and connections as well as new practices that are to be explored and eventually enacted appropriately. For these new elements to become endorsed completely, they need to become shared and overcome the scepticism that occurs in the first place.

The local food culture of the examined case study showed the stability in food culture clearly while also showing that there are outside processes to which it remains open. Within this stable food culture, people can still pursue their own ways of enacting certain practices and thereby differences still occur which happens almost naturally due to the nature of food cultures. The doings and sayings observed from village Number Five make explicit what usually remains implicit for people subject to the dominant food culture since food is usually very internalised.

Looking at Number Five specifically, agricultural decline and the nutrition transition can be confirmed as ongoing processes in the area and these have influenced the local food culture over time. New materials have to become included as well as the usage of these and the embodied understanding of it.

9.1.2 Social practices of food

> ➤ *Which social practices of food are enacted within a specific food culture of rural South Africa?*

The practices that could be identified most clearly from the case study are practices of preparation, cooking, eating, cleaning, agriculture, celebration and shopping. Within these social practices of food certain sub practices could be identified such as helping each other which corresponds to a celebratory practice. These practices are highly context specific and even though the practice of eating would most probably occur in all food cultures, the way in which it occurs, to what extent it is important, the understanding of the practice or how it is practised can always differ and therefore these categories should not be taken for granted or defined narrowly. This also shows that there is a link between appropriate practices and food cultures because what can be defined as appropriate and desirable practice in one place, can be inappropriate in another.

Clearly, food is something that is enacted and each practice is composed of certain materials, competences and meanings but variety in practices exists and differences can emerge from context to context. Competent practitioners in the field of food carry an internalised understanding with them that becomes more explicit once the enactment is carried out and this makes it possible to see certain practices as they emerge from their contexts. Using a social practice lens for studies of food is valuable because it grasps daily life and leaves room to include whatever needs to be included without having to stick to prefixed categories and definitions. However, this also means that social practices of food are highly context specific and that the practices identified within this report cannot be generalised to other places. There is an advantage in this because, having prefixed categories means that some practices as they emerge from different contexts could not be included due to the fact that they simply do not fit within a bounded category.

Identifying the type of practices as they emerge from its context can also show certain pitfalls or room for improvements in relation to FNS. In the case of rural South Africa, the agricultural practices are declining whereas shopping practices are increasing but policy regarding FNS still tends to focus on subsistence production rather than on the retail sector. This leads to a misfit between demands from reality and actual implemented policy. By focussing on social practices of food it is possible to incorporate the wider context within a study which means that practised behaviour becomes clear and can thereafter be taken into account for example by policy makers. It is likely that this would enhance policy and make it more effective.

9.1.3 Performing FNS

> ➤ *How do people living in rural South Africa perform food and nutrition security themselves?*

There are several strategies that people use in order to secure themselves for food and nutrition by actively performing certain practices that allow people to engage with FNS. Regarding the visible strategies that were found in the case study, people pursue FNS by the means of money, the homestead garden or adjustments. This is not to say that people focus solely on one of these aspects and often people diversify between these three so for example, they buy non-perishable foodstuffs from the supermarkets in town and they supplement this with fresh vegetables from their homestead garden. However, next to these more visible aspects, there is one big hidden aspect to FNS as it emerged from the studied context. This is the social aspect since there is a big role for practices that are enacted socially and embedded within the wider food culture. Within this context, sharing was

identified as an important non-edible characteristic for the food culture of village Number Five and by sharing food people also socially perform their own FNS.

As was revealed throughout the study, the social seems to be more resistant to shocks and stresses and therefore this is viewed as a rather constant factor that provides security. Social performances can therefore be argued to play a big role within the FNS strategies that people pursue and these are also inherently tied to the rural livelihoods of the villagers. Within the more visible strategies, money is not enough or runs out, the homestead garden is highly dependent on weather conditions and adjustments often happen only in critical times of need. Even though the social can also be exposed to disruptions or shocks, it appears to be more resistant over time because it is deeply rooted in the communal livelihoods that rural South Africans live.

Clearly, from the contemplations in the report it becomes clear that not everything within the rural domain revolves around the production of food and that rural residents should not be seen as producers. Subsistence production almost seems to be non-existent but still it remains a desired goal for most policies focussing on FNS. It is true that most people do produce something in their homestead garden but this does not say that the residents can immediately be classified as producers or farmers. On the contrary even, looking at more contextual elements it can become clear that pursuing subsistence agriculture is not desired for people subjected to these kind of policies. Rather, they actively pursue FNS by certain obvious and more hidden strategies which cannot be measured as would be done in more conventional analysis.

9.2 Discussion

To finish this report, the only part that remains is the critical discussion in which the results are going to be further elaborated and interpreted into the wider discussion. Firstly, the discussion will go back to the question that this report has started with to engage with the broader debate of FNS. Thereafter, the aim of the report will be discussed within an elaboration of moving beyond FNS. Following from that, the discussion will flow into a reflection on the theory. Lastly, some reflection is given on the methodological aspects of this report.

9.2.1 Feeding nine billion

"How to feed nine billion people?" This was the opening question of this report since it has kept FNS researchers busy for a while now (e.g. Godfray et *al.,* 2010; Béné et *al.,* 2015). For some time now the FNS debate has been led mainly by productionist perspectives on FNS aimed at measurable and technical fixes and also overlooking other critical aspects such as unemployment and poverty (Fouilleux et *al.,* 2017). Even though answering this question is outside the scope of this report, this thesis does contribute in some way to finding an answer to the question of feeding nine billion. Put simply, there is no straightforward answer to that question because feeding (or eating) practices are not global in nature since different food cultures exist and they each have their own different meanings and practices (Lang & Haesman, 2015). Even though globalisation has its own impacts on food cultures, differences remain to exist and will probably remain to exist for quite some time as well. This means that feeding nine billion is highly complex because as the findings of this report suggest what works for one place might be inappropriate for another. What this means is that probably, there is no uniform answer to this question and thus we might want to move away from finding an answer to this ever-complex question that targets global and productionist answers in nature.

Furthermore, following the conclusions of this thesis, people enact their own social practices of food meaningfully whereas the concept of *feeding* seems to undermine this. Having to be fed would undermine the fact that people are competent practitioners in a specific field of activity, which is food in this case. Rather, people have to be seen as capable practitioners that have their own meaningful ways of nourishing themselves whereas feeding more implies that people are subjected to certain interventions or programmes that lead to the best

outcome. Feeding thus again implies that there is some mere technical fix that could solve problems of FNS and to which people could easily be subjected. In this light, the conclusions of this thesis are valuable because they add to the wider FNS debate that has remained a focus on production over time.

9.2.2 Moving beyond food and nutrition security

The aim of this thesis *was to approach the FNS debate more qualitatively by applying a social practice approach in order to move towards a new unit of analysis within this study which allows to study the enactment of food.* By stating this aim, the main purpose was to move beyond conventional analyses of FNS by which was mean that the debate should take another turn to include new elements and also leave room for new inputs that can emerge throughout any assessment regarding this topic. This is in line with authors such as Noack and Pouw (2015), Fouilleux et *al.* (2017) and Alonso et *al.* (2017) who also argue that certain more qualitative factors have thus far been overlooked in the FNS debate. However, whether this thesis report is really 'moving beyond' remains debatable and maybe instead of a *move beyond* it has been more of a *next step* towards a start of having more inclusive debates. What this thesis has especially tried to move away from is *measuring* FNS since that is one of the factors that is keeping the debate rather technical and fixed upon quantities (Fouilleux et *al.*, 2017). In order to make the next step,

Elaborating the aim of this thesis a bit further into depth, it mentioned and implied that encompassing, holistic and in-depth studies are required in order to give a more qualitative turn to FNS which is also argued by Noack and Pouw (2015), Fouilleux et *al.* (2017) and Alonso et *al.* (2017). This is in line with the results of this thesis since these also make it clear that qualitative perspectives have to become acknowledged and integrated in the FNS debate. But when would a FNS study be completely encompassing and holistic? And is this even feasible? In order to be completely holistic and encompassing the quantitative and qualitative should probably be merged and aim for interdisciplinary approaches. Doing this would really lead to a holistic picture in which both sides of the debate can be captured. Because of the critical view towards the technical approaches taken to FNS following the critiques that have been expressed in the literature (e.g. Noack & Pouw, 2015; Fouilleux et *al.*, 2017) the debate in this thesis remains quite sociological in nature which also has its own critiques (e.g. being time-consuming, vague or not generalizable), just so as critique can be expressed towards technical approaches. Furthermore, this report also has overlooked gaps of which I am fully aware but in order to make this study feasible certain choices had to be made by which several factors have been included whereas others have been excluded (e.g. identity or authenticity). Throughout this report, it has mainly been culture which is seen as an overlooked factor (Noack & Pouw, 2015). However, in order to really move beyond FNS, more overlooked factors can probably be identified which Fouilleux et *al.* (2017) already do by identifying more specific factors as being overlooked such as poverty or unemployment.

Just so as the broader debate of FNS has limitations, this thesis and its qualitative approach also have some limitations of which maybe the main one is that the caloric value of the diet is not taken into account. The nutritionist point of view has been identified as quantitative in nature (Baiphethi & Jacobs, 2009) and thereby dismissed throughout this thesis. Therefore, the real caloric value of diets in village Number Five have not been taken into account. The nutrition transition which could possibly be shown by caloric and nutritional measurements, tends to be normatively underpinned as a transition of which the outcome is worse than the point of departure since it leads to diets that are high in energy by including fats and sugars (Popkin et *al.,* 2012) whereas the point of departure is diets high in fibres. Even though this has been leading throughout this report, it is simply unknown what the two main described changes (agricultural decline and the nutrition transition) really do to the diet of rural South Africans. It could be that due to these changes the diet is indeed more harmful for health and wellbeing but it could also be that it adds something to the diet or that people now consume the

right amount of calories per day. Maybe the residents even needed the added sugars and fats in their diets in order to benefit from their diets. This again emphasises the importance of both qualitative and quantitative studies to examine this topic and furthermore, this point also emphasises the need for further research.

The qualitative approach that is taken towards FNS also comes with some further limitations. First of all, the question of feasibility arises. It does take time to conduct qualitative studies and in this case especially because keeping an open view means diving into the research blankly and thereby first the relevant aspects have to be defined before being able to go in depth and come to solutions. Secondly, the question of space arises because an identification is needed of the geographic areas that can be captured as belonging together to examine food cultures. Taking this back to a national level would simply be a conventional way again. More especially going back to the case of South Africa, a national elaboration would already not work since the country is too diverse to take it as a whole. The two main questions for these kind of studies would thus be regarding time and space. How much time do we need or want to invest, and which geographical spaces should be covered?

9.2.3 Theoretical discussion

9.2.3.1 Using a social practice approach to study food

The main strengths of using a social practice approach to examine enactments of food have been outlined in the preceding chapters of this report however it is important to note that a social practice approach was not established in the first place to use as a lens for food related studies. Initially applying a social practices approach occurred because it has the potential to show practices of everyday life whilst simultaneously understanding change and transition (Shove et *al.,* 2012). Still, it has also proven to be useful for food studies.

As social practices are concerned with doings and sayings in a specific field of activity (Arts et *al.,* 201) it has to be noted that food is not an activity but it is a static noun which could spark the discussion about it being a social practice. This is also why social practice approaches do not immediately occur to researchers making analyses of food. For example, cycling is a verb which makes it easier to see it as a social practice because everyone would agree that it is something someone can do. Cycling can be seen as what Arts et *al.* (2012) call a *doing* whereas food is not directly such a *doing* but by enacting other practices such as cooking or shopping food can be done in some way. In order to overcome this, I explicitly choose to talk about the enactment of social practices of food. When food is referred to as an enacted practice, it becomes something that can actually be 'done' by people. Practices that are clear social practices of food are eating and grocery shopping. Now, of course I could have taken eating practices or as some other authors have done consumption practices (Fonte, 2013; Holm, 2013) to depart from but this would have put more clear boundaries around the scope of the research and thereby it would have missed its aim. This thesis is therefore more in line with the discussion that Domaneschi (2012) highlights in his work. Applying a social practices lens to food allows us to make more comprehensive studies and to get a better understanding in the complexity of food issues (Domaneschi, 2012).

Even though I believe that the findings of this thesis are relevant and that the use of a social practice approach can be relevant to take towards the study of food, I would like to refrain from saying that this social practices approach that follows the work of Shove et *al.* (2012) is the best or only method by which a qualitative approach can be taken. What I do believe that this research has proven is that there are other ways of approaching FNS whereby different units of analysis than the conventional (global, national, communal and individual) also provide interesting insights in the domain of FNS which is also the main point of Noack and Pouw (2015) and Alonso et *al.* (2017). Consequently, certain overlooked issues can thereby become more evident which allows for new solutions that also move beyond conventional solutions also making them more context specific (Noack & Pouw, 2015). This potentially enhances the Instead of showing the best possible way to study FNS qualitatively

this research foremost attempted to show that a more qualitative analysis of FNS and its performance is possible and can be very valuable.

9.2.3.2 The Bourdieusian approach in this report

Going back to the theoretical framework of this thesis, Bourdieu's work on the sociological taste (1984) has been incorporated into the framework however, one might note that it has not gotten a prominent role thereafter in the report. The sociological taste has been touched upon some times throughout the empirical chapters but it has been less outstanding than the two other concepts (food culture and social practices) since these two have entire chapters dedicated to them. Some critical effort has been put in the role of the Bourdieusian in this report and now a small reflection on this issue is going to be discussed.

Mainly, integrating the sociological taste (Bourdieu, 1984) was useful to stretch the concept of food culture that had been defined as the *shared practices and meanings relating to food* (Lang & Heasman, 2015). Even though people have this shared understanding, it does not mean that every practice is enacted in the same way. Partly, this is also explained by the use of social practice theory within the theoretical framework since elements can be integrated differently (Shove et *al.,* 2012). To make this point more explicit, the work of Bourdieu has been incorporated because that explicitly mentions that people can still distinguish themselves but that we also internalise certain appropriate behaviours (Bourdieu, 1984). Furthermore, in line with the concept of food cultures and social practices, there is an element of internalisation since tastes are internalised at a very young age and this guides us towards the appropriate behaviours and social positions (Bourdieu, n.d.). The fact that we internalise food culture, sociological taste and social practices is what binds these three concepts together in the end.

Furthermore, using Bourdieu (1984) allowed to stay away from the structure versus agency debate since I did not want to incorporate this as social practice theory is trying to break away from this ongoing and longstanding debate. While it refrains from this debate, incorporating this concept still gave an explanation of difference and hybridity within food cultures. Bourdieu (1977) has been one of the advocates of the position that social structures not just exist, but that they are produced and reproduced through interactions (Arts et *al.,* 2012).

9.2.4 Methodological discussion

Even though different forms of triangulation apply to this research, there are still a few issues in the methodology that require some attention. First of all, most of the participant observations were done by cooking and eating with people. Trying to make the appointment we made it clear that other practices regarding food would also be useful for us to study (e.g. agricultural practices or shopping practices) but we always said that the observation phase had to be convenient for them as well. It turned out that most people felt comfortable having us over during cooking and eating times. From the seven identified practices of Chapter 7, this means two have been explored very extensively whereas the others have gotten less attention throughout the fieldwork phase. One explanation that I could give for this is that people cook and eat on a daily basis whereas other practices are not executed on a daily basis and therefore these were hard to plan.

Secondly, due to the fact that neither of the researchers had ever used the method of conducting food diaries, the first eight food diaries are not as accurately as the latter eight. Relevant literature about conducting food diaries was read prior to the use of the method however neither of us had practical experience that could help to take the method from a document into reality. Throughout the first eight there was an incorrect assumption that it would be quite an easy task for people to do and that by giving a quick verbal explanation of the book people would be capable to fill out the forms as we expected them to do. Sampling the next eight households, we learned from our mistake and adjusted the explanation of the book a little bit. Furthermore, we also decided

to immediately fill in an example with the respondents. This approach paid off and the food diaries were now filled out as we had expected them to be. Personally, I have learned from this that, being unfamiliar with a certain approach, it is good to run some sort of pilot before launching the actual method. This way the method can be practised with and altered before having to worry about the research findings of the report.

Thirdly, another issue that requires some reflection is the relatively homogenous group of respondents that have been included in the fieldwork trajectory. Ten out of sixteen respondents are older than 60 years which also makes it a relatively homogeneous sample. Partly, this is probably due to the fact that no inclusion or exclusion criteria were established before starting the trajectory with people. For the second set of eight households, some criteria were drawn to make the sample a bit more diverse (socio-economically but also spatially) however, the sample still remained homogeneous. Even though the sample is homogeneous, it does in a way reflect the demography of rural South African villages in which the younger people have out-migrated and work in the cities to earn money.

Lastly, living in a time in which software programmes can be run for basically everything I decided to conduct the entire analysis without any of these programmes that can do part of the job. Being unfamiliar with these programmes and as it would require quite some time to obtain these skills, I decided to stick with the 'old' methods of coding by using Microsoft Office. Even though I do believe that these software programmes have certain advantages, I also believed in my own capacities to code and interpret data. For me personally, I see it as a process that has enhanced this study because it allowed me to really engage with my data and by really diving into it, delivering the best possible result.

9.2.4.1 Role of the researcher(s)

As has come forward already throughout the empirical chapters of this report, the two researchers drew quite some attention in village Number Five mainly because me and the co-researcher were the only *white* people in the village. Some respondents even mentioned that they had never had a white person in their house before and also that there are no whites living in the village which also made our presence somewhat unique. On the one hand, being this visibly different, it made some issues difficult to research. For example, we were not allowed to wash dishes because this would have made people uncomfortable *since there is a common believe that white people do not wash dishes* (field notes, November 22nd, 2017). Additionally, people did not believe that *they* (blacks) could help *us* (whites) so there was almost a constant struggle of trying to bridge this gap by explicitly showing how normal we were.

Furthermore, our whiteness on the one hand could have raised some expectations because in the past, whites had come to bring something (e.g. tractors or school supplies) of which stories are known. This also made some people in the village a bit sceptic because of the assumption that we would not fulfil our promises or that we had some more (secret) intentions and that in the end, there would be people disappointed or hurt by our intentions. Transparency has therefore been very important between the researchers and the respondents which also allows to keep expectations low and thereby not having disappointed people. This also allowed to leave the field properly so that new research can possibly be conducted in the village.

On the other hand, mostly after a while once a further stage in the trajectory was reached, people started to express their gratitude. First of all, there was some sort of happiness that we choose Number Five specifically because it showed our exclusive interest in that village. Secondly, people expressed their gratitude because we showed them some sort of humbleness by not discriminating against them or against their food. Appreciation was expressed to us because we did not ask for any special treatment.

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Appendices

A: Food diary form

Table 7 Food diary form

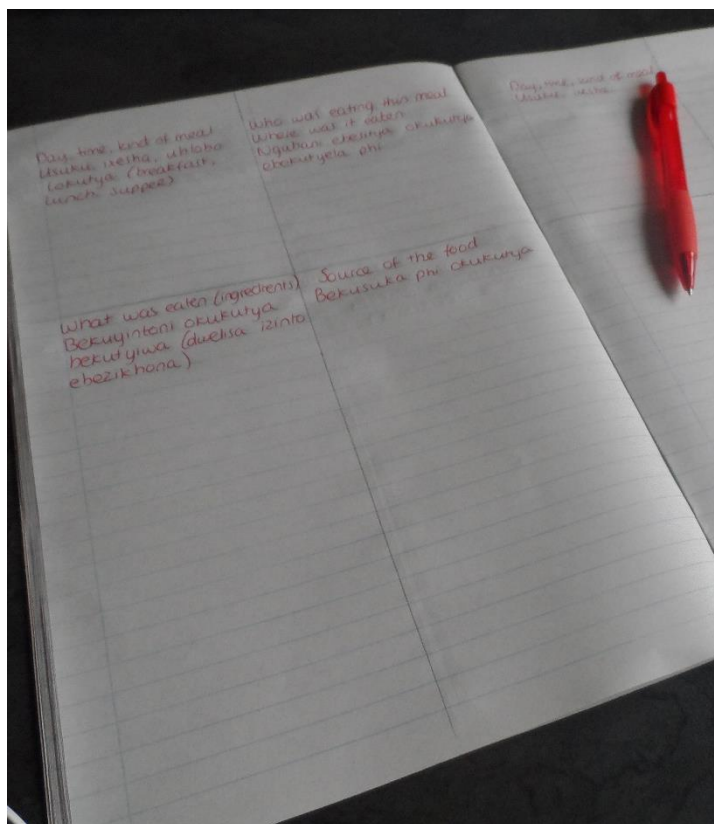|	
Day, time, kind of meal **Usuku, ixesha, uhlobo lokutya (breakfast, lunch, supper)**	**Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten?** **Ngubani ebesitya okukutya, ebekutyela phi**
What was eaten (ingredients) **Bekuyintoni okukutya bekutyiwa (dwelisa izinto ebezikhona)**	*Source of the food*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

Image 5 The handwritten food diary (Own photograph)

B: Interview guide

- Introduction
    - As you know, we are two students (Stefanie and Anouk) from Wageningen University, the Netherlands, conducting research about food and eating for our master thesis.
    - The aim of the interview is to gain insights in the way that people eat food in village Number Five.
    - You are selected because you live in Number Five and therefore your opinions matter to us.
    - The interview will last approximately one hour.
    - Your answers will be dealt with in a confidential way and used for our thesis. We will make sure to store the recording safely.
    - If it is okay, we would like to record this interview. This is for our own purposes, so that we can remember what was said. If you agree, we want to start the recording now. Remember that this will be treated completely confidential.
    - If it is okay, we would like to start the interview now. Feel free to ask any questions when something is unclear. Furthermore, if you really do not want to answer a question, you are free to refuse.
    - There are no wrong or right answers.

- 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?

C: Additional interviews

C.1 Hlankomo history interview

- How did Number Five settle here?
- How did these fifteen villages become connected? (Hlankomo)
- What have been the main struggles in the past?
- Which past events have shaped Number Five?
- What are some of the main victories in the past?
- Which leaders have been influential here?
- How has Number Five changed over time?
- Could you explain the name *Number Five*?
- How important is Xhosa culture for this place?
    - Why is this so (un)important?

C.2 Elderly project interview

- Could you describe food from *'the olden days'*?
    - What are the main changes?
        - Food products?
        - Cooking?
        - Agriculture?
    - What do you think about these changes?
        - Fear of trying new foods?
- In what way is food important to you as a community?
    - What about sharing?
        - Has this changed over time?
    - How does it make you feel to eat together? (What does it mean to you?)
        - What about the elderly project in specific?

Questions about the project:

- Who cooks in the elderly project when your hostess is not present?
- What are other things that you do together in the project?
- Does the elderly project make you feel more secure of food?
    - Why is this (not) the case?
    - How do you think this feeling is established?

Questions about history

- Are there any general changes over time in Number Five?
- How does Number Five differ now than from fifty years ago?
    - What do you think about this?
- How does Number Five differ from other villages?
- Could you explain the name *Number Five*?

D: Coding format for food diaries

D.1 Coding format

Table 8 The used coding format for the food diaries

Type	Explanation
<mark style="background-color:yellow">Maize based staple</mark>	Pap, umvubo, porridge, maize bread, inqodi (incl. sorghum)
<mark style="background-color:lime">Flour based staple</mark>	All types of flour bread, amagwinga (homemade, store brought, white, brown)
<mark style="background-color:cyan">Rice</mark>	Rice
<mark style="background-color:magenta">Vegetables</mark>	Vegetable recorded in a meal (Cabbage, spinach, onion, carrot, tomato, potato, other) Nb. Potato is seen as a vegetable and not as a staple in this case
<mark style="background-color:blue">Animal products</mark>	Meat, eggs, fish, milk (also amaasi) (incl. tinned stuff)
<mark style="background-color:red">Additives</mark>	Sugar, salt, yeast, spices, beef stock, oil
<mark style="background-color:silver">Other</mark>	Noodles, pasta, others.

D.2 Example of a coded meal

This example presents how the codes were used in the food diaries. The codes specifically applied to the section about *what was eaten*. When one of the categories was clearly identified, the word was put into a coloured category.

Table 9 Example of a coded meal

Day, time, kind of meal Usuku, ixesha, ublobo lokutya (breakfast, lunch, supper)	Who was eating this meal, where was the meal eaten? Ngubani ebesitya okukutya, ebekutyela phi 11 family members
Supper	Inside
What was eaten (ingredients) Bekuyintoni okukutya bekutyiwa (dwelisa izinto ebezikhona) Umvubo - <mark style="background-color:yellow">mealie meal</mark> - water - <mark style="background-color:red">salt</mark> - <mark style="background-color:blue">fresh milk</mark>	**Source of the food Bekusuka phi okukutya** - Maclear - Well - Maclear - Milk truck

D.3 Division of the staples

The table below shows how the staples that were presented in table 6 divided in three categories.

Table 10 Division of the staples

Household Food group	ID10	ID11	ID12	ID13	ID14	ID15	TOTAL
Maize based staples	19	13	11	13	15	15	86
Flour based staples	5	8	4	4	4	3	28
Rice	3	4	4	2	6	8	27
Staple total							141

E. Anonymization

In order to adhere to the promised privacy protection, all respondents are anonymized throughout this thesis report. The interviewees, people present in the vignettes and the translators have all been given pseudonyms in order to guarantee their anonymity. Each respondent has been given a random new first name by using a list of Xhosa names that was found by a google search with the key words *list of Xhosa names.*[10] The gender was taken into account but the meaning of the name was not taken consciously into account during the anonymization process. In order to respect the importance of clan names and how deeply personal this can be, I decided not to give people a last name or clan name since it felt wrong to do so.

Table 11 Pseudonyms of the respondents

Role during fieldwork	Pseudonyms	Gender division	
Interview respondents	Cebisa, Jikela , Madoda, Ndiliswa, Cikizwa, Wonga, Thozama, Sonwabo, Fezeka, Bongani, Esihle, Fundiswa, Khanyiswa, Langa, Neliswa, Sisipho.	Male	5
		Female	11
History interview respondents	Mandla, Qondile	Male	2
		Female	0
Additional people attending participant observations	Lumka, Noxolo, Nobomi, Nolitha	Male	0
		Female	3
Translators	Luxolo, Menzi	Male	2
		Female	0

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[10] https://standiwe.wordpress.com/2012/03/16/xhosa-names-their-meanings/

F. Coding tree

Coding tree			
Format			
* Maincode_subcode_respondentnumber_date			
* Coloured in code column and notes itself			
Tree			
Concept	**Category**	**Code_subcode_name_dd**	**Explanation**
Food Culture	Food	Foo_fav_number_dd	Favourite kind of food
		Foo_cul_number_dd	Foods typical for rural food culture
		Foo_acc_number_dd	Acculturised foodstuffs
		Foo_pro_number_dd	Processed foodstuffs
		Foo_eat_number_dd	Eating
		foo_mea_number_dd	Meal
	Source	So_sho_number_dd	From the local shop
		So_sup_number_dd	From the supermarket
		So_oth_number_dd	From other people
		So_fie_number_dd	From the field
		So_gar_number_dd	From the garden
		So_gat_number_dd	Gathering
	Celebrations	Cel_hou_number_dd	Having own celebration
		Cel_pur_number_dd	Purpose of celebrations
		Cel_foo_number_dd	Food during celebrations
		Cel_peo_number_dd	People engaging/attending in celebrations
		Cel_hel_number_dd	Helping with celebrations
		Cel_oth_number_dd	Other peoples celebrations
	Changes/differences	Cha_nfi_number_dd	Specific change in Number Five
		Cha_chi_number_dd	Same diet as childhood
		Cha_fut_number_dd	Food and eating in the future
		Cha_agr_number_dd	Change in agricultural practices
		Cha_sea_number_Dd	Change in seasons *(not per se over time)*
		Cha_wee_number_dd	Differences between weekdays and weekends
		Cha_nut_number_dd	Changes related to the nutrition transition
		Cha_ele_number_dd	Changes regarding electricity
	Livelihoods	Liv_agr_number_dd	Involvement in agricultural practices
		Liv_liv_number_dd	Livestock
		Liv_gra_number_dd	Income from grants
		Liv_inc_number_dd	Income
		Liv_pro_number_dd	Projects
		Liv_nfi_number_dd	Livelihoods in number five (general)
		Liv_com_number_dd	Communal aspects of life
		liv_rur_number_dd	Something typical for rural livelihoods (or rural-urban connection)
Social Practices	Meanings	Mea_imp_number_dd	Importance of food
		Mea_tas_number_dd	Importance of taste
		Mea_tra_numer_dd	Tradition
		Mea_cul_number_dd	Importance of culture
		Mea_rit_number_dd	Importance of rituals
		Mea_hea_number_dd	Importance of health *(relating to nutrition transition)*
		Mea_soc_number_dd	Importance of the social
	Competences	Com_lea_number_dd	Learning food related practices
		Com_ski_number_dd	Skills needed
	Materials	Mat_use_number_dd	Materials used for food practices
	Food practices	FP_coo_number_dd	Cooking practices
		FP_pre_number_dd	Preparation practices
		FP_eat_number_dd	Social eating practices
		FP_cle_number_dd	Cleaning practices
		FP_sho_number_dd	Shopping practices
		FP_agr_number_dd	Agricultural practices
FNS	FNS	FNS_fee_number_dd	When do you feel food secure
		FNS_typ_number_dd	Type of foods needed to feel FNS
		FNS_kno_number_dd	Knowledge about nutrition
		FNS_soc_number_dd	Social FNS