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Food security in rural areas: the case of the Umkhanyakude District Municipality in the Northern Region of KwaZulu-Natal

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Food Security in Rural Areas: The Case of the Umkhanyakude District Municipality in the Northern Region of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Thesis Presented for the Award of a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Town and Regional Planning)

in the

School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

06 February 2023

Supervisor: Prof. F. Sihlongonyane

Declaration

I confirm that this work is original. As far as I know, it does not contain any material written by another author nor does it contain any published material unless where due reference is made. This work, to the best of my knowledge, has not been submitted to any institution: university or college for the award of a diploma or degree.



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Mduduzi W. Nhlozi

Abstract

Studies on food security focusing on households began attracting considerable attention in the mid-1970s following a surge in the cost of food production and food prices. The surge in prices led to increasing percentage of food insecure households throughout the world. To address the growing number of people affected by hunger, countries sought to develop new technological techniques to produce food in large quantities particularly in the developing world. The thrust of the approach was to ensure the availability of food first. The understanding was that large food quantities would result in food-secure nations. Overtime, researchers realised that improved food production does not lead to food secure households. Since then, the percentage of people affected by hunger has continued to increase with 690 million (8.9%) considered food insecure in 2020 (Food Agriculture Organisation – FAO, 2021) despite relative increase in food production. South Africa is not an exception with 23% of the population reported food insecure in 2020 (van der Berg *et al.*, 2021). The reports by the NIDS-CRAM have indicated that the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic in 2019 has further exacerbated food insecurity at a household level.

The purpose of the study is to explore mechanisms used by rural households to achieve food security during various threats and risks to their livelihoods. The case study adopted is the Umkhanyakude region which is in the rural area of northern part of KwaZulu Natal. It covers an area of 13855.35 km² and accommodates approximately 625 846 people constituting a total of 128 195 households (Stats SA, 2011). The region was selected as a case study due to its economic, social, demographic and ecological characteristics. The study uses semi-structured questionnaire to collect information on lived experiences of households in their quest to access and ensure availability of food.

The study finds that households use several food strategies namely economy-related, culture-related and rite-of-passage to achieve food security. The strategies are framed within the context of what Nee and Ingram (1998) refer to as new institutionalism or new institutional economics. New institutional economics places focus on the importance of a "web of interrelated norms – formal and informal" that govern how individuals and households in Umkhanyakude region "respond to perception of costs and benefit in exchanges and invest in or divest themselves of particular ties" (Nee and Ingram, 1998: 19). The study argues that these strategies are embedded within social norms, values, and cultural practices beyond the ambit of orthodox economics. It further argues that the discourse on food security in rural areas must be framed beyond the economic analytical framework, to reckon with the embedded social and cultural norms, practices, rules, and relationships and to develop salient policy interventions. The study advocates for the development of localised food security plans by local municipalities to improve food security status of rural households. This is because food insecurity is largely felt at community and household levels. It is important that policy frameworks to manage food security are placed at municipal levels where local communities can easily access them.

Keywords: *Household, Food Security, Food Strategies, Socio-cultural Systems, Umkhanyakude.*

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Dedication

To my daughter, Nongcebo Nhlozi, you will forever be my precious, little girl.

To my family: my mother, Thembi Anna Manzini, and my brothers Robert '*Torres*', Happy, Mseshi '*Chief*' and Sabelo, may God richly continue to keep us closer as we grow and reach for our individual dreams.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFSUN	African Food Security Urban Network
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ASGI-SA	Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa
BMR	Bureau of Market Research
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CoGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COL	Community-organisationally-linked
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Pandemic
CSG	Child Social Grant
CSI	Coping Strategies Index
DA	Democratic Alliance
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DEC	Department Ethics Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DSD	Department of Social Development
EEA	Employment Equity Act
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFSI	Global Food Security Index
GFSI	Global Food Security Index
GHS	General Household Survey
GRPBF	Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Framework
GVA	Gross Value Added
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
HHD	Household Diary
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSP	Housing Sector Plan
ID	Identity Document
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFSS	Integrated Food Security Strategy
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFSNP	Inter-ministerial National Food Security and Nutrition Plan
ITB	Ingonyama Trust Board
LED	Local economic development plans
MDGs	Millennium and Development Goals
MFSP	Municipal food security plans
MNCs	Multinational corporations
M-pesa	Mobile Money

MSA	Municipal Structures Act
MSA	Municipal Systems Act
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCR	National Credit Regulator
NDP	National Development Plan
NFSAS	National Financial Aid Student Scheme
NFSNP	National Food Security and Nutrition Policy
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NIDS-CRAM	National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
NIHSS	National Institute for Human Social Sciences
NP	National Party
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPFWE	National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RDP	Reconstruction Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARB	South African Reserve Bank
SASSA	South African State Security Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
SES	Social ecological systems
SOL	State-organisationally-linked
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning, Land Use and Management Act
SPSS	Statistical Programme for Social Sciences
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UDHDO	Umkhanyakude Department of Health District Office
UDM	Umkhanyakude District Municipality
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organization
WRC	Water Research Commission

Chapter 1: Background and Overview - Situating Household Food Security in the Study

1.1. Introduction

When travelling in a public taxi, I often choose to sit in seats mounted alongside windows of the taxi. This allows me some space to sit alone and not share a seat with other commuters. As I got into the taxi on the 22nd of May 2012, twelve people were already seated. After looking around for a while, I decided to sit at the back. I kindly asked a woman sitting in the second row from the back to let me sit next to her. I greeted her and asked if I could assist her with one of the bags she had on her lap. She smiled, nodded and noted, “thank you my child. It is not often that you find a young person who respects elders. What is your name and where are you from?” This was the start to a long conversation in a long journey from Johannesburg to Manguzi town in the Umhlabuyalingana in the north-eastern part of Kwazulu-Natal Province in South Africa.

I responded, “I am from a village called Manqakulana.” She nodded and said, “oh, I have heard of that place, but I have never been there.” While all of us in the taxi had in the passenger book wrote that we were going to Manguzi, to be precise, we were all going to different areas or villages around the Manguzi town. She was going to an area called Mazambane. She asked about my surname and who my parents were. I only responded with the details of my mother. There was a sigh of breath, she looked up at me and asked about the whereabouts of my father. I explained, “my farther passed on 10 years ago.” She apologised and stated most of the families in Manguzi had no fathers. As a result, women had to look after families on their own. She explained, “I am also a head of my family. I must look after five (5) children, with my first son your age or older” (Zungu, *Pers. Comm,* 22 May 2012).

She then went on to tell me how it was important that I support my mother given that she had done extraordinarily well and had to sacrifice a lot to be able to raise me and even manage to get me into university. She explained, “raising children, especially boys, without their father is very difficult, and without income or support from the family, it becomes almost impossible.” To find out about what she meant about this, I asked, “do you or any of your children work? How do you survive?” During this time, numerous questions arose in my mind regarding her ability to cloth, feed, educate and keep her children in good health. She shook her head, and responded “no, no one works, my child” (Zungu, *Pers. Comm,* 22 May 2012). Her response raised more questions than answers.

This is a conversation between the researcher and an unknown woman in a communal taxi travelling from Johannesburg to Manguzi. She explained how she had been able to raise five (5) children following the death of her husband in 2000. She had raised her children despite having no formal employment or secure, constant income to buy food. To compound this,

she explained how, as result of family conflicts, her sisters-in-law did not want to assist her with raising of children. She explained how one of the sisters-in-law once said, "*wazala ngathi uzala amagundane, uzozibona",* simply meaning, you gave birth to many children like rats, you will see who will assist you to feed them (Zungu, *Pers. Comm,* 22 May 2012). Interestingly, two (2) of her children had managed to finish high school and had managed to obtain funding through the National Financial Aid Student Scheme (NFSAS) to access university for further education. The older son had completed a Master of Science qualification and the other son was doing second year at the University of Johannesburg. The main question therefore was: how did she ensure availability of food for her children given that none of the family members had access to income? Was this a unique case or was commonplace in rural areas?

In the third quarter of 2019, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) indicated that 29, 1% of South African population was unemployed (Stats SA, 2019). Of this total percentage, 43.3% comprised of people living in rural areas such as the Umkhanyakude region. The rate of unemployment in rural areas continues to be very high as a result many factors including slow rate of national economic growth, inadequate support of small-holder farmer development as well as lack of growth in employment in the commercial agricultural and tourism sectors (Kwenda *et al*., 2020 and Wasserman, 2019). The rate of unemployment in rural areas has been further exacerbated particularly in 2020 following the outbreak of Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020. The National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) reported the employment rate decreased by 9% from 57% in February to 48% in April 2020. This trend continued overtime with reports indicating that the percentage of unemployed decreased to only 38% (Ranchhod and Daniels, 2020). The report further points out that during this period men were more "than twice as likely to find employment as women while men were also about 10 percentage points less likely to lose employment than women" (Ranchhod and Daniels, 2020: 16).

In South Africa, these circumstances exist despite the legal right enshrined in the Constitution of the country that all its citizens have a right of access to food. As a supreme legislation, Section 27(b) of the Constitution explicitly states that "everyone has the right to sufficient food and water', and that the "state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights" (The Presidency, 1996: 1255). While this is enshrined in the constitution, food security remains one of the hotly contested issues in South Africa. This has been demonstrated by debates on the need to increase right to access to food by political parties such as African National Congress (ANC) and Democratic Alliance (DA) as well as organisations such as

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (Battersby, 2012). The bone of contention is that food security remains one of the key shaping forces of the country, and as a result should be prioritised in government programmes (du Toit, 2011). The Diagnostic Report of the National Planning Commission (NPC) produced in 2011 also echoed similar sentiments by highlighting the need to elevate and address the issue of right to access to food in South Africa. In emphasising the importance of food security, the report stressed that new, innovative technologies must be developed that will address climate change and rising food prices to ensure sustainable food supplies (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Worth noting is that household food insecurity is not only a challenge to South Africa, but it is widespread across Sub-Sahara and the globe. It is for this reason that several regional and international studies have been done on factors of food insecurity and measures to address to achieve sustainable food supply, access, availability and nutrition. In the recent past, the majority of these studies nevertheless have been framed and focused on the urban environment, with economic factors and traditional, supply-side modernist methods of producing food at the centre of the discussions (see *Tawodzera, et al., 2016, 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011, Crush, 2013, Crush and Tevera, 2010, Frayne, 2010, Battersby, 2012, Crush and Frayne, 2011, Cohen and Garrett 2009, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2008, Oxfam International, 2008a, 2008b and 2008c, World Health Organization (WHO) (2008), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (2002), Garrett, 2000 and Maxwell, 1999*). This inclination towards urban-centric literature on urban food systems has largely been necessitated by an understanding and elevation of towns and cities as important areas of economic opportunities and future enclaves of the world's population (van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2017 and van der Merve, 2011). This is particularly the case in the African region (and South Africa) which is said to be the "future of the world's urbanisation" with the continent's urban population expected to triple in the next in 30 years, with more than 1.3 billion people living in cities by year 2050 (van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2017: 1224).

Since the 1950s, the food security discourse has included three (3) main elements, namely: quantity, quality and safety (Barnes, 2014 and van der Merve, 2011). The modernist period altered the food security landscape, more particularly in the developed world. Modernist theorists and policy makers understood that with technological, industrial advances and exponentially increasing populations, methods of producing food to sustain growing populations needed to drastically improve (Abdulkadyrova *et al.,* 2016 and Barnes, 2014). These advances also created opportunities for increased profit margins for farmers and retail redistribution establishments (Barnes, 2014). In efforts to maximise profits, both farmers and

redistribution retailors produce food at large scales, which was supported by existing technological advances of the time. Overtime, pursuance of large profit margins led to increased risk of food produced being of poor quality. It was for this reason that in the United States and Europe in particular, stringent regulations on production and redistribution of food from the "field to plate" were ratified to curb production and distribution of food of less quality (Barnes, 2014: 13). This framing of food security continued to dominate food security discourse until the late 1990s when post-modern approaches of producing food were introduced. The post-modern paradigm began to introduce issues of sustainability, nutritional value and cultural acceptability of food being produced (Barnes, 2014, Battersby, 2012, Crush, 2013 and van der Merve, 2011).

This study does not disregard the importance of modernist orthodox economic approaches of food security. While still regarding these as important, the study explores systematic, complex, post-modern food security factors such as socio-cultural factors of food, gender dynamics, social networks, social economies, existing power relations and oppressions, access to resources and associated conflicts. The study observes that these factors are fundamentally important for purposes of understanding food security as they acknowledge complex, nuanced systems and relationships that exist at household levels (Agada and Igbokwe, 2016, Leung *et al.*, 2011 and Ribot and Peluso, 2003). Remote rural areas and townships where economic opportunities are limited and/or non-existent, seeking to understand food security through structural economic factors of food can lead to a missed opportunity to unpack the real lived experiences and limitations of people living in these areas.

The lack of access to income to buy food and other essential household services suggests that people living in these areas must find 'other ways' to access food. It is these other ways which cannot be understood by solely focusing on economic factors of food. Equally important, these cannot be explained by aggregating analyses at international, regional and national levels. For instance, social networks formed by individuals cannot be explained when food analyses are aggregated at regional or national levels. The same can be said of gender dynamics or unequal power relations that exist at community and household levels. It is for this reason that this study observes that food security discourse must move beyond orthodox economic analysis to socio-cultural analysis of food focused on household levels.

1.2. Problematizing the Concept of Household Food Insecurity

The prevailing studies on food security have in the main, been contextualised at three (3) levels, namely global, regional and national levels. This section of the study discusses how the conception of food security at these different levels and its programmatic interventions

have been problematic. The first part of the section discusses food security at global level, followed by food security at regional level, and then food security studies at national level.

At global level, food security began receiving attention in mid-1970s (Crush, 2013, Battersby, 2012, Cohen and Garrett, 2009 and Maxwell, 1999). Increasing food prices coupled with increasing production costs and doubling of food insecure households elevated concerns of access and availability of food (FAO, 2019, Battersby, 2012 and Longbottom, 2011). During this modernist period, the resounding question was: how can nations ensure access to food to the people? A number of researchers and institutions focused on finding ways on how food production can be maximised to ensure that increasing populations can be provided with food (see Crush, 2013, DfID, 2002 and 2000, FAO, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2008 and 1996, Oxfam International, 2008, Tawodzera, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, and WHO, 2008 and 2014). The approach was to ensure the availability of food first as this was believed to lead to food secure nations. Ensuring food first emphasised the need to improve supply-side of food security, through food production systems, technological advances and agricultural methods (FAO, 2019, Crush *et al.*, 2011 and Aliber and Hart, 2009). This approach has been problematic through.

Within the global community, institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Department for International Development (DfID), Oxfam International, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), World Health Organisation (WHO) as well as African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) have generated considerable literature on food security, and in turn shaped the discourse on food security emphasising homo economicus factors such as poverty, unemployment, food prices, policy framework, technological advances and agricultural production. The FAO for instance, continues to produce report series called *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World,* which continue to shape discourse on food security. In its 2019 report, it indicated that "more than 820 million people in the world are still hungry today, underscoring the immense challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030" (FAO, 2019: xiv). In the same report, FAO (2019: vii) points out that,

> Another disturbing fact is that about 2 billion people in the world experience moderate or severe food insecurity. Although primarily concentrated in low- and middle-income countries, moderate or severe food insecurity also affects eight (8) percent of the population in Northern America and Europe. In every continent, the prevalence rate is slightly higher among women than men.

The high rates of people who are food insecure have not gone unnoticed. To address these high rates, governments have developed programmatic interventions to improve food security for their countries (FAO, 2019 and United Nations Foundation, 2012). One of these is the inclusion of food security as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 5 of the 17 SDGs calls for ending of discrimination against women and girls (UNDP, 2020). The SDG 5 is in addition to the SDG 2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (United Nations, 2022). Through the SDG 5, the United Nations Development Programme sets specific objectives to be achieved by different member states by year 2030 (FAO, 2019). However, this SDG goal has been set within a modernist discourse and discussions of food security emphasising gender equality and empowerment of women and young girls (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). As a result, substantial literature is focused on this goal and how states could move towards achieving it within the set timeframe. In South Africa for instance, the government continues to track the country's performance in terms of achievement of the SDGs and implementation of proposals of the National Development Plan 2030 (Stats SA, 2019).

These programmatic interventions sought to adhere to definition crafted by the 1996 World Food Summit which explained food security to be not just an adequate supply of food, but a state which is achieved 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 an active and healthy life" (DfID, 2002: 2). To achieve food security as defined in the Summit has been a serious challenge more particularly in less developed regions such as Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa (FAO, 2019). In the African continent more particularly, food insecurity remains a challenge due to a rising number of people affected by hunger with the region being one of the most undernourished in the world at approximately 20% (FAO, 2019).

As part of the developing world, the discourse on hunger and food security in Africa has not differed greatly from that of the global community. Reports on food security in the African region have focused mostly on national factors causing food insecurity within the African region (WHO, 2014, FAO, 2013 and Sasson, 2012). The "catastrophic famine after major droughts in the early 1970s and mid-1980s" is one of many reasons that provided the foundation for framing of food insecurity and the development of monitoring systems at the national level (Larson and Moseley, 2010: 2). The focus on indicators of food insecurity at national level in Africa has been justified by several development challenges such as high poverty levels, gender issues, climate change, political instabilities, dietary issues (quantity and quality), volatility of food prices, trade agreements and competition and food riots (WHO,

2014, FAO, 2013, Asian Development Bank, 2013, Folaranmi, 2012 and Gender Action, 2011).

To address increasing number food insecure people in the region, modernist approaches to food security have prevailed. A concerted effort has been directed towards creation of innovative sustainable food production and food supply systems (Alademerin and Adedeji, 2013, Asian Development Bank, 2013 and Folaranmi, 2012). Speaking at International Conference for Sustainable Food Future in 2018, the Executive Director of Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Mans Nilsson emphasised the need for innovation-driven food systems more particularly in areas with low productivity, but high population growth such as Africa and Asia (Nilsson, 2018). For Nilsson (2018), innovation-driven food systems are crucial as they promote resource-efficient, productive agricultural systems resilient to climate change, give new opportunities for local value addition, business development and stable markets, revitalize rural communities and alleviate poverty as well as contribute to enhanced national food security.

These supply-driven interventions are not new in the African continent. In a paper titled *'Developing an approach for a sustainable agricultural revolution: a prescription for the private and public sectors in the Southern states of Nigeria resulting in insufficient agricultural productivity*", Alademerin and Adedeji (2013: 37), point out that the need for "achieving and maintaining sustainable farming system is rapidly becoming a top priority" more particularly in regions of the developing world such as Africa. Support for small-scale farming and establishment of farming cooperatives gained momentum following the growing importance of the notion of sustainable food supply (Alademerin and Adedeji, 2013). Equally, at the convening of the African Union on the 26th of June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, African leaders recommitted to increasing food production and supply for all nations by 2025 (FAO, 2014). This again, illustrates African leaders focus at national, supply-side approaches of food security discourse within the continent. Most African countries, including South Africa have adopted these supply-side interventions in efforts to address rising percentages of the population affected by hunger.

Whereas South Africa is regarded as a food secure nation with the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) ranking the country 69th of the 113 food secure nations globally, a noticeable number of individuals or households remain food insecure (GFSI, 2021, Oxford, 2018, Ndhleve *et al.*, 2013, de Cock *et al.*, 2013, Battersby, 2012 and Department of Agriculture, 2006). The reports from various surveys (see General Household Survey, 2017, Living Conditions Survey, 2015, Community Survey, 2016, South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2012, and Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and

Mapping System, 2004) have all pointed at increasing percentages of food insecure households in South Africa (de Cock *et al.*, 2013, Jacobs, 2009 and van Zyl and Kirsten, 1992). In 2011, the General Household Survey by Stats SA indicated that approximately 20% (that is an estimated 25 million people) of South African households have inadequate food access or are food insecure (Ndhleve *et al.*, 2013 and Joala, 2013). The percentage of food insecure households had not improved in 2018, with over 26% of the country's population reported food insecure by the South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (Oxford, 2018). This is despite the fact that the country boasts national food sufficiency through a combination of own production and food imports (van der Berg *et al.*, 2021 and Vink, 2016).

In efforts to address the increasing number of food insecure people, the government has the developed the National Development Plan (NDP Vision 2030) and a policy called National Food Security and Nutrition Policy in 2013 as a guiding framework to increase food security levels. The government has also developed an Inter-ministerial National Food Security and Nutrition Plan, which is coordinated at the Office of the President (Oxford, 2018). At the heart of these, is the need to improve food production and technological systems to ensure production of high quantities of food. Alongside these, is the emphasis on the need to strengthen the economy for creation of economic and employment opportunities to reduce poverty and therefore, food insecurity (*Ibid*).

Worth noting, from the government's effort to address food insecurity is the alignment to the global discourse dominated by economic orthodoxy and modernist approach. The government is concerned more about meeting the national targets of food security (Stats SA, 2018 and du Toit, 2011). This is reflected by the indicators which have been set to measure food security. These are macro, national indicators, concerned about structural, economic factors of food security. This focus is despite the fact that in economically depressed environments, where high levels of poverty, unemployment, inequality, crime, and low economic growth exist, individuals and households must find 'other means' to access and have food available at all times. These other means of food security cannot be understood through econocentric models of analysis at macro or national level.

It is against this backdrop that this study raises the following research question regarding food security in South Africa. The question emanates from the view that discourse on food security has firstly, been framed from an economic structural perspective. Secondly, the discourse has in numerous instances, been situated at macro, national and regional levels. At these levels, such analyses fail unpack the "beyond-the-economic" factors that are micro, complex, and nuanced household dynamics of food security. These are factors that are

embedded within the new institutionalist or 'new institutional economics' approach. New institutional economics places focus on the importance of a "web of interrelated norms – formal and informal" that govern how people "respond to perception of costs and benefit in exchanges and invest in or divest themselves of particular ties" (Nee and Ingram, 1998: 19). As a result, a context specific case study of Umkhanyakude region in northern region of KwaZulu Natal is used to unpack livelihood strategies and household food security dynamics.

1.3. Research Question

What are the mechanisms and strategies used by households at grassroots levels in rural areas of the developing world to mitigate food insecurity?

The research question is underpinned by the following sub-questions, which are raised, analysed and engaged upon in the study. The sub-questions are:

1.3.1. What are the primary causes of household food insecurity in rural areas?

1.3.2. How do individuals and households in rural areas understand food insecurity?

1.3.3. Which theoretical lenses and perspectives explain dynamics of household food security?

1.3.4. What are the existing policy frameworks that address household food security in South Africa?

1.3.5. What are the main determinants of mechanisms and strategies used by households to achieve food security in the northern region of KwaZulu-Natal?

1.4. Research Aim and Objectives

The study investigates and analyses dynamics of household food security at grassroots levels in rural areas of the developing world to mitigate food insecurity using the case of Umkhanyakude region in northern KwaZulu Natal. It unpacks strategies and mechanisms used by households to ensure secure food security status. The study uses qualitative research techniques for gathering of household information on the mechanisms they use to obtain food. The collected data is analysed using narratives, comparative statistics, percentages, and tables that are developed from the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The aim of the study is further underpinned by the following objectives:

1.4.1. To analyse local scale food insecurity issues and livelihood dynamics in South Africa more specifically in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal.

1.4.2. To explore livelihood strategies and practices that contribute to household food security in the Umkhanyakude region.

1.4.3. To explore the implications of existing power relations, gender, and social relations of household food security in the Umkhanyakude region.
1.4.4. To explore the legislative, policy and institutional framework on the provision of food security in northern region of KwaZulu Natal and South Africa.

The study makes an argument that household food dynamics have changed fundamentally in rural areas. Food dynamics have changed from when households were self-sufficient through customary agricultural practices to a state where food security is determined by access to employment or income. This shift presents interesting dynamics between rural and urban areas of the developing world considering the continuous shrink in the global market economy and rising fuel prices, leading to high food prices, political instabilities, crime, poverty as well as economic and social inequalities (FAO, 2019 and Cohen and Garrett, 2009). This shift therefore raises questions relating to amongst other things; rural-urban dynamics of food, the land question, capacity of urban economies to absorb increasing populations and economic development trajectory of rural areas. Does the increased migration to cities render rural areas less important in the development discourse in general, and food security studies in particular?

1.5. Research Rationale

The studies on food security in South Africa began gaining substantial attention in the last 20 years following the development of national strategies such as the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) of 2002 (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2002). The research on this issue has in most part focused on various modernist and economic approaches of analyses such as food prices, technological advances, food markets as well as climate change (Crush and Frayne 2011, Larson and Moseley, 2010). However, these studies have been explored at nation-wide level and in urban areas. Limited research has been done to understand food insecurity and related issues at a local scale, more particularly at household levels in rural areas.

While food security studies at a country level offer insights on a much larger scale (du Toit, 2011), they simultaneously come short of analysing complexities of food security. Conclusions from these studies are often that, households must have access to income to improve their food security status (Battersby, 2012, du Toit, 2011 and FAO, 2011). While lack of income plays a fundamental role on people's access to food, this study reveals that there are other ways used by households to access food, which are beyond income-related, and these are framed beyond the lens of orthodox economics. The 'beyond-the-economic strategies' signify the need for policy to be response to local needs to avoid the abstraction of national policy from local needs.

This study also dismantles the assumption that the household head seek employment to have purchasing power to access food (United Nations, 2014, Batterby, 2012, Crush, 2013 and PAHO, 2009). Such an understanding is limited since it is not a true reflection of dynamics of food security at the household level, especially in a rural context. Even the United Nations (2014) has observed that the way of living in rural areas has changed overtime and is constantly changing. The changing nature of living has introduced both opportunities and risks on how people live, the actions they take and their non-actions (*Ibid*). Therefore, this study demonstrates that analysing food security at household level is crucial as various household members experience different food insecurity risks and in turn, respond differently to the risks facing them (PAHO, 2009).

The changes in livelihood risks signal the need for the development of policies and strategies that effectively respond to the new livelihood circumstances. Therefore, policy interventions must take a multifaceted approach in addressing food security taking into consideration food dynamics embedded at household levels in rural areas. This will not only ensure the country meets its constitutional mandate, but also contribute towards the regional fight against hunger and eventually achieving SDGs, particularly SDG 5 on ending of discrimination against women and girls (UNDP, 2020). The need to achieve this goal signals importance of this study as it provides in-depth analyses of household food security dynamics through unpacking household experiences, attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, cultures, history, norms, beliefs as well as accepted beliefs through the nexus of new institutionalism. As it is explained in Chapter 4 of the study, these systems and structures are shaped by a mixture of factors including cultural beliefs, values, institutions, and global discourses over different centuries. By exploring these, the study is able to unpack the systems and structures which exist in rural areas of the Umkhanyakude region.

1.6. Knowledge Gap and Contribution of the Study

The African continent, as part of the developing world, suffers greatly from poverty and hunger (WHO, 2014 and 2008, FAO, 2013 and Sasson, 2012). This justifies why the continent would make a concerted effort to combat hunger. The continent forms part of the global community and as a result, efforts towards reducing hunger in the region has followed those of the international community with emphasis on advancing the agricultural sector to increase the production of food (FAO, 2013, Asian Development Bank, 2013 and Folaranmi, 2012). The direction taken by the continent owes much to the fact that lots of the research work on food security is done by international agencies, which act on prescripts of international agreements and pacts. It is only in the last 20 years that there have been efforts to understand food security from the demand side, with more emphasis on analysing

household dynamics regarding *inter alia*, how they access and utilise food (Crush, 2013, Folaranmi, 2012, Frayne, 2010, Tawodzera, *et al.*, 2016, Crush and Tevera, 2010). These studies have to a larger extent began positioning food security discourse at micro, household and individual levels, even though they still place a significant emphasis on economic dimension of household food security (FAO, 2019, Alademerin and Adedeji, 2013 and Folaranmi, 2012). South Africa is one example of countries within the continent which has followed this line of thinking and framing of food security discourse.

As a signatory of the United Nations, South Africa has in the last decade focused enormous efforts on aligning its interventions to that of the international community (Crush, 2013, Batterby, 2012 and du Toit, 2011). The country has set itself targets towards the achievement of the SDGs. This alignment to the international discourse on food security has greatly influenced the direction of many studies in the country (Ndhleve *et al.*, 2013 and Frayne, *et al.,* 2010). Reports in the early and mid-2000 focused on understanding economic effects of poverty and unemployment on food security (Ndhleve *et al.*, 2013). However, it is important to note that several studies have been done to investigate social aspects of household food security other than the structural, economic factors as was the case during the modernist period in the 1950s and 1960s. These came after the realisation that food availability does not result in food access for all. Most importantly, the need to understand other means that people use to have access to food has highlighted of factors beyond the economic factors of food (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), 2014, Ndhleve *et al.*, 2013, de Cock *et al.*, 2013, Battersby, 2012, Ziervogel and Frayne, 2011 and Crush and Frayne 2011).

In the last 20 years, a concerted effort has been towards understanding food security issues in urban areas given the third wave of urbanisation as people migrate from rural to urban areas (Rudolph *et al.*, 2012, Battersby, 2012 and Ziervogel and Frayne, 2011). At the core of these studies is the argument that cities are now (and will continue to be) attractions of populations from rural areas. With increasing scores of people migrating to cities, the demand for food, shelter, water, land, schools, clinics and hospitals, employment opportunities as well as other social amenities is high. With a particular focus to food, various authors have argued that urban food systems need to be strengthened to ensure that people living in urban areas have some level of access to food (Crush, 2013, Rudolph *et al.*, 2012, Batterby, 2012 and Ziervogel and Frayne, 2011). While many of these arguments are warranted, it is important to understand them in the context of the inter-relationships between rural and urban areas. Majority of people traveling to urban areas do not abandon their rural homesteads, but they keep these connections as some of their families or relatives living in these areas

(Sihlongonyane, 2020). Umkhanyakude District Municipality in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal is one of the rural areas bearing urban-rural connections. Keeping these connections is crucial for the Umkhanyakude region as maintains flows of resources between the cities and the region. Money that people earn in cities is invested back in their rural homesteads in the quest to better lives of those remaining in the region. These connections results in what is referred to in this study as rural-urban continuum fostering socio-economic interface between rural areas, towns and cities, diffusion of cultural behaviours as well as flows of information, ideas and thoughts (Dabson, 2007 and Tacoli, 1998).

The availability of food whether at global, regional or country level does not translate to access at household levels (Abdu-Raheem and Worth, 2011). To investigate food security at levels other than micro, household level, often neglect the complex dynamics of food security, which (in this study) is understood through the lens of beyond orthodox economics. The commonly accepted definition of food security makes an important point that all members of the households must have access to food on sustainable basis (Battersby, 2012). The definition brings to the fore a micro, nuanced dynamics of food which cannot be investigated when studies are done at either regional, national or international level. Abdu-Raheem and Worth (2011: 92) observes that while South Africa "produces enough food to feed its population, but experiences rapidly increasing rates of household food insecurity." Thus, while a country is seen as food secure at national level, the same is not proven true when analyses are done at the household level. By focusing on the household level, this study sheds light on local, micro, individual and household dynamics of food. Equally, these micro analyses begin to point to various analytical lenses which must be used to best understand food dynamics in rural areas.

As indicated in the introduction, a number of studies on food security are often situated within the domain of orthodox economic theories with emphasis on food production and the need to improve technological techniques to increase food supply while simultaneously reducing cost of production. Central to structural theories, was the consideration of households as mere consumers of food. This perspective fails to monitor the socio-cultural dimension of food security, the institutions that govern people's decisions, which move beyond the orthodox economics of food. In the Umkhanyakude region for instance, households use a number of strategies to access food such as: economy-related, culture-related and rite-of-passage-related food strategies. Framing food strategies in this manner allows for understanding of systems, behaviours, relationships, oppressions, and opportunities at the disposal of households and communities in their quest to achieve food security.

Furthermore, this analytical framework allows for unpacking of post-modern dimensions of food security such as gender and power relations or struggles which are central in determining food accesses and its distribution within local communities.

To this end, this study situates food dynamics in social systems and structures governing day-to-day activities in societies. One of these society systems is language, which is one of the important institutions guiding food dynamics in the region. Most food strategies in clusters of Umkhanyakude region are embedded in the *IsiZulu* language and associated cultural processes. The food strategies such as *ukunana, ukusisa, ukuthekela* (which do not have direct translations into English), are largely influenced by the notion of *Ubuntu*, the belief that *'I am because we are'*. Guessabi (2017: 1) explains that "language points to the culture of a particular social group. Learning a language, therefore, is not only learning the alphabet, the meaning, the grammar rules, and the arrangement of words, but it is also learning the behaviour of the society and its cultural customs. To interact with a language means to do so with the culture which is its reference point." The *IsiZulu* language has helped unpack food security dynamics beyond the commonplace orthodox economic analyses of food. The Zulu language as one of the most important features of the community under study was therefore used as the window through which to understand not just traditions and values embedded in the Zulu culture, but to observe and identify the strategies for leveraging food security.

1.7. Research Structure

The thesis report consists of nine (9) chapters arranged in the following manner:

The first chapter starts with a short story in a journey by taxi which opens the door to the problem statement on food security in rural environments such as Umkhanyakude District Municipality in the northern part of the province of KwaZulu Natal. In the problem statement, it is stated that many people struggling with food security in rural areas are often obscure in the prevailing literature because of its econocentric nature; macro-level/national focus and the marginalisation of new institutionalism. The chapter outlines the main question and the underlying sub-questions, rationale for the study as well as contribution of the study to the broader food security discourse.

The second chapter tracks historical development trajectory of the Umkhanyakude region. While not giving whole account of historical development of the region, the chapter explains how migration, tribal and resource wars shaped early settlements of the region. The chapter also explores social, economic, and physical aspects of the region. It explores these by unpacking population statistics, education levels, local spatial economic overview, and economic distribution in the region. The analyses of social and economic profile begin to

situate Umkhanyakude region in the socio-cultural and economic context of food security in the country.

The third chapter discusses the methodological approach used to investigate household food security strategies in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The research draws from the interpretative traditions or perspectives which underlie the methodological approach in the study. The chapter provides an overview of the process of data collection, data techniques, methods of analysis as well as the experiences of the researcher during the data collection and analysis processes. The chapter begins by an introduction of the interpretative paradigm, followed by the discussion of the research design – a qualitative research methodology aimed at providing lived realities of households in terms of food security in a rural environment. The chapter concludes by providing a detailed account of observations, challenges and limitations encountered during the research process, the techniques for addressing the challenges and the implications of these for undertaking research in areas with similar spatial morphology as Umkhanyakude region.

The fourth chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives and analytical framework for understanding food security in the Umkhanyakude region. The chapter is divided into two (2) broad parts, firstly, discussion of theoretical perspectives of food security including modern perspectives, complex, systems, behavioural and post-modern perspectives. The second part discusses the analytical framework of food which is anchored on concepts of embeddedness, socialisation and embodiment. The chapter also outlines the implications of household food dynamics for existing policy frameworks on food security and nutrition in South Africa. The chapter concludes that the discourse on food security in rural areas must be framed beyond the orthodox economic analytical framework, to reckon with the embedded social and cultural norms, practices, rules, and relationships and to develop policy interventions.

The fifth chapter discusses economy-related food security strategies. The economy-related food security strategies are further categorised into two (2) types of strategies namely, community organisationally linked and state organisationally linked food security strategies. The community organisationally linked food security strategies include *ukushonisa*, *ukukweleta (*including *spaza* shops*)*, *stokvels*, remittances, selling of livestock and informal trading activities. The state organisationally linked food security strategies include social grants, disability grants and pension grants. The chapter explains how economy-related food strategies are used in a complimentary manner as households make means to access food.

The sixth chapter discusses culture-related food strategies namely *ukusisa, ukunana, ukufaka isandla,* including food gardens and *ukuthekela*. The culture-related food strategies are largely embedded in the commonly accepted norms and beliefs guiding what is considered good or bad, ethical or wrong. While not mentioned as one of the prominent food strategies in clusters of the region, the chapter explains how these strategies are used to support the economy-related food strategies.

The seventh chapter discusses rite of passage strategies. As an extension to the previous two (2) categories of food strategies, the rite of passage food strategies includes coming out of age (*memulo*), *ilobolo and membeso*, burial (*umcwabo*) *and ukukhalela*, tombstone unveiling (*ukumbula itshe*), *ukuthetha* and *ukubonga* (thanksgiving). The rite of passage food strategies differs slightly from economy-related and culture-related food strategies in that these are not used in the same manner as the other strategies. These form part of different stages of life which are celebrated as part of growth and/or closing of a phase and beginning of a new phase of life of a person. As such, they are not strategies which can be used as and when needed but are used on *adhoc* basis.

The eighth chapter discusses gender dimension of household food security. The chapter does not discuss all categories of household food strategies, but those that illustrate an interesting gender dynamic in terms of roles and power dynamics, as gender is understood in this study as a form of power exercised between two (2) different sexes. The household food security strategies discussed in chapter are as follows: - economy-related food strategies (informal employment (hawking), *ukushonisa*, remittances, *ukukweleta*, selling of livestock and social grants), culture-related food strategies (*ukunana and ukusisa*) and rite of passage food strategies (*ilobolo / membeso*, *ukuthetha and ukubonga*).

The ninth chapter, a concluding chapter, discusses emerging perspectives and theoretical viewpoints for understanding household food security particularly in rural areas such as Umkhanyakude region. The chapter suggests that food security discourse needs to shift from the commonplace orthodox classical economics of food security to new institutional economics which acknowledges the importance of institutions, the rules and laws that guide human behaviour in societies. The chapter also suggests that studies on food security need to take into consideration that food security is not only about the price, income, or employment status, but equally, it is about how people relate to others, the beliefs, and meanings they embody, their embedded cultural beliefs as well as how they learn new ideas and identities as a result of the socialisation process. In turn, policy frameworks on food security must be adapted to address social, cultural, political, and environmental dynamics of food.

Chapter 2: Tracing the Historical Origins of Umkhanyakude Region

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the case study area namely, Umkhanyakude region, also commonly referred to as Umkhanyakude District Municipality. The Umkhanyakude region has been shaped largely by migration patterns which dominated the period between early 19th to 21st centuries. The migration patterns were motivated by tribal, colonial and apartheid policies which later dictated who lived and worked in what areas. The chapter explains how migration has historically shaped the region as a labour reservoir, therefore creating a core-periphery relationship between the region and cities such as Mpangeni, Durban and Johannesburg. It also points out that this relationship led to gender imbalance, age-gap, de-agranisation, commercialisation and erosion of cultural integrity as a result of migration patterns between 1940s to 1990s.

The chapter is structured into four (4) broad parts. Firstly, it discusses early historical origins of settlements in the lower uThukela River, Ingwavuma, lower Pongola, Mkuze as well as Maputaland in the 1817s to 1850s. Secondly, it describes migration between 1850s -1990s enforced through laws and policies of separate development. This period also involved political struggles which largely shaped the region and South Africa as whole. Thirdly, it discusses the post-apartheid period, the policies and laws which largely shaped the five (5) clusters of the Umkhanyakude region of today. The historical origins of the Umkhanyakude region are summarised in the table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Timeline for development of the Umkhanyakude region

Period	Key Defining Events / Activities
1817 – 1850s	Territorial chiefdoms, conflicts and wars for access to resources
1850–1990s	Grand territorial segregation, homelands, social and political struggles and resistance against the apartheid state
1990s – 2000	The dawn of democratic dispensation` and new local municipal demarcations
2000 - 2021	Umkhanyakude region of today

2.2. 1817 – 1850s: Territorial Chiefdoms, Conflict and Wars

The early origins of settlements in southern Africa can be traced back to migration from 500AD when the Nguni Nation (including the Zulus), descended from the eastern and central part of the African continent in countries such as Congo of today (Genesis International, 2015, Horsburgh *et al.*, 2013 and Carlean, 1990). During this period, some farmers left North Africa and moved southwards through Cameroon and other eastern parts of Africa (Oliver, 2017 and Carlean, 1990). Oliver (2017: 2) observes that,

> Groups that moved south, eventually settled in the northern to north-eastern parts of today's South Africa, about 1700 years ago. The Nguni clans originating from the Great Lakes region in eastern Africa and migrating southwards between 900 and 1290, belonged to one language group, but divided into smaller groups, each with its own cultural character and dialects).

Predominantly cattle herders, Zulu people migrated down the Zambezi River in search for better grazing pastures for their cattle for purposes of maintaining their livelihoods and access to food (Oliver, 2017 and Genesis International, 2015). Their movement down the continent eventually brought them into contact with the San people who at the time, lived in the southern tip of Africa (Genesis International, 2015). In the 14th century, it is believed that this group moved inland to the KwaZulu Natal of today. It is here where they settled in the lower Umzimvubu River (Oliver, 2017). This group split into three (3) groups called the Lala, the Mbo and the Ntungwa. The split was due to two (2) reasons, firstly, to search for fertile grazing land, and secondly, ethnic wars which dominated the period between the 15th and 18th centuries (Oliver, 2017 and Carlean, 1990).

The search for grazing and fertile land for farming indicates the importance of food security in shaping early settlements. Oliver (2017: 2) argues that "it is these parts of the continent, and especially in Cameroon, farming was originally developed." Most of these settlements were located in areas with fertile land near water resources. Many of the crops planted were grain plants such as sorghum, bulrush, finger millet and groundnuts and cowpeas. Coupled with the crops, was stock farming such as cattle, sheep, goats and chickens which is illustrated by faunal remains. Hammond-Took (2008: 62) observes that animals such as cattle had a critical social and cultural symbolism and played an "important part of the stock of knowledge that allowed for effective coping with the harsh realities of pre-colonial southern Africa." The wild plants also played an important role in providing food for the people more particularly the wild fruits and other related wild resources (Hammond-Took, 2008). This illustrates how food security is not an issue which has received currency in recent years but has always been a shaping force behind historical migration and early settlements.

In addition to food production, were mining activities which motivated the development of early settlements (Huffman, 2006). In areas such as Mzonjanu, Kalundu and Ndololwane in the uThukela valley, this resulted into the production of gold and iron which even though it was produced mainly for safety reasons, it constituted the economy of these areas (Huffman, 2006 and Marks, 1985). Marks (1985: 6) points out that the production of gold and iron began to change the early settlements from "simple agricultural self-sufficiency or kinship-based political organisation to more complex social formations." While the production was mainly

undertaken by individuals grouped in kin-based villages, the co-operation between homesteads and villages was crucial for production of surplus necessary to maintain the both the homesteads and the chief (Marks, 1985). The chief played an important role in allocating rights to undertake mining and cultivating land to the people and was seen as the “father of the people” (Marks, 1985: 8). Below is an image of the furnace for production of iron.

Fig 2.1: Furnace for production of iron



Source: Huffman (2006: 60)

The early settlements were largely disrupted by various colonial and tribal wars. The colonial wars in the period in 1837 (first confrontation between the Zulus and Boers) and 1879 (battle of the Blood River or Isandlwana) had serious implications on food security of rural households (Laband, 2022 and Wassermann, 2011). Following the battles with the Boers, particularly the battle of Isandlwana which led of displacement of Zulu people from areas along the lower uThukela River to inland areas such as Nongoma, Vryheid, Weenen, Kranskop, Melmoth and Newcastle, Ulundi, Mthonjaneni, Nkandla, eDumbe and Pongola. Unfortunately, the Zulu people were displaced from fertile, arable land to dry, barren and infertile soils which are difficult to plough and graze for stock farming. This increased on household food insecurity as households could not plough the land, and those who had cattle could not find grazing land (Wassermann, 2011 and Cope, 1995). Wassermann (2011: 25) observes that “the nature of the conflict, which for the most part centred on the raiding of livestock in addition to attacks and raids on homesteads and farms” led to high levels of food insecurity. Alongside these colonial wars was the civil and tribal wars between the different tribes. One example of the civil wars is the battle between King Cetshwayo and Zibhebhu, which the latter emerged victorious, after Dinuzulu, the son of King Cetshwayo, “formed an

alliance with the Boers from the Transvaal who had invaded western Zululand for grazing to defeat Zibhebhu" (Wassermann, 2011: 25).

Worth noting is the important resistance role placed by chiefs and headmen during the colonial period to protect arable land for grazing and farming. Wassermann (2011: 25) points out that "protests by Dinuzulu and his followers fell on deaf ears and Britain responded by annexing Zululand, including Proviso B, and turning it into the British Colony of Zululand" in 1898. He further argues that "the fightback by the chiefs and headman was echoed by the Attorney General Henry Bale who during the Anglo-Boer war was adamant that "Natal Africans should not be involved in the war against the Boer Republics, except when they were defending their cattle from extensive looting" fearing that "once armed they could rise up and kill white women and children." This contestation for land continues today following the promulgation of Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) in 2013. Williams *et al* (2016: 2) the provisions of SPLUMA on spatial governance "appears to conflict with the longstanding roles assumed by traditional leaders and it is this that has led to discontent, if not resistance among traditional authorities." In challenging the implementation of the act by local municipalities, chiefs and headmen continue to "identify and allocate land – usually for members of the clan", often without the consultation and/or consideration of the land management plans of municipalities (Williams et al., 2016: 3). They do this as they believe that the land is under their ownership, and thus they have whole rights to decide how it is used and its allocation (Makhoba, 2020, 2018 and du Plessis Williams *et al.,* 2016).

2.3. Early Settlements in Ingwavuma, Lower Pongola, Mkuze and Maputaland

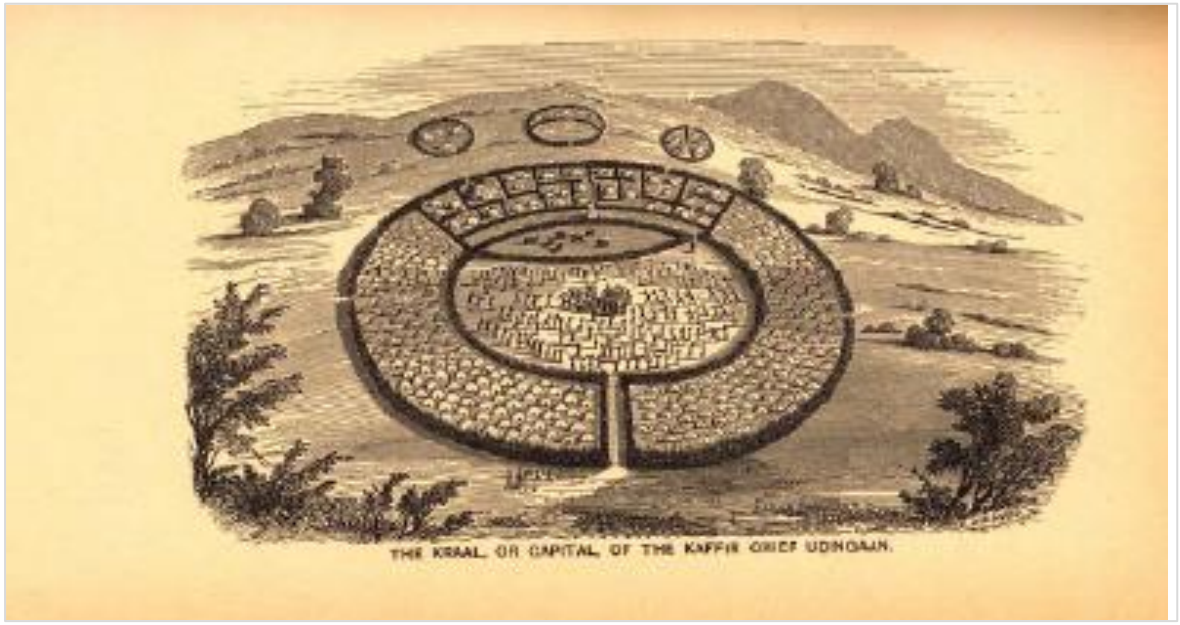
The historical archives of the early settlers in the Ingwavuma area are unclear as some reports suggest that following the ethnic and territorial wars, the Ndwandwe people settled in areas along the Pongola River, Mkuze and Umfolozi (Mthethwa, 2002). The Ndwandwe tribe was displaced into this area along with the Ngwane of Sobhuza who settled in the north of Ingwavuma River. Other reports indicate that around the similar time, the Tembe tribe, led by King Mabhudu Tembe was also already staying in the area (Mthethwa, 2002 and Cobbing, 1990). Kloppers (2003) and Cobbing (1990) point out that the Tembe tribe descended from Mozambique as these enjoyed a good relationship with the Portuguese and the Machakane, a Tsonga chief ruling in Matolla. The tribe enjoyed and maintained a good relationship with both the Ndwandwe and Ngwane of Sobhuza as no conflicts and wars were recorded between the tribes. The historical records indicate that only Ngwane of Sobhuza who, after settling in the north of the Ingwavuma River was further raided by the Ndwandwe king, and as a result "retreated north-eastwards in the Swaziland escarpment" (Cobbing, 1990: 6).

In the then Umkhanyakude region, the Tembe people lived in small, scattered villages, which were largely based on kinship and chiefdoms (Laband, 2008, Kloppers, 2003 and Mthethwa, 2002). The homesteads varied in size and form. For instance, the physical structure of homesteads of the Ndwandwe tribe took were different from that of the Tembe tribe which were often built of trees and did not follow the similar pattern where the cattle pen (*isibaya*) formed the organising feature of the household (Whitelaw, 2008 and Kloppers, 2003). Whitelaw (2008: 47) refers to this settlement pattern as central cattle pattern, which depicts "life forces, kinship and status." The cattle pen was a man's court or assembly and central area used for ceremonies such as weddings and burial of important people (Whitelaw, 2008). The numerous houses within the homestead were spread among the wives. Apart from the cattle pen, the other important feature in the homestead was *inqolobane* (food repository), which formed part of the food security strategy. During this period, The chiefs and headmen had important roles and responsibilities to their subjects. Ndlovu (2017: 5) points out that chiefs and headmen,

> Were obliged to provide justice, material and military security and, at societal level, they were obligated to restore order and were expected to help their subjects in times of economic need. They were also expected to assist with rainmaking; to maintain proper relations with the ancestors; to prevent the use of witchcraft and assign land to their subjects for cultivation and residence however, no tax of any kind was paid for the use of land.

These role of managing land was important as it ensured that arable and grazing land was protected for ploughing and stock farming. The protection of these areas ensured that rural areas are self-sufficient and food secure. The spatial shape of the homesteads is illustrated in figure 2.2 below.

Fig 2.2: Nguni homestead patterns



Source: Kloppers (2003: 52)

To note from the above discussions is that early settlers of the region were predominantly cultivators and collectors (Kloppers, 2003). They developed agricultural methods to ensure production of food and self-sufficiency. Kloppers (2003: 8) points out that,

> The principal agricultural technique used is slash-and-burn, swidden or shifting agriculture. In this system, a piece of land is cleared by cutting down any large trees and slashing away the undergrowth. After the remaining tangles of grass and weeds have dried, it is set on fire. The ash from the vegetation provides a natural fertilizer for the soil. Farmers harvest their crops at different times so that there are always crops growing in the fields.

Overtime, these agricultural techniques were developed with the introduction of new farming techniques such as field crop rotation (Kloppers, 2003). The improvement of techniques was crucial as the period between 1850s and 1860s focused on agriculture as the most important economic activity which mainly comprised food crops and commercial crops for the region and the then Natal, which was inhabited by the white settlers, and incorporated the port of Durban. Sellers (1984: 6) observes that these crops were used as “agricultural exports that would boost coastal and commercial trade” in Natal. Maize and sugarcane were the important crops mostly cultivated (Mahoney, 2001). As the population of region and province grew, the people ventured into stock farming as an economic activity with cattle and sheep crucial in the production of meat, milk, and wool (Sellers, 1984). The growing agricultural economy of Natal suggested demand for labour from the homelands including Umkhanyakude region. Sellers (1984: 8) observes that,

> Very few white agricultural labourers were to be found in the colony in the 1850s despite the arrival of a number of settler parties in Natal during the period 1849 – 1851, when it is estimated that some 5000 settlers arrived.

Apart from the low numbers of white labourers, native labourers were cheap labour (Mahoney, 2001). The need for labour initiated the core-periphery relationship between the Umkhanyakude region and Durban, a relationship which continues to exist today. The homelands were important for provision of cheap labour, with the kings collecting tax and maintaining customary laws (Mahoney, 2001 and Sellers, 1984).

2.4. 1850 – 1990s: Grand Territorial Segregation, Homelands, Social And Political Struggles and Resistance against Apartheid State

The period between 1850s to late 1950s was dominated by exponential development of industries and factories, which led to increase in migration of the native population from rural areas to Natal colony and other urban areas such as Johannesburg (Sellers, 1984). This was fostered through the hut tax in 1849 as a distinct method of African taxation rooted in the British official and colonial system (Ndlovu, 2017). The hut tax was levied specifically on African men on a per hut basis. This meant that each adult male inhabiting a hut would pay a flat fee. Worth noting was that the tax was "payable either in cash, and in those areas where there were no public works for Africans to earn money, cattle and other produce were used to extract taxes" (Ndlovu, 2017). This meant that men had to migrate to urban areas in search for work opportunities to earn money to pay hut tax and also feed their families. In turn, rural urban migration started to be a common phenomenon for most of African men (Gwaindepi and Siebrits, 2020). This had adverse implications on food production by rural households as they gradually began relying largely on income to obtain food. The use of cattle to pay hut tax also led to erosion of household resources to achieve food security as these were used for ploughing, rituals and rite-of-passage strategies such as bride-price.

The migration of men to cities also caused concerns for white urban settlers. During this period, Africans were not regarded as part of urban population, and there needed to a way to accommodate these in urban areas. To address the concerns, new laws were introduced in late 1940s controlling movement and settlement of Africans in urban areas. Amongst these laws were the Land Act of 1913 and 1936, Group Areas Act of 1957, Pass Laws of 1952, Bantu Authority Act of 1951, Job Reservation Act of 1926 and Mixed Marriage Act, 1949.Todes *et al.,* (2010: 332) point out that "apartheid policies attempted to limit access by South Africans classified as 'Africans' to cities, and to confine many of them to homelands." Through the Group Areas Act of 1957, apartheid government created ten (10) homelands namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele,

Lebowa, and QwaQwa (History Online, 2011). While some of the homelands administered their 'own independent governments', their existence was nothing other than permanent removal and disenfranchisement of the black population as these were confined in areas with limited or no socio-economic opportunities (Bennett *et al.*, 2015, South African History Online, 2011, Kautzky, 2009 and Egero, 1991). Todes *et al.,* (2010: 332) further observe that most of the homelands "were predominantly rural and with limited economic bases." These became major administrative mechanism from prevention and removal of all the black people from the political system, the economy and other activities of the White Settler South Africa (Egero, 1991). Swilling (1985: 364) observes that these laws were created with the commonplace view that,

> Blacks were temporary sojourners in the white urban areas entitled to be there only as long as their labour power was required by white employers. After that, they were meant to return to their rural homes the so-called homelands.

The migration of Africans from their rural homes had serious implications on household food security. Households began to rely heavily on purchasing food rather than producing their own food. The payment of tax through cattle also increased food insecurity of families as this meant families could not, firstly, trade their cattle for food (and other important household needs) and secondly, use their cattle (oxen) for ploughing the fields to produce food. The loss of cattle and dependence on money to purchase food largely led to what Kate Meagher (2001) refers to as de-agrarianisation. They led to "a diminishing degree of rural household food and basic needs self-sufficiency and a decline in agricultural labour relative to non-agricultural labour in rural households" (Bryceson, 1996: 99). The rural households were no longer self-sufficient and had to rely on urban areas to achieve food security. This reliance on urban areas largely remains the case today as many rural people work in urban areas and maintain their rural homesteads through remittances.

The rural-urban migration also led to the development of core-periphery relationship between these areas. The function of the rural areas was now largely influenced by activities in core areas such as Durban and Johannesburg. Hryniewicz (2014: 2) points out how functioning of peripheral areas was influenced and "conform to the needs of core nations." In the case of Umkhanyakude region, the area had similar characteristics with other homelands which had no economic base, and as a result relied on economic opportunities in towns and cities of white South Africa. The region has continued to maintain the status of "labour reservoirs, housing the unemployed and releasing them when their labour was needed in White South Africa" (South African History Online, 2011: 2). During this period, rural areas were commercialised, and as a result, did not have concentration of capital, goods and economic activities. The rural areas were associated with "backwardness, economically

disadvantaged, marginality and uncompetitiveness" (South African History Online, 2011: 2). Worth noting however is that, this characteristic of rural areas began to change over as these areas also began to resemble some of the urban characterises such as housing, fashion, road infrastructure, informal dwellings and trading activities as well as multiple livelihood strategies. These characteristics have created linkages between rural and urban areas, and as a result gradually changing the core-periphery relationship. The rural-urban linkages and interconnections have made these areas to be interdependent to each other. These linkages are further explained in Chapter 5.

2.5. Migration and Implications for Umkhanyakude Region

The migration during the apartheid period had serious implications for rural areas including Umkhanyakude region. When men migrated into cities in the early 19th century, they left behind their family members including their wives, children, mothers, siblings and other family members. During the apartheid period, men were permitted to work in industries and firms of white urban areas. Seepamore (2015: 572) observes that "the trend in apartheid South Africa was for men to migrate to places of employment" to find work opportunities as well as better living environments. This pattern of migration resulted in a gender-imbalance, as men stayed in cities and women in rural areas to look after children and take care of the home. The gender-imbalance resulted in the splitting and destabilisation of the functioning of rural households (Singh, 2019, Wahyuni, 2005 and OECD, 2004). It also led to changing of responsibilities in rural households as women left behind in rural households had to undertake responsibilities beyond the traditional reproductive responsibilities (Singh, 2019 and OECD, 2004).

The shifting gendered responsibilities meant that rural women began to be largely involved in the decision-making processes. Unlike in the 1920s and 1930s when most families had both male and female, rural women became 'head of households' with "improved autonomy and increased responsibility" (Choithani 2019: 1). In a study by Chapagain (2015: xii) on migration and its impact on women's mobility and decision making in Nepalese families, he observes that migration of men,

> Has created the scope to access decision making processes, financial and non-financial resources, social networks, and information about services, which have collectively enriched women's ability, identity, and agency, despite having to perform some roles which contradict the prevailing social values and practices. The women have increasingly managed their resources and negotiated at different levels according to the length of their husband's migration. These capacities have come from the women's distinctive abilities, skills, exposure, and

> a combination of individual ability and the external environment. Therefore, the temporary separation of husbands and wives in the patriarchal Nepalese villages has been beneficial to the women, enhancing their negotiation and bargaining power, and their ability to challenge the patriarchal institutions as capable agents in managing multiple roles.

The same is echoed by Fakir and Abedin (2020) in the study of male migration in rural areas of Bangladesh. They argue that by being left behind, women have opportunities to begin taking on,

> Roles and responsibilities previously handled by their husbands. This shift in household power dynamics enable women to become more empowered which would reflect positively in their asset ownership, productive decision-making, household expenditures and personal autonomy" (Fakir and Abedin, 2020: 1).

In support of this argument, Choithani (2019: 5) points out that the shifting gendered responsibilities led to,

> Women carrying the added burden of production and reproduction responsibilities. The absence of men meant women had to take over tasks traditionally performed by men in agriculture. Women's increased involvement in productive functions, however, does not usually relieve them of responsibilities of housework and child-care.

The increased autonomy and sense of responsibility for women also had implications for women in terms of food security. Choithani (2019: 5) points out that the increasing autonomy of women on household matters lead to enhanced "access to food of household members, particularly women and children. It also produced more gender-balanced food security outcomes."

Worth noting however is that while gendered roles and responsibilities changed, the head of the household remained important in supporting livelihoods of rural areas (Antman, 2018 and Choithani, 2019 and Dodson *et al.*, 2008). Their responsibility shifted slightly from coordination of household activities to provision of means for survival through remittances (Choithani, 2019, Singh, 2019 and Casale and Posel, 2006). Following migrating to white South Africa, rural men could not afford traveling between their workplaces and homelands due of lack of transport infrastructure, high transport costs and long travelling times (Thebe and Mutyatyu, 2016). Some resorted to not travelling to their homes but sent monies or remittances to their families. At the time, the lack of advanced technological financial tools to send remittances forced workers to build strong social and community relations of friendship, neighbourhood, kinship, referrals and communal taxis which were then used as tools for

transferring remittances (Thebe and Mutyatyu, 2016). Nzabamwita (2018) separates between formal and informal remittances. He points out that “the transfer of remittances is formal when sent using registered channels. Informal remittances, as the name suggests, are remittances sent through informal channels and, by definition, this type of remittance is not registered” (Nzabamwita, 2018: 1229).

As the homeland population grew and arable land diminished, so did the reliance on remittances grew. This is echoed by Bush and Cliffe (1984) in Thebe and Mutyatyu (2016: 7) observe that,

> Structurally, this led to the development of a worker-peasantry, which became overly dependent on remittances from the capitalist sector in a context where rural agriculture was severely stifled. Over the years remittances began to influence the social relations and the dynamics of reproduction, as well as social stratification in these societies.

As a result, the economy of homelands has historically largely been sustained through remittances (Thebe and Mutyatyu, 2016). In the Umkhanyakude region, this continues to be case even today as majority of the population, more particularly the younger population, migrate to cities such as Mpangeni, Durban and Johannesburg in search of economic opportunities. Like migrant labours of the past, these continue to maintain strong links and relationships with their rural homelands as rest of their household members are in these areas and because this remains home where, when they are not well or passed on, they are buried (Fan *et al*., 2011).

The 1980s marked a different kind of migration patterns. Following the imposition of financial sanctions to the apartheid regime in the 1980s, the economy began declining, mining jobs dwindled as well as subsidies. The employment opportunities in farms were limited as agriculture declined. Consequently, women began to migrate to cities, and largely worked as domestic workers in white South Africa (Pontsho, 2016 and Marx and Charlton, 2003). The shortage of shelter for African migrants led to land invasions which resulted in growing growth of informal settlements (Marx and Charlton, 2003). Similar to lack of adequate shelter, was lack of employment opportunities. Unlike man who could work in formal construction, industry jobs and farms, women were largely forced to find work in the informal economy (Reed, 2013). Most women worked as beer-brewers, hawking, laundry, dressmaking, sewing, gambling, traditional medicine and trading (Phillips and James, 2014). Some of the work activities such as beer brewing and prostitution attracted a lot attention from security state officials. As a result, it is these activities which are recorded as the main work done women

in the 1980s (Phillips and James, 2014 and Reed, 2013). Phillips and James (2014: 412) refer to this invisibility of women in history, more particularly that relating to migration, 'male-migrant' model, which limited role of women to a domestic one, including child rearing and seeing to the well-being, feeding and care of the family (Reed, 2013).

The migration of women to cities led to age-gap as children were left in the custodianship of other family members for example, grandparents (Seepamore, 2015, Bennett *et al.,* 2015 and Kautzky, 2009). Seepamore (2015: 571) observes that "it is common for children to be left with relatives such as grandparents, uncles and aunts when their parents leave for home for any reason or start new families." Bennett *et al.,* (2015: 311) point out that,

> Despite political reforms and increases in female participation in the labour market, recent national surveys suggest only a minority of migrant parents include their children in their destination households.

They, further observe that,

> Studies using data collected from respondents in rural households suggest that most parents that migrate do not bring their children to live with them in their destination household, and instead, children are left in the care of other family members.

The women in rural areas often regard these areas as preferred places for rearing of children due to the uncertainty associated with living conditions in the areas of destination, change of lifestyle, culture and support social networks and structures. Russell (2003) in Bennett *et al,* (2015) obverses that "destinations may be crowded" and there may be "poor material conditions for migrant families in their destination community." Richter *et al.,* (2006: 8) observe that,

> Migrant children to the metropolis were generally more likely to live in informal housing, and specifically, were more likely to live in a shack, room/garage, shared house or hostel as opposed to a house.

Bennett *et al* (2015: 2) argue that "the circumstances under which children are left behind when one or both parents migrate may vary widely and are likely to be complex and dynamic. Left behind children are often reliant on extended kin of care." Seepamore (2015: 574) points out that,

> As a result of long periods of absence, a cultural gap may develop between the parents and the family. The absence of parents in the formative and teenage years of their children's lives may erode family relationships and contribute towards an inability to form and maintain a sense of unity and common purpose.

In terms of food security, the age-gap led to collapse in the transfer of indigenous food security strategies as the elderly people could not transfer information to their grandchildren. Equally, having to take care of the children, the elderly could not continue to vigorously plough their fields. This study confirms that this is one of the reasons leading to de-agranisation in the region (as illustrated by figure 2.3), and in turn resulting in household food insecurity.

Fig 2.3: Fallowed fields in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster



The age-gap has also led to erosion of cultural integrity both in rural homes and the host areas. At a global level, the discussions on erosion of cultural integrity have focused on the "cultural dynamics triggered in the receiving countries" (Rapoport *et al.,* 2020: 2). This focus tends to neglect the impact of migration on source countries (Lanati and Venturini, 2018 and Epstein and Gang, 2010). At the centre of the discussions is that "globalization will lead to a new hybrid world culture, a global mélange, invoking the notion of the global village" (Rapoport *et al.*, 2020: 2). The global village is an interconnected world characterised by cultural differences which has largely led to "global cultural polarization" (*Ibid*). While countries are interconnected through webs of infrastructural systems, they have also become socially polarised because of cultural shocks amongst the different groups. The same dynamics exist at a national, regional and local levels where the diffusion of cultures as migrants converge to live together has increasingly resulted in cultural shock which manifests through language barriers, generational gap, technology gap, skill interdependence as well as homesickness (Moufakkir, 2013 and Winkelman, 1994). In the Umkhanyakude region, the age-gap has led to decline in cultural integrity as children have had to be raised by their

grandparents and family relatives such as aunts and uncles. The local Chief (*induna*), Cele (2020, *Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) explained that,

> Some of the social ills such as alcohol and drug abuse that is widespread in society today is as a result of declining traditional ways of raising our children and behavioural changes in society at large. For instance, for our generation, you could not just pass by elders and not great them. This was taken as the highest form of disrespect. Children of today do not know this. They live like they are white people or people from cities who are always in a rush and never greet others. The world in which we live has changed. People in communities do no longer assist each other like they used to. In the past, there were less families going to sleep on empty stomach as those who had food, shared with those without. This seldom happens today. People are less concerned about others, but themselves. Things are no longer the same.

This has meant that the socialisation system is weakened, and cultural norms and customs are loose and changing faster than accepted social norms and values. The transferring of information, opinions and cultural beliefs and practices through media platforms such as radio, television, newspapers and social networks has led to diffusion of urban and rural cultural practices, and in some in cultural shock or confusion. As is explained by Cele (2020, *Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020), the widespread use of drugs, high teenage pregnancy and crime are some of the social ills indicating erosion of cultural integrity in rural areas. It must be noted however that the enforcement of apartheid laws and policies was not met without resistance.

2.6. The Turning Point in the Struggle against Apartheid

The segregationist laws and policies were not met without protestations particularly in the period between 1960s to the 1980s (McKinley, 2004 and Swilling, 1985). The resistance, which manifested in various forms including through political movements, was organised nationally particularly in urban areas with an aim to obliterate the unfair, discriminatory treatment by the apartheid government (Swilling, 1985). The different organisations including labour unions, political parties and student political movements challenged what Swilling (1985: 363) points out as the “construction and organisation of urban forms under apartheid.” While the resistance focused on issues of race and political resistance, Swilling (1985: 363) observes that these largely resisted urban meaning, that is, “the structural performance assigned as a goal to cities in general (and to a particular city in the inter-urban division of labour).” The resistance was also concerned with access to resources such as land, economic and social opportunities which was restricted through the pass laws. The lack of access to resources suggested that majority of native population were not food secure as

areas such as ‘townships’ did not make any provisions for subsistence agriculture (Swilling, 1985). The living conditions in these areas were appalling. Kgatla (2013: 120) refers to these as “barren and uninhabitable areas” exposing native population to conditions of “poverty, exploitation and alienation.” This highlighted the need to depend even more on commerce to provide for food security.

In addition, the growing calls for sanctions by the international community on the apartheid state forced the government to begin abolishing the majority of its apartheid laws and policies (Todes *et al.,* 2010 and Swilling, 1985). Kahn (2000: 2) argues that,

> In mid-1982, when the financial sanctions debate was intensifying, the IMF granted South Africa a US$1.1bn loan, amid a great deal of controversy. This was to be the last loan to South Africa until the demise of apartheid, as in 1983 the Gramm amendment was passed in the US which prohibited the US Executive Director at the IMF from supporting loans to South Africa unless the Secretary of the Treasury certified in person to the US Senate and House Banking Committees that the loans would reduce distortions caused by apartheid.

As the social and political movements gained momentum between the 1970s to late 1980s, apartheid began to crumble, and large scores of migrants moved into cities. Reed (2013: 74) observes that “as apartheid and its associated labour control system began to crumble, blacks were increasingly free to move into cities.” While this further fuelled political tensions in cities, it also led to increased poverty, hunger and inequalities as not everyone who migrated into towns and cities was absorbed by the economy in these areas (Reed, 2013). As a result, in the ‘townships’, where the black population lived, informality, crime and political tensions ensued, even amongst the different political parties more particularly the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) followers (MacInnes, 2020). This signified the interconnectedness and linkages between rural and urban areas as political tensions were prevalent in both these areas. The social, economic and political pressures forced the apartheid government to get into negotiations with the ANC and its allies for introduction of first democratic elections in the 1994.

2.7. The 1990s and 2000: The Dawn of Democratic Government and New municipal Demarcations

The early 1990s was marked by the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela, which strengthened negotiations for the convening of the national elections, which for the first time were to involve participation of the native, black population (Ginsberg, 1999). The period between 1990 and 1993 was of intensive engagements and mobilisation between the government (National Party), the ANC and other political parties of the natives such as

the IFP. Important to note was that while there was an aura of hope throughout the country, there were also incidents of violence particularly between the ANC and IFP, which led to large scores of people losing their lives and leading to splitting and displacement of families (MacInnes, 2020). These acts of violence especially in KZN were so serious in the townships and thereby leading to instability and food insecurity.

The introduction of the democratic government in 1994 marked the new dawn for the country, with people free to move in any parts of the country without the possibility of being asked for *'dom pass'* and/or being arrested for trespassing (South African History Online, 2011). The introduction of various legislations including that governing conditions of work meant that black middle class also began to grow as majority of this were now being absorbed in the formal sector. The introduction of the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) led to emergence of small black businesses which was previously prohibited, except for taverns which were widespread during apartheid (Corder, 1997). This led to increased migration to areas which were previously reserved for white people (Tewolde, 2019). Increased migration led to intensification of growth in such areas such as Soweto, Umlaza, KwaMashu, Hillbrow, Mayville (to mention a few) having exponential increase in population, which in some instances led to over population in some of these areas. In some instances, this led to extensive land invasions in the 1990s which manifested both though backyard housing as well as through informal settlements (Strauss, 2019 and Tewolde, 2019). These informal means to shelter enabled migrants to leave in areas closer to employment and economic opportunities, and as a result allowing them to earn a living in these areas.

The region of Umkhanyakude still remained largely a labour reservoir for the cities as large numbers of people moved out of the area in search for social and economic opportunities in cities (Bakker *et al.*, 2016 and Muhwava *et al.*, 2010). The people in rural areas have sought to develop their own local economy through creation of small businesses, often regarded as informal trading activities such as *spaza* shops, hand crafts, veggie and mealie-mealie businesses, shoe repairing, selling of traditional medicine as well as grocery shops. This local economy has been created by people who are left in rural areas and migrants who travelled to cities to accumulate financial resources to better their lives. In most instances, the migrants would transfer money they earn in cities to create businesses back in their rural homes to diversify and guard against future threats and risks to their livelihoods. Below is a local *spaza* shop observed along the P22 road in the Jozini cluster.

Fig 2.4: A *spaza* shop in Bhambanana area, Jozini cluster



In the recent years, the *spaza* or grocery shop sector in the region has largely been dominated by the migrants from other areas particularly the Somalians. Most local people who owned *spaza* shops have resorted to leasing these to the Somalians who are presently majority owners of the *spaza* shops in the region. The Somali spaza shop owners have developed a relationship with communities who have means to buy food on credit and pay at a later stage. These relationships are further explained in the discussion of economy-related food strategies in Chapter 5.

The mid-1990s experienced an introduction of a number of legislations and policies including the Constitution of the country in 1996, the Municipal Structures Act (MSA) of 1998 and the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) of 2000. Both Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Structures Act guided process of formulation and administration of the local sphere of government (municipalities) in South Africa. Following the promulgation of these laws, the Umkhanyakude region was further divided into five (5) municipalities namely Hlabisa, Hluhluwe, Jozini, Mtubatuba and Umhlabuyalingana municipalities.

The promulgation of these laws began to put emphasis on the importance of local municipalities as administrators of local development matters. The Municipal Systems Act ensured that the demarcation of municipalities was wall-to-wall, and as a result leaving less space for local chiefs to administer local matters particularly that of land administration (Forbes, 2011). Bikam and Chakwizira (2014: 142) point out that the “Municipal Structures Act of 2000 does not provide a clear definition of the role traditional leaders should play in land use planning and development projects.” The promulgation of the Spatial Planning, Land Use and Management Act 16 of 2013, further strengthened the powers of municipalities to

manage land use and land development responsibilities. The section 24 (i) and (ii) of the Act stipulates that,

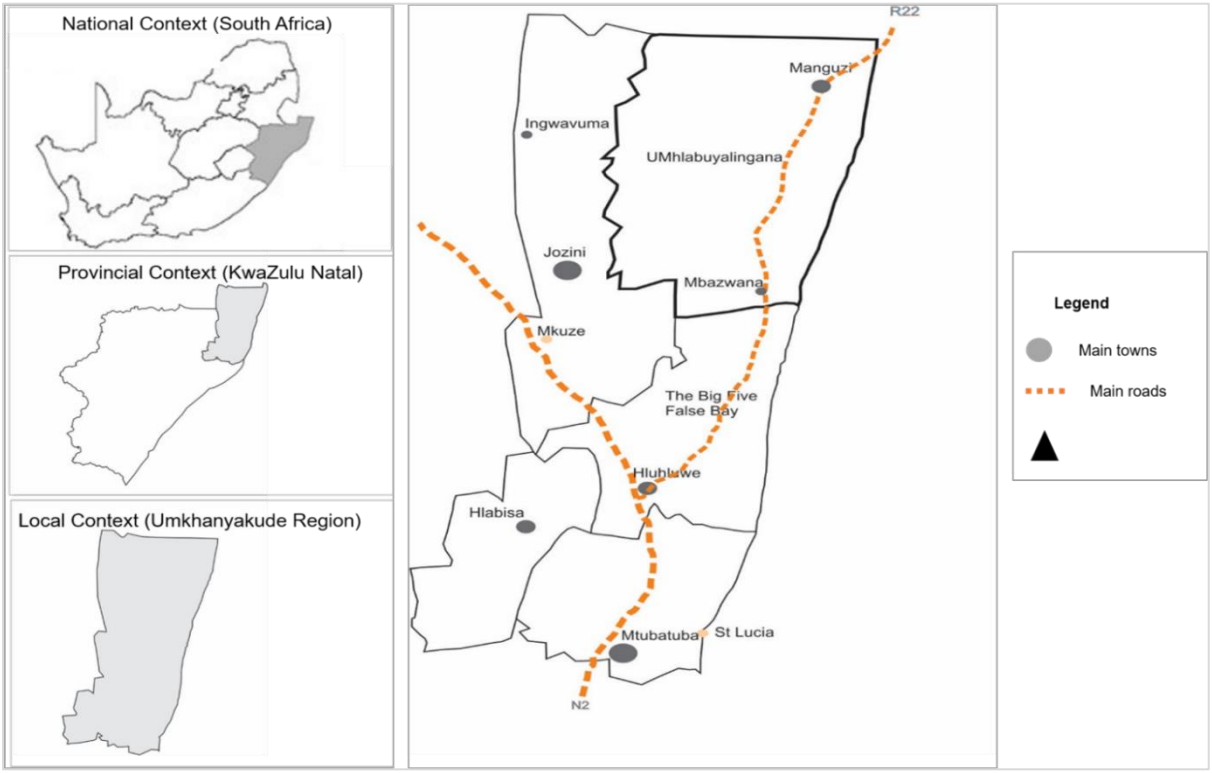
> A municipality must, adopt and approve a single land use scheme which must include appropriate categories of land use zoning and regulations for the entire municipal area, including areas not previously subject to a land use scheme (SPLUMA, 2013: 35).

While the Act has sought to organise land management matters, it has also created hostile relationship between local chiefs and municipal authorities as the former have explained that they are being side-lined in land development matters. Bikam and Chakwizira (2014: 142) observe that,

> Consequently, traditional leaders argue they were given a back seat role of only public participation and not those related to decision making with regard to planning in their areas of jurisdiction. This has led to conflicts more often than co-operation between traditional leaders and municipal officials.

As it is explained in section 2.2 of this chapter, the local chiefs and headmen always played a role in allocation of land to people, particularly in areas under the ownership of the Ingonyama Trust Board (ITB). The ITB is a formal corporate entity which exist to administer the land traditionally owned by the Zulu people (Weinberg, 2015). In most instances, the local chiefs have continued with allocation of land portions to its people without consideration of conditions of the land use schemes administered by local municipalities. Their allocation of land is primarily based on the need to conserve arable land for farming and grazing. This indicates their consideration for ensuring stability and food security of households within their areas of control. The five (5) municipalities are referred to as clusters. The clusters are illustrated in figure 2.5. below.

Fig 2.5: Locating Umkhanyakude region within national and regional context



The Umkhanyakude region is approximately 12 818 km^2 in extent. It is located in the north-eastern part of the province of KwaZulu Natal, covers an area of 13855.35 km^2 and accommodates approximately 625 846 population with 128 195 households (Stats SA, 2011). The population of Umkhanyakude region had not changed in 2019 as the 2018/2019 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the UDM, indicates the same number (625 846) of people living in the region (UDM IDP, 2019). Named after the yellow-barked fever tree, which literally means ‘seen from afar’, the region extends from the Umfolozi River in the south up to the Mozambican border in the north. The region shares boundaries with the Zululand District Municipality to the West, the uThungulu District Municipality to the South and the Indian Ocean to the east. The access to the region is through the national N2 route which links the southern and northern parts of the province. The region is primarily a rural in nature with Mtubatuba (in the south) and Jozini in the north, the largest towns in the region.

The region has a diversity of sectors contributing to the local economy. The major economic sectors as measured by GVA are “retail, catering and accommodation sector accounting for R1, 45 billion (US$100 922 360, 78) in 2011, the manufacturing sector, R1, 37 billion (US$95 354 230, 53), and the general government services sector, R1, 34 billion (US$93 266 181, 68)” (UDM IDP 2018: 20). Most of these economic activities are located in Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters which account for R1, 7 billion (US$118 322 767, 81) and R1, 9 billion (US$132 243 093, 43) of Gross Value Added (GVA). In addition to these economic sectors,

are agricultural and tourism sectors, with the former contributing employment opportunities to approximately 5000 people in the region. In terms of tourism, this sector manifests through biodiversity, recreational opportunities, visual appeal, heritage and the culture of the region (UDM, 2020). The region has a strategic access to both Mozambique and Swaziland. This provides opportunities for the inflows and outflows of tourists and other economic activities. Isimangaliso Wetlands Park is the major contributor to tourism and employment opportunities to region. The tourism sector contributes approximately R1, 45 billion (US$100 922 360, 78) - 13.5%, to the economy of the region (UDM, 2020).

The agricultural sector, both commercial and subsistence agricultural activities, are regarded as one of the cornerstones of the region's economic growth and development (UDM IDP, 2018 and UDM Biodiversity Plan, 2014). A large portion of land predominantly located in the eastern part of the region is said to consist high agricultural potential (20%) and the central parts of the region considered to have medium agricultural potential (52% of the region). The agricultural activities prevalent in all clusters particularly in the Jozini cluster (UDM IDP, 2018). The Jozini cluster has major floodplains alongside the Pongola River which serves as a source of water for the farmers and local people, as well as fish and building materials such as reeds and thatch. Equally, worth noting is the Pongolapoort Dam (commonly referred to as Jozini Dam) built between the 1963 and 1973 as part of the plan to establish formal large-scale commercial agriculture to provide a reliable source of water to the fertile soils of the areas alongside the river and the Makhathini Flats (Heeg and Breen, 1982). While the dam was initially designed to irrigate approximately 50 000 hectors of farms, only three thousand (3 000) hectors were ever developed into viable, commercial agricultural farms, with the lack of skills and technical expertise particularly from the emerging black farmers the major challenge (Water Research Commission-WRC, 2009 and Heeg and Breen, 1982). In addition, the WRC (2009: 2) points out that,

> Apart from boosting commercial farming, the government also hoped to stabilise the frontier bordering Mozambique and Swaziland. At the time, it was believed that development would automatically follow impoundment and so not much consideration was given to alternative development options.

The Pongolapoort Dam continues to supply water to the Makatini flats, Umjindi and other areas alongside the river flood plain, where the popularly planted crop is sugarcane. The commercial forestry along the coastal low-lying plains from Mtubatuba up to Kosi Bay is also another major agricultural activity in the region (UDM Biodiversity Plan, 2014).

The clusters of Umhlabuyalingana, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Mtubatuba do not have major commercial agricultural activities such as those in the Jozini cluster. In the Umhlabuyalingana

cluster for example, while there exists commercial agriculture in the north-western part of the cluster, this is thwarted by the lack of water infrastructure and not well-drained soil. The same can be said of the Hlabisa cluster which is largely rural and has no infrastructure to support large-scale commercial agriculture. The Mtubatuba cluster is regarded as the least rural of all the five (5) clusters, and as a result, does not have large-scale commercial agriculture. The Hluhluwe cluster has a combination of both subsistence and commercial agriculture, with commercial pineapple farms prevalent in the cluster. The water infrastructure in Hluhluwe cluster is said to only cover 20% of the entire cluster, and with the larger part of the area remaining underutilised (UDM Biodiversity Plan, 2014).

Like other rural areas with increasing population coupled with dwindling local economies, the region has since the advent of democratic government, experienced increasing informal economic activities (UDM IDP, 2018). The informal street vending has become a main feature in the main towns of the region such as Mtubatuba and Jozini town, contributing largely to the employment and survival opportunities for the poor. Many informal economic activities are local *spaza* shops, *mealie-mealie* businesses, *vetkoeks* businesses, braai businesses as well as cell-phone repair businesses. The region has embraced the importance of informal trading in the region by developing a training plan for small, micro enterprises and cooperatives in an effort to address all skill shortages in the region. Through this plan, it is believed that small businesses can be capacitated into sustainable businesses which will compete and meaningfully contribute to the local economy of the region (UDM IDP, 2018).

The region is known for its rich ecological and biodiversity which consists of grasslands, coastal forests, marine areas and estuaries and game reserves (UDM Biodiversity Plan, 2014). These make up entire ecological ecosystems of the region, which mainly falls within the Isimangaliso Wetland Park, the Hluhluwe Game Reserve, and the marine environments of both Sodwana Bay and Kosi Bay, all world-renowned sites (UDM IDP, 2018 and Sterrett, 2007). The region is characterised by a temperate climate with warm to hot summers and mild winters. The mild winter temperatures are as a result of oceanic climate, with the lowest temperatures, which are experienced between March and July period. Average summer maximum temperatures vary between 29 ºC and 32 ºC. The southern and eastern parts of the region fall predominantly within the humid subtropical region of South Africa, with the western region being a more semi-arid region. The highest rainfall months are typically January and March period, with the highest mean annual rainfall (> 1000 mm) occurring in the southern part of the region (UDM Biodiversity Plan, 2014).

It is worth noting that while these are being protected through the conservation areas such as the Isimangaliso and the game reserves, major critical biodiversity is being lost because of increasing human population, economic activities, and ever-changing climatic conditions. The degradation of the environment poses a serious threat to the livelihoods of the people in the region. With regards to climate change, the region is said to the most affected in South Africa with temperature reported to have become warmer (averaging 38 ºC), and thereby leading to droughts, water shortages and depletion of grazing areas for the local people (Sterrett, 2007). During the data collection process, the study participants dejectedly indicated how they lost their cattle due to prolonged drought which depleted all water sources and grazing land. This further plunged people into poverty and food insecurity status (*Ibid*).

The population profile of the region resembles that of the country with most of the population (55%) being youth, and 3,9% of the population over the age of 65 (Stats SA, 2016). Approximately 42,8% of the population is unemployed. Of the 42,8% unemployed population, 51% is youth. There still remains a substantial population of 17,8% with no schooling, 31,1% have obtained matric and only a sizable 6,4% having obtained 6,4% (Stats SA, 2016). As indicated in the discussions of the economy of the Umkhanyakude region above, most of the population receives working opportunities from the agriculture and tourism sectors. There is still also large scores of the population migrating out of the region to other areas in search for social and economic opportunities.

In terms of land ownership, large areas of land are under communal tenure in the region, located in the traditional authority areas under the jurisdiction of the ITB. There are also some tracts of land that is privately owned. These are often game farms, agricultural farms, game lodges as well as private homes. According to the UDM IDP (2018), approximately 20% of the land in the region is undergoing process of land reform. These dynamics of land ownership in the area have serious impact on food security status of people in the region as their lack of private ownership suggests that they cannot use their properties as collateral to access funding. While there are efforts by the financial institutions such as the IThala Bank to provide funding to people in rural areas, lack of land proper infrastructural services and access to market by people living in these areas continues to disadvantage them to improve their livelihoods and food security status.

2.8. Clusters in the Umkhanyakude Region

The Umkhanyakude region comprises a total of five (5) clusters, namely, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe, Jozini, Mtubatuba and Umhlabuyalingana. This section of the study discusses these clusters in terms of their location within the region, population, HIV/Aids, local economy as well as access to services. The clusters are discussed below.

2.8.1. Hlabisa Cluster

The Hlabisa cluster is located in the Hlabisa local municipality (now called Bi5 Hlabisa) in the northern part of KwaZulu Natal and the southern part of the region. Like the Umhlabuyalingana and Hluhluwe clusters, Hlabisa cluster is largely characterised by isolated rural communities managed by four (4) traditional councils, namely the Hlabisa, Mdletshe, Mpembeni and Mpukunyoni (Hlabisa IDP, 2012 and Hlabisa Local Municipality HSP, 2012). As a result of large rural land area, agriculture is the most significant land use with farmlands and plantations found throughout the municipality (The Local Government Handbook, 2012).

As one of the most underdeveloped clusters in the Umkhanyakude region, the major contributing sector in Hlabisa is the tourism centred on the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve, located 280-kilometres north of Durban and the oldest proclaimed park in Africa (Hlabisa IDP, 2016). As part of conservation efforts, the park is reported to have the largest population of white rhino for a state managed park globally (The Local Government Handbook, 2012). The cluster also enjoys strategic, well-maintained road network connecting it to Nongoma and Mpumalanga in the north, and the Mtubatuba, Mpangeni and Durban in the south (Hlabisa IDP, 2016).

In terms of access to services, the Hlabisa cluster has unsatisfactory service provision levels. For instance, the Integrated Development Plan of the municipality indicates that the cluster has a “lack of proper educational facilities” as “no tertiary education facilities exist in the municipality” (Hlabisa IDP, 2016: 9). The lack of services further paves way for other socio-economic challenges including high illiteracy, crime rates and health related issues. While it is the responsibility of local government to ensure provision of some of these services, the dispersed settlement pattern of the cluster makes “physical infrastructure related services delivery extremely expensive and in most cases not effectively affordable” (Hlabisa IDP, 2016: 9).

In addition, while the rural character of the cluster has created fertile ground for agricultural production, it has also paved way for several socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and high dependence on social grants. The Hlabisa IDP (2016: 9) points out that,

> High mortality rate and burden of AIDS related illness caused by this has resulted in increased socio-economic hardships of families in the municipality, mostly due to a loss of income when economically active family members are unable to work or pass away.

Linked to these is lack of well-established economic centre, which has serious implications on economic within the cluster. The lack of the economic core suggests that the cluster is

unable to attract investment that in turn could assist towards addressing the persisting developmental challenges. This also makes it difficult for the municipality to establish an income base through the collection of rates and taxes from the businesses and residents (Hlabisa, IDP, 2016). The underdevelopment state of the cluster eventually affects households and individuals in terms of access to basic services, economic opportunities and food.

2.8.2. Hluhluwe Cluster

Centrally positioned among all other clusters of the region, the Hluhluwe cluster is located in the Big 5 False Bay Municipality. The cluster covers approximately 1191 sq. kilometres in extent with larger portions of the land area predominantly rural in nature (Big 5 False Bay IDP, 2013). The cluster only has one urban area called Hluhluwe. The Hluhluwe town is located between Isimangaliso Wetland Park and Hluhluwe - Umfolozi Park, which are both internationally renowned heritage and conservation sites (Big 5 False Bay IDP, 2016 and 2013).

As the main urban centre, Hluhluwe has the major shopping and light servicing facilities, as well as the municipal offices. A large proportion of the land is used for agriculture and game lodge activities and is sparsely settled. The area is reported to be producing up to “95% of South African pineapples” (Big 5 False Bay IDP, 2016: 6). Other agricultural crops produced in the cluster are sugarcane, sisal, cotton, tomatoes and chillies.

The north-eastern parts of the cluster are occupied by densely settled three (3) rural traditional communities, that are, Makhasa, Mnqobokazi and Nibela. The traditional councils play a crucial role in the administration amongst other things land development and social disputes among people in the area (Big 5 False Bay IDP, 2016).

The cluster is well connected to other clusters within the region and other areas in the province with the N2 being the main access route connecting the cluster to the Jozini and Pongola in the north and Mtubatuba, Mpangeni and Durban in the south. The R22 links off the N2 and “is the primary linkage between South Africa and Mozambique” (Big 5 False Bay IDP, 2013: 4).

2.8.3. Jozini Cluster

The cluster shares similar characteristics with Hlabisa and Hluhluwe clusters in that it is also largely rural and is associated with underdevelopment, high poverty levels, large tracks of neglected areas in terms of provision of services and unemployment (Jozini IDP, 2016). The Integrated Development Plan (2016) indicated that approximately 36% of the population

earns no income, and this is due to lack of economic and employment opportunities in the area. As a result, many people, more particularly male, are forced to migrate to other areas such as Mpangeni, Richardsbay, Mandeni and Durban in search for economic and employment opportunities. It should be noted that there have recently been noticeable external investments in the area with development of the Jozini Mall and the Jozini Tiger Lodge, which both have brought sizable number of opportunities in terms of employment in the area (Jozini IDP, 2016).

Like other rural areas in the province of KwaZulu Natal, large percentage of land in Jozini falls under the ownership of the ITB, with the *amakhosi* (local chiefs) overseeing issues regarding the development of local communities. Small portions of land are under the ownership of private individuals and the state. The land ownership dynamics have largely affected the development patterns in the area as negotiations have to be done with the local chiefs prior to implementation. There is also limited control by the municipality of development as A*makhosi* (local chiefs) are also involved in the administration of land purposes (Jozini IDP, 2016).

2.8.4. Mtubatuba Cluster

The Mtubatuba cluster is allocated in the Mtubatuba local municipality in the north-east of the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the southern end of Umkhanyakude region. The cluster is bounded to the south by Umfolozi River, which separates the municipality from the uThungulu district municipality. On the east, municipality is bordered by the ocean, while it is bounded by the Big Five False Bay Municipality in the immediate north. Hlabisa Municipality and Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park forms the western boundary of the municipality (Mtubatuba IDP, 2016 and 2015).

The cluster is well located along the N2 route which links it to Pongola, Mpumalanga Province and SADC countries such as Swaziland and Mozambique in the north, Richardsbay, Mpangeni and Durban in the south. There remain prospects to maximise on the opportunities presented by this strategic location of the cluster along this national route. The opportunities will only be realised through development and implementation of the proper spatial planning and land use management systems which are currently none-existent especially for areas of Msane, Mfekayi and Somkhele (Mtubatuba IDP, 2016).

Like other clusters in the Umkhanyakude region, Mtubatuba cluster also has developmental challenges relating to lack of service provision for its growing population. The main challenge in the cluster is water shortages which is “stifling the economic growth and development throughout the municipal area, where, for example, at the peak of the tourism season, the

water runs dry, resulting in everyone departing and leaving behind the municipality" (Mtubatuba IDP, 2015: 16). Linked to lack of services are prevalent high poverty, HIV/AIDS and unemployment levels.

2.8.5. Umhlabuyalingana Cluster

The Umhlabuyalingana cluster is located far from areas of economic opportunities such as Mpangeni, Richardsbay, Mandeni, Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The cluster is approximately 260 kilometres from Mpangeni and 425-kilometres from Durban. The distant location of the cluster from these centres has major influence on access to food by households because of increased prices and availability of food in local shops. One of the respondents, Respondent 13 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Sometimes you will want food such as brown beans or potatoes, and you find that it is not available at the shops, particularly Boxer and Shoprite stores. You then will be forced to buy it from Spar which is very expensive.

The above discussions of clusters illustrate how the region has developed in the last 28 years of the new democratic government. While this is the case, it is important to note that Umkhanyakude remains a peripheral region with high cost of service delivery due to lower economies of scale and more expensive travel to facilities and is characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and poor access to services such as water, sanitation and electricity. The existence of these does not suggest that the region has not developed over a period. It is worth noting that there has been some level of development, particularly in clusters such as Jozini and Mtubatuba as these form part of the main towns in Umkhanyakude. The efforts by government have led to some level of migration from Mozambique, Swaziland, Mpangeni and Pongola into Umkhanyakude region. The migration pattern is led by professionals such as into the region has seen professionals such as teachers, nurses, engineers all migrating into the region for work opportunities in the services sector. The services sector is one of the most contributing sectors in terms of levels of employment. The increase in services sector and efforts to develop infrastructure has slightly shifted the rural character of Umkhanyakude region. This has caused mixture of both rural and urban character with the region now performing responsibilities which traditionally are urban responsibilities. In turn, this leads to the rural-urban continuum, which changes how rural areas are often defined. As Hawley *et al.,* (2016: 3) point out "rural researchers generally agree there is no single best definition that adequately measures the theoretical construct of rural." This signals the need for shift in mind-set and policy development and interventions on rural development. Hawley *et al* (2016: 3) observe that,

> Failure to adequately define and describe rural makes it difficult, if not impossible, to confidently make comparisons, interpretations, or generalizations from the rich body of rural research studies. Further, such inconsistencies can have meaningful policy consequences, as rural definitions drive resource allocation, grant funding eligibility, policy decisions, research, and development.

In defining rural areas with similar characteristics as the Umkhanyakude region, it is important to understand context specific characteristics in relation to the broader regional and national contexts. The context specific detail of the area allows for better understanding of the richness of the area but does not acknowledge and shed light on broader interconnections and relationships that exist between the specific setting and other areas (including urban areas). It is for this reason that local, individual and household food strategies are explored to understand complexities, nuances and oppressions faced by people in their quest of achieving food security.

2.9. Conclusion

The historical development of the Umkhanyakude region is rooted in the Zulu culture, the precolonial migration and territorial conflicts between the Nguni people, colonisation and apartheid and post-apartheid. The pre-colonial migration was crucial in the development of early settlements in the lower uThukela River, which were largely influenced by the need to access fertile land for grazing and food security. The following territorial wars led to development of areas such as the Umkhanyakude region. Equally, the introduction of the colonial and apartheid laws greatly influenced the region, particularly as a labour reservoir for major towns and cities. The legacies of these continue to exist in the region today.

The migration from the region to other areas has largely influenced the development of Umkhanyakude. At a household level, migration patterns had two (2) ramifications namely gender-imbalance and age gap. The first phase of migration, commonly referred to as male-migrant system, experienced large scores of men leaving their families in rural homesteads to cities in search for job opportunities. The second migration phase experienced women migration to cities as children were left in the custodianship of other family members. Both these types of migration patterns had effect on the functioning of the home. Beyond the disruption of the traditional nuclear structure of families, it reconfigured gendered responsibilities as rural women shifted slightly from coordinating household activities to provision of means for survival through remittances. It also led to age-gap as children were left in the custodianship of other family members as women often regarded rural areas as preferred places for rearing of children due to the uncertainty associated with living conditions in the areas of destination, change of lifestyle, culture and support networks.

Both these have largely led to destabilisation of the functioning of rural homes and transferring of social norms and values through the socialisation process. This disruption has also led to the decline in cultural integrity as convergence of migrants lead to cultural shock which manifests language barriers, generational gap, technology gap, skill interdependence as well as homesickness (Moufakkir, 2013 and Winkelman, 1994). This study has also argued that migration has increased household food insecurity as the elderly had to take care of their grandchildren, and in turn could no longer plough the fields. The increasing levels of food insecurity further strengthened core-periphery relationship between the region and urban areas as people had to migrate out of the region in search for better living conditions and economic and employment opportunities.

Since the advent of democratic government in 1994, settlement patterns and local economy as well as population dynamics have changed in the region. The transformation of the region has come due to increased government efforts to improve living conditions of the people living in the area. Over and above this, given the strategic location of the region as a gateway to South Africa for tourists travelling from Mozambique and Swaziland, it has and remains important that the region is developed to play a significant economic role in the tourism and retail sectors, and as well as a connecting corridor to the rest of South Africa. The improvement of the N2 and construction of a new corridor between Maputo and Manguzi are good examples illustrating on-going efforts to release economic potential, while at the same time creating employment opportunities in the area riddled with high poverty and scores of unemployed populations.

While a lot of government investment has been directed into the region, it is worth noting that Umkhanyakude continues to function as a labour reservoir as majority of young, economically active population must migrate to towns and cities in search of social and economic opportunities. There is also serious lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity and proper road network to support production and movement of goods and services within and out of the region. In addition to this is the diminishing interest on subsistence agriculture, more particularly crop farming by households. There has been an increase in *spaza* shops as households are largely becoming dependent on income for purchasing food. Such a shift in food strategies denotes serious implications for food security in the region more particularly as there exist high unemployment, poverty, high illiteracy levels and economic opportunities. The persistence of high levels of food insecure households suggests poor policy response which has largely focused on addressing macro, structural dimensions of food than the micro, socio-cultural and institutions governing household food dynamics in rural areas.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach in the Study

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to detail and justify the methodological approach used to investigate household food security strategies in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The research draws from the interpretative traditions or perspectives which underlie the methodological approach in the study. The chapter provides an overview of the process of data collection, data techniques, methods of analysis as well as the experiences of the researcher during the data collection and analysis processes. In terms of structure, the chapter begins with an introduction of the interpretative paradigm, followed by the discussion of the research design – a qualitative research methodology aimed at providing lived realities of households in terms of food security in a rural environment. The chapter concludes by providing a detailed account of observations, challenges and limitations encountered during the research process, the techniques for addressing the challenges and the implications of these for undertaking research in areas with similar spatial morphology as Umkhanyakude region.

The process of identifying and using a particular research approach forms a fundamental part of the study as it guides the methodological techniques to be used in gathering and analysing data. Grover (2015: 1) observes that there exists “three basic components of a research approach- philosophical world view, research design and methods of research.” In choosing a research approach, the researcher must ensure that this is complimented by an appropriate research design and methodological techniques. These basic components of research must be knitted together in way that the study acknowledges the worldview, philosophical, epistemological considerations and is designed in a manner that integrates the different tools in a coherent and logical manner, and in turn, ensuring that it engages the identified problem efficiently (Bhawna and Gobind, 2015, Grover, 2015 and Chilisa and Kawulich, 2017). The commonplace understanding is that it is crucial to acknowledge the worldview, philosophical assumptions, the beliefs, and values, as these provide a base for understanding how the world is perceived, could be understood and re-constructed (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006 and Chilisa and Kawulich, 2017). Discussed below is the research design adopted in the study to understand household food dynamics in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region.

3.2. Research Design – A Qualitative Research Method

Various definitions have been developed to explain what constitutes a research design. Akhtar (2016:68) observes that some scholars define research design as “the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose.” Henry Manheim (1977) in Akthar (2016: 68) defines

research design as a framework that does not only "anticipates and specifies the seemingly countless decisions connected with carrying out data collection, processing and analysis but it presents a logical basis for these decisions." This study employs the definition by Zikmund (1988: 5) that, a research design is "a master plan specifying the methods and procedure for collecting and analysing the needed information." It is an action plan that details the steps that must be followed by a researcher to investigate to the identified research problem and questions raised in the study. The research design enables the researcher to be able to provide answers and draw conclusions to underlying philosophical assumptions from data collected from the field (Mouton, 1996). Discussed below, is the philosophical approach that underpins the research methodology, namely interpretivist approach. The interpretivist approach philosophical approach does not only underpin the methodological approaches adopted in this study, but also reflects the beliefs of the researcher as underlined by the assumptions embraced by this philosophical approach and view of the world.

3.3. Interpretivist Traditions

The interpretivist epistemology is important particularly for qualitative research in that it emphasises the need for a researcher to acknowledge differences between human beings in their role as social actors (Tuffour, 2017, Alvermann and Mallozzi, 2010 and Fade, 2004). This suggests that in undertaking research, the researcher must treat people as central social actors rather than objects, able to actors "make sense of their experiences or reach understandings of their everyday organizational lives" (Putnam and Banghart, 2017: 2). This assumption understands that people are continuously making efforts to understand the world around them. The researchers who hold interpretivist perspective have an understanding that people interpret their everyday actions (and inactions) in relation to the meaning they give these actions and interpret or understand the actions of others in accordance with their set of meanings. This therefore suggests that there exists no objectivity in how researchers or people see and construct meaning of their environment (Gephart, 1999). Fade (2004: 647) argues that the way people interpret situations is likely to differ as "meanings individuals attach to experiences considered possible because they experience different parts of reality." The approach encompasses social theories and viewpoints that "embrace a view of reality as socially constructed or made meaningful through actors' understanding of events." (*Ibid*) This socially constructed reality can be understood through various means including language, symbols and social interactions (Putnam and Banghart, 2017).

In social research, the interpretive approach allows researchers to use meaning rather than measurement-oriented methodological tools such as interviews and participant observation to collect data. In this way, researchers can understand the complexities embedded in human

action and non-action, and thereby making sense of underlying reasons shaping human actions (Alvermann and Mallozzi, 2010 and Creswell, 2012). By observing participant, interpretivist researchers can make meaning of human (study participants) by drawing inferences from a particular context. It allows researchers a scope to contend with issues of influence and impact, and to raise questions on 'why' and 'how' particular decisions and/or actions are taken and not others (Creswell, 2012).

Whereas the importance of the interpretive approach is noted in this study, it is also equally crucial to acknowledge criticisms that have been levelled against this approach. Tuffour (2017: 1) points out that this approach has been criticized by some scholars for "being riddled with ambiguities as well as lacking standardization. Others also point out that it is mostly descriptive and not sufficiently interpretative." Furthermore, criticisms raised relate to whether this approach can accurately capture experiences and meanings rather than opinions of it (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012 and Rowlands, 2005). The approach assumes that both the researcher and study participants have requisite communication skills to successfully communicate the nuances of experiences, neglecting that there are instances where the information cannot be appropriately communicated and gathered, and therefore invalidate the study findings. These criticisms have been addressed by asserting that interpretive researchers must take extra attentiveness to collect rich and exhaustive data from participants, through using language that is well-known to study participants (Rowlands, 2005).

In this study, the interpretive approach is used to understand complex social structures and systems which influence and impact household food security in clusters of Umkhanyakude region, more particularly how households obtain food whilst not having sustainable access to income, formal employment and economic opportunities. The interpretive approach is appropriate as it gives the study a greater scope to address questions of 'how' and 'what' strategies are used by households to obtain food. Furthermore, it allows the study to engage in fieldwork, and thereby ensuring that the understanding of context specific data collection through interviews and participant observation. The use of *IsiZulu* language was used as a medium of interpretation to understand context specific food practices and strategies to access food in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. Also, food security issues in rural areas of Umkhanyakude is seldom reported, and where this happens, it focuses on orthodox, structural dynamics of food, and thereby missing socially embodied and embodied dynamics of food. By focusing in an area with high levels of employment, this study unpacks food dynamics beyond the economic dimension. The section below discusses research methods used in the study.

3.3.1. Case Study Approach

The qualitative nature of the study suggested that a case study needed to be identified to validate the philosophical assumptions and meanings, research problem and question(s). In so doing, a case research approach was adopted to explore distinct dynamics of food insecurity at a local level. The approach was used as a single-case design exploring various mechanisms used by households as responses and strategies to access food in Umkhanyakude District Municipality, located in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal. Equally, the case research approach was used as part of the exploration purposes to discover "situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single outcomes" (Yin, 2003: 50). Using the northern region of KwaZulu Natal as the case study assisted in producing "detailed descriptions" of household food insecurity, and "development of possible explanations of it" (Yin, 2003: 50). Zucker (2009) and Ali (1994) for example observe that a case research method is important for deriving richer, more contextualized, and authentic interpretation of a given phenomenon.

The use of the case study approach in the study was critical for *inter alia*:

a) As not much is known of rural areas in northern part of KwaZulu Natal, and as a result, efforts to assist people living in these areas have been far-and-few between (D'Haese *et al.,* 2013 and Abdu-Raheem and Worth, 2011).
b) Providing an entry point for understanding food security dynamics more particularly food security strategies used by households in various clusters within the region,
c) Providing new insights and unpack complexities and nuances relating to household food security in the clusters of the Umkhanyakude region.
d) Creating a basis that can be used for comparison with other areas of the same (rural areas) and distinct (urban areas) characteristics insofar as household food security is concerned.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

3.4.1. Interviews through a Semi-structured Questionnaire

The study employed qualitative techniques in the collection of data using semi-structured questionnaire for conducting interviews (*appendix 5*). Mason (2006: 10) underlines that lived realities and social experiences of food security in different households are "multidimensional" and thus an attempt to understand these requires a methodology that is not one-dimensional. The interviews were used in the study to "gain insights into a person's subjective experiences, opinions and motivations – as opposed to facts or behaviours" (Busetto *et al*., 2020: 3). Interviews can be categorised into three (3) types, namely, structured (questionnaire), open-ended and (free conversation or autobiographical

interviews) and semi-structured. This study used a semi-structured interviews which are characterised by guided, open-ended questions on household food dynamics. The semi-structured questionnaire was designed in a friendly-user way to allow for easy understanding by respondents. Participants indicated the correct answer by ticking the appropriate box. In an instance where a participant indicates an answer such as 'other', they were asked to provide further explanation for clarity purposes. The questionnaire was structured in terms of themes, namely household composition, food access, availability and utilisation and household adaptation strategies. The interviews were conducted in all clusters on the dates as indicated in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Dates of interviews in clusters of Umkhanyakude region

Cluster Name	**Date of the Interview**
Umhlabuyalingana	8 – 9 May 2017
Jozini	9 – 11 May 2017
Hlabisa	12 May 2017
Hluhluwe	12 May 2017
Mtubatuba	13 – 14 May 2017

3.4.2. Participant Observation

The semi-structured interviews were supplemented by direct participant observation (including voice recordings), for capturing of specific, lived food security realities of households. Busetto *et al* (2020: 3) argue that participant observation is important for gaining "insights into a certain setting and actual behaviour – as opposed to reported behaviour or opinions." In the study, it was important for the researcher to observe study participants to ensure that data which might have not been communicated through the semi-structured interviews could also be gathered. During the observation, the researcher made notes of how other household members communicated with one another, shared food and responsibilities amongst each other. This information was important for researcher to reflect on as it illustrated how household members supported one another in the quest to ensure functionality of the household, but also more importantly, continuously ensured that they had access and availability of food.

3.4.3. Sampling Techniques

Sampling is one of the commonly used research techniques in research. The sampling technique ensures that inferential statistics are used to determine population characteristics by directly observing only a portion of population (Taherdoost, 2016 and Elder, 2009). Mugo (2002) points out that sampling as a methodological technique is important as it requires

fewer resources and provides a researcher with needed information quickly. The study used sampling as a technique to determine the number of households to participate in the semi-structured interviews (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007 and Mugo, 2002). This was done as not all 128 195 households could form part of the study. It is important to also note that a sample can favour the selection of units that have characteristics (Taherdoost, 2016). This is usually a result of a poor sampling plan, which leads to error and bias in the sampling process.

There exist two (2) types of sampling techniques, namely probability and non-probability sampling methods (Datta, 2016). The probability sampling is also called as random sampling or representative sampling, while the non-probability sampling called as judgment or non-random sampling. The study used a probability sampling as it reduces the possibility of systematic errors and biases, and thereby ensuring that the inferences drawn from sample are generalizable to the population (Datta, 2016, Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007 and Mugo, 2002). The probability sampling can be further categorised into five (5) types, random, systematic, stratified, cluster and multistage sampling techniques (Datta, 2016). The study has chosen two (2) of these types of probability sampling, that is, cluster and emergent sampling techniques. Below is an explanation of how these were used in the study.

a) Cluster Sampling

The cluster sampling is a technique in which “all population elements are categorized into mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups called clusters” (Frey, 2018: 3). The population is divided into sub-groups called as clusters based on their geographical allocation (Datta, 2016). The technique is commonly used when participants in the study are sporadically spread over a wide geographic area. Frey (2018: 3) observes that this sampling method is important as it may “reduce travel cost for in-person data collection by using geographically concentrated clusters.” The vastness of the region necessitated that areas be grouped into clusters to ensure that as many households are included as part of the study. Clusters were formed as follows:

Table 3.2: Clusters in the study

Cluster Name	Population	No. of Households	Area (km)	Main Town
Hlabisa	71925	12586	1555.12	Hlabisa
Jozini	186502	38849	3442.24	Jozini
Mtubatuba	175425	34905	1969.83	Mtubatuba
Hluhluwe	35258	7998	2486.54	Hluhluwe
Umhlabuyalingana	156736	33857	4401.60	Manguzi

Source: Stats SA (2011)

The spatial patterns of rural households of the region are largely influenced by main towns of these areas. Most rural areas are located in proximity to the main towns. However, it is important to note that there are instances where households are in distant areas as far as 20-kilometres away the town or service centre. This was the case in Hlabisa and the Umhlabuyalingana clusters.

The local towns namely Hlabisa, Jozini, Mtubatuba, Hluhluwe and Manguzi were used for the formation of clusters. A total number of five (5) clusters were formed. To ensure that households in remote areas are included in the study, a 20-kilometre radius was developed around towns. The areas falling outside of this radius formed areas of focus for the collection of data in the study.

As is depicted in table 3.2, numbers of households in each cluster varies and as a result, a ratio method was be used to determine number of households to be interviewed. The following formula was used to determine the number households to participate in the study:

$$H = \frac{\sum Mh}{\sum Dh} \text{ X } 150$$

$\sum Mh$ is the total number of households in the cluster.
$\sum Dh$ is the total number of households in the region

Based on the above formula, the following numbers of households were interviewed in each cluster:

Table 3.3: Number of households interviewed in each cluster

Cluster name	**No. of households interviewed**
Hlabisa	15
Jozini	45
Mtubatuba	41
Hluhluwe	9
Umhlabuyalingana	40
Total	150

In the initial planning and design of the research methods, the intention of the researcher was also to interview dieticians from local clinics and/or hospitals in each cluster. This was to determine whether there were any cases recorded on nutritional deficiencies. The idea was to interview one dietician or an official dealing with malnutrition in five (5) main households in the region namely, Bethesda, Hlabisa, Manguzi, Mseleni, and Mtubatuba hospital.

During the fieldwork, Manguzi, Hlabisa and Mseleni hospitals were visited. It was a serious challenge to locate dietician dealing with cases relating to nutritional deficiencies. In all these hospitals, it was made clear that no personnel dealt with the required information. Furthermore, these hospitals indicated that even if they had this information readily available, they would be reluctant to release medical information of patients without their prior consent. As a result, no information on recorded nutritional deficiencies was collected and analysed in the study. It is worth noting however that, some of the data collected through the semi-structured questionnaire included issues on nutritional status of households.

While the establishment of clusters was important for purposes of identifying households to participate in the study, it was equally important to note limitations associated with cluster research method. Firstly, the cluster method produces fewer representative samples compared to other probability sampling designs, particularly when clusters contain large numbers of units within them (Palinkas *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, by grouping different units of analysis into similar clusters, the method ignores individual characteristics which can be similar, and this can lead to overrepresentation of underrepresentation of analysis in the study (*Ibid*). To address limitations of cluster sampling, emergent sampling technique was used for the identification and selection of respondents (Palinkas *et al.*, 2013 and Nastasi, 2004).

b) Emergent Sampling

The emergent sampling technique "involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest" (Palinkas *et al.*, 2013: 2). This was important for achieving in-depth of understanding livelihood circumstances and composition of households in the case study area which are to a larger extent not homogenous. The emergent sampling technique offered flexibility, which was critical for purposes of allowing the researcher to make sampling decisions during the process of collecting data (Nastasi, 2004). This allowed the researcher to collect specific household information offering more insight into food security dynamics of households.

Like other research methods, emergent sampling has limitations. One of these relate to inability of the researcher to find knowledgeable units in the study and misinformation that can be given regarding those who are regarded to be knowledgeable (Nastasi, 2004). Therefore, a thorough interviewing process was undertaken in the study to ensure that households with unique and food security dynamics were identified and selected for recording of their consumption and buying patterns (household diaries).

As stated earlier, the initial interviews were used as part of the foundation to identify households with special circumstances. Using the emergent sampling technique, households were requested to assist towards identifying households who are poor with characteristics including women-headed households, child-headed households, households without any member in formal employment, households headed by elderly persons and ailing head of the household. A total of 25 households were identified using emergent sampling method. These households were therefore requested to record diaries for three (3) weeks within a period of five (5) months.

3.4.4. Household Diaries

The household dynamics of food in the Umkhanyakude region were also gathered through diaries. Simply put, a diary is a book that one keeps a daily record of events and experiences (Klimova, 2015 and Lingsom, 1979). The diaries are used for various purposes including recording memories and as an event-planning tool. In social sciences and scientific research, diaries are records that are kept by research respondents at the request by the researcher to "obtain, as accurately as possible, a daily or even hourly record of certain of the respondent's activities" (Vajda, 2011: 1043). These solicited diaries used to obtain specific information in line with the objectives of the study. Vajda (2011) and Hewitt (2016) argue that solicited diaries are important as they ensure a more accurate picture, the behaviour, experiences, thought and feelings, attitudes, perceptions as well as motivations. Lingsom (1979: 1) points out that the "strength of the time diary method is that it provides the most accurate measurement of time spent on different activities." This study adopts a similar understanding in that household diaries are used as a tool to record daily food activities and experiences of poor households in the Umkhanyakude region. They are supplementary to interviews, which even though they were crucial in collecting household information on food access and availability, they allowed respondents to give information over a period.

The diary studies began attracting noticeable attention from researchers interested in qualitative studies in the early 1980s (Ohly *et al.*, 2010). Prior to this period, it was in the mid-19th century when medical researchers aimed to unpack medical, psychological and behavioural patterns of patients most particularly in countries of the developing world (Vajda, 2011 and Kenten, 2010). Recently, the diary method has been used in food security studies as researchers attempts to understand how households, more particularly, the urban poor utilise food. In these studies, diaries were often used to monitor the dietary intake of groups such as "infants, school children, adolescent girls, and pregnant women" (Wiseman *et al.*, 2005: 394). The studies focused on nutritional subject matters such as monitoring of cholesterol intake, nutrient levels, carbohydrate intake, caffeine consumption as well as and

bodyweight (Engin, 2011 and Wiseman *et al.*, 2005). Similar application of diaries was followed as these are used to monitor and gather household information of how they obtain, utilise, and always ensure food availability. A similar formula was used to the determine the number of households to record diaries in each cluster as indicated in table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Number of respondents participating in diaries

Cluster name	**No. of households recording diaries**
Hlabisa	2
Jozini	8
Mtubatuba	7
Hluhluwe	2
Umhlabuyalingana	6
Total	25

While detailed information over a five (5) month period was recorded through diaries, it must be mentioned that administration of these proved challenging, particularly in the first week of the process of recording. The respondents did not seem interested in recording their diaries. Some would lose their diaries, and initially did not inform the researcher that they lost them. There were also instances where in the third week, some respondents were no longer recording their diaries. Lingsom (1979: 1) points out that the "weakness with the method is that it is applicable to only a short period of time." Overtime, the "quality of the diary entries decreases and non-response rate increases with longer periods (*Ibid*). To address this, the researcher had to develop ways to remind study respondents to record their diaries and re-deliver diaries to those who have lost them. The experiences of recording diaries are further explained in section 3.8 of the chapter.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis forms one of the integral sections of the study. It is a process in which the raw data gathered from the field is ordered and organised in logical information in line with the aims and objectives of the study. Shamoo and Resnik (2003: 17) observe that data analysis is a process that draws an "inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise (statistical fluctuations) present in the data." At this stage, the researcher must be able to identify emerging common patterns and trends in collected data and critically analyse them in relation to aims of the study. The analysis of data can also be used to critically assess existing theoretical and conceptual perspectives. The data either confirm or argue against these existing theoretical and conceptual viewpoints (Wong, 2008).

In the analysis of data, the study used methods that are qualitative (for example, anecdotes) and statistical data (comparative statistics, percentages, tables and graphs). Mixing analytical tools of data was important in the study as it offered "potential for generating new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experience, and for enhancing our capacities for social explanation and generalization" (Mason, 2006: 10). This mixture of tools also ensured complementarity and lessened the gaps where one method was not suitable for analysis of data. In the study, the results from one method are used to further analysis from the other method. For instance, the percentages or numbers are further substantiated by anecdotes from participants in the study. In this way, the quantitative results were explained in more detail through the qualitative data.

3.5.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis of data is a section of the study that typically differentiates qualitative research from quantitative research. Qualitative data analysis refers to a process of organising (coding), interpretation and categorisation of information collected through interview transcripts, notes, video and audio recordings, images and text documents into themes, anecdotes, storytelling, and autobiography (Gale *et al.*, 2013, Wong 2008 and Lacey and Luff, 2007). Dissimilar to quantitative analysis, this type of analysis is a dynamic, creative process that explores values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, and feelings characteristic of the phenomenon that is being invested (Lacey and Luff, 2007). From these, the researcher can draw emerging significant trends, which are used for building evidence for and/or against hypothesis of the study (Wong, 2008). Qualitative data analysis can be divided into five (5) categories namely: content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, framework analysis and grounded theory (Gale *et al.*, 2013 and Lacey and Luff, 2007).

The study used a framework analysis which involves familiarization, identifying a themes, coding, charting, mapping and interpretation (Smith and Firth, 2011). Using framing as an approach to research, particularly qualitative research, is important as it sets out the systematic structure to manage, analyse and identify themes for interpretation of data to provide an illuminating description of the phenomenon (Hackett and Strickland, 2018 and Srivastava and Thomson, 2009). Developed in the 1980s, the framework approach has many similarities to thematic analysis (Hackett and Strickland, 2018 and Gale *et al.*, 2013). Smith and Firth (2011: 3) observe that the application of framework analysis ensures that "analysis can provide rich and insightful understandings of complex phenomena, be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches and expand on or test existing theory." Gale *et al.,* (2013: 3) agrees with this and explains that this approach identifies

"commonalities and differences in qualitative data, before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data, thereby drawing descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes." This is important for cross-sectional analysis of descriptive data including concepts, hypothesis, theories and conceptual frameworks. The cross-sectional analysis is important for finding common threads, opposing perspectives as well as generation of new ideas and concepts from different disciplines (Gale *et al.*, 2013).

3.5.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis involves critical interpretation of figures, percentages and numbers (Bryman and Cramer, 2005). From these, quantitative data analysis tools are used to find rationale behind the emergence of key trends or findings in the study Bryman and Cramer, 2005). In the study, the process of quantitative data analysis involved the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel computer programmes. SPSS is a Windows based program that was used to process data to create comparative tables, pie-charts and graphs as part of analysis (Garth, 2008 and Bryman and Cramer, 2005). The study made use of this tool to derive quantitative data analysis on variables such income, number of women-headed households and other related demographical information. This was important for generating cross tabulations for identification of relationships among different variables and frequencies on gathered findings.

In addition, Microsoft Excel was also used to calculate percentages, generate graphs pie-charts and tables analysing different sets of data. The data variables that were quantified included the number or percentage of households using food strategies such as ukunana, remittances, stokvels, ukuthekela, *ukufaka isandla*, *ukusisa*, ilobolo, food gardens and funerals. Quantifying this data was important for identifying the most used food strategies and the reasons why these were commonly used by households. The quantitative analysis of data culminated in the development of three (3) household food security strategies namely economy-related, culture-related and rite of passage food strategies. The three (3) categories of household food strategies are discussed at length in chapter in the subsequent chapters. These categories are underpinned by the concepts of socialisation, embodiment and embeddedness as discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 4.

It is worth noting the researcher initially anticipated that the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and Coping Strategies Index (CSI) were to be used for complementing the analysis of household social dynamics of food security. The HFIAS assesses prevalence of household food insecurity as well as changes in food insecurity over time. However, after a thorough engagement with households through interviews, the data on the insecurity status of households became very clear, as the diaries captured substantial amount of data, which

provided insight on the socio-cultural practices of food security. The CSI is used to *inter alia* provide a quick, status indicator of the extent of food insecurity, identify areas and population groups where needs are greatest and shed light on the causes of malnutrition (Maxwell and Caldwell, 2008). While measuring these indicators is important in food security studies, this study did not seek to assess these. The objective of the study was to explore strategies (beyond orthodox, economic strategies) to achieve food security. The study explored lived realities of households and analysed these in a qualitative manner.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Considering that this study involved human beings, it was critical that the researcher is cognisant of the ethical and legal responsibility of undertaking qualitative research (Roshaidai and Arifin, 2018, Scott, 2013 and Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). This suggests that a researcher must ensure that they respect values, beliefs, traditions, rights, needs and rights of all respondents involved in the research process. To achieve this, several factors must be considered including informed consent (study content and intentions explained to participants before their participation is elicited), doing no harm (possible risks explained to participants), anonymity and confidentiality (hiding identities of participants) and honesty (trust in presentation of data). This section of the study presents how the researcher adhered to these to exercise care and causing no harm to participating respondents.

3.6.1. Informed Consent

Acquiring consent is a major ethical issue in undertaking research. Powell e*t al.,* (2012: 13) for example, point out that obtaining consent is a process of "provision of information by the researcher; the potential participant understanding the information, and then making a response to it." Informed consent suggests that respondents participate in the study "knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently", and are not participating in the study without having access to relevant information and knowledge (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011: 3). Scott (2013: 77) argues that "potential participants must be informed with regards to what will be required of the individual participant, including the approximate time requirement, any procedures that will be performed on him or her, any known or predictable risks or side effects". To address these, the researcher obtained ethics clearance approved by the University's Department Ethics Committee (DEC) in line with set standards for non-medical research (Ethics Clearance Number: H17/03/14). The Committee considered all the tools to be used in the collection of data including consent forms, diaries, and semi-structured questionnaire. The consent forms included key information such as the purpose of the study, methods, period the study, risks, benefits, and a phrase stipulating that participation is voluntary and the

participants have the right to withdraw from the study. This information was presented to all study respondents prior to convening of the interviews.

3.6.2. Doing No Harm

Ensuring that participants are not exposed to any risks and their lives made vulnerable is one of the key ethical issues in research (Haines, 2017, Scott, 2013 and Powell *et al.*, 2012). To achieve this, Halai (2006: 6) observes that researchers must "provide the participants with an outline of the risks and benefits involved to the participants in the study." Making respondents aware of this information is crucial as it minimises instances where the research may unearth sensitive information or remind respondents of their painful past experiences, and thereby opening old wounds. Fouka and Mantzorou (2011: 5) argue that a "researcher must consider all possible consequences of the research and balance the risks with proportionate benefit." The exposure of sensitive information is often the case in medical studies where health status of patients may be exposed during collection of data (Scott, 2013 and Halai, 2006). This study did not focus on health-related matters, but generic food security issues such as income, poverty, employment, economy, infrastructure as well as social networks. While these did not pose many risks, the researcher still exercised caution and made respondents aware that in instances where they felt uncomfortable, they could decide not to answer the question or ask not to continue with the interview, even after the informed consent had been signed. In instances where the researcher wanted to record voices through an audio recorder device, consent was requested from respondents. Both the questionnaire and household diaries were translated into *isiZulu* to accommodate respondents who could not read or speak English.

At the conclusion of every interview session, the researcher undertook some time to explain to participants the aims of the study, use and presentation of the information they had provided. This was done for purposes of putting respondents at ease and allow them to ask any questions for clarity, as at this time, they were more understanding of the study aims and objectives.

3.6.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality

As part of exercising care and doing no harm, is the need to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of respondents of the study. Halai (2006: 6) points out that it is important that the researcher adheres to the anonymity of confidentiality as part of,

> Offering protection to research participants through assurance of confidentiality of information shared and anonymity by not revealing the identity of the individuals and institutions involved.

The principle ensures that the rights of respondents are respected for preservation of their fidelity and dignity (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). In the study, two (2) methods were used to achieve anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, namely, coding of data during analysis and storage of information in private area only accessible to the researcher. During the data analysis, the researcher used codes such as HHD1 (household diary 1) to refer to households who participated in recording of diaries and respondents (for example, respondent 1) to refer to households who participated in interviews. Fouka and Mantzorou (2011: 20) observe that use of these methods in research ensures that "subject's identity cannot be linked with personal responses", and in turn cause distress, physical and mental harm, embarrassment as well as frighten and offend study participants.

As indicated above, it was during data analysis that methods such as coding was used to protect anonymity and confidentially of respondents. Any documents that had names of respondents such as consent forms and questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet which with no access to anyone other than the researcher. Equally, the process of data transcribing was conducted in a private room, with only the researcher having to listen to responses of study respondents. It was during this process that identities of respondents removed, and codes were assigned to refer to them.

3.6.4. Self-reflexivity during Analysis of Data

The researcher was aware that there was a possibility that the researcher's personal views featured strongly in the study analysis, perspectives and arguments. During this study, the researcher attended several conferences, workshops, and seminars, which broadened his understanding of how to best undertake research. One of the key discussions was that of positionality, which assisted the researcher to always self-reflect on his position in the study. For instance, the researcher asked questions relating to his role as a man undertaking research in dominantly women-headed households: how did researcher's positionality influence interactions with head of households who were of the same age? How did the researcher use his positionality to obtain access in the different clusters? How did the researcher's past experiences influence recording of all data in the study? Constantly asking these questions was important to ensure that the researcher was able understand his positionality, reflect on it and the influence it had on data collection and analysis as well the entire research process. Bourke (2014: 3) argues that,

> You must position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all. Positionality represents a space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet. To achieve pure objectivism is a naive quest, and we can never truly divorce ourselves of subjectivity. We can strive to remain objective but must be ever mindful of our

> subjectivities. Such is positionality. We must acknowledge who we are as individuals, and as members of groups, and as resting in and moving within social positions.

To achieve some level of objectivity, the researcher always had to refer to the objectives of the study, how data could be best presented without researcher's own personal thoughts, experiences and attitudes overruling findings of the study.

3.7. Limitations in the Study

The study has made a concerted effort to explore and explain conceptual and theoretical perspectives and viewpoints of household food security in the Umkhanyakude region. While this is the case, it is important to note that there are limitations of this study. These limitations include the nature of the study itself, the sampling size, drought, data deficit and researcher's positionality. This section of the study discusses these limitations of the study, their impact on findings as well as methods used to minimize adversarial impact on findings of the study.

Firstly, one of the major limitations of the study is the qualitative nature of the study. This suggests that the study relied heavily on capturing lived experiences of households to understand food security dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region. While 150 participants were interviewed and 25 households participated in recording of diaries, findings of the study cannot be used with certainty to explain household food security in other areas. It was for this reason that in the analysis of data, both qualitative techniques (for example anecdotes and direct quotes) and quantitative techniques such as coding were used. These were used to complement each other to achieve greater insight into the meaning of collected data and gaining specific insight on household food security dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region.

Secondly, the study was conducted during a period when the province of KwaZulu Natal was gripped by extreme drought. The northern region of Umkhanyakude was one of the worse affected areas in the province with substantial numbers of people experiencing acute food scarcity. This suggests increased household vulnerability in terms of household food security. As a result of drought, households had to change their day-to-day activities, and intensify these to ensure they do not fall into extreme state of food insecurity. This suggests a possibility of households intensifying food strategies through finding new strategies and/or mixing strategies to achieve food security. This means there is a possibility that findings of this are likely to differ if the study is conducted in another rural area with similar characteristics, but without extreme drought conditions. As a result, this limits the replicability of findings of the study.

The third limitation relates to data deficit, more particularly historical data. While the search for fertile land to plant food and pastures for grazing of livestock has always been the determining factor in early settlements of the Nguni nation, historical studies and reports on these early settlements were framed around issues of chieftaincies, lineage, power relations, conflicts and wars. In cases where access to food received attention, it was in studies which sought to understand famine and other related disasters which could have caused scarcity of food. As a result of data deficit, the researcher had to search for information from the history commons from the University of KwaZulu Natal where there exist a number of books, reports and thesis on early origins and settlements of the northern region of Umkhanyakude. Therefore, the study could not review and use existing information to compare and contract with other areas of similar and distinctive characteristics in South Africa. The comparisons would have been critical to determine whether food dynamics are like other areas or are unique to the study area.

The fourth limitation of the study relates to the ability of the researcher to maintain objectivity throughout the entire research process, that is, from data collection to presentation of findings. As indicated in ethical considerations, maintaining objectivity is not an easy task as researcher's viewpoints are embedded in personal experiences and philosophical beliefs. Thus, there is a possibility that the researcher's personal arguments and views have featured strongly in the study. In so doing, the imposition of researcher's viewpoints can lead to influence of findings and bias. It is always for this reason that during the study; the researcher had to self-reflect on arguments presented in the study. In addition, ideas presented in the study have been reviewed against existing literature on household food security.

3.8. The Fieldwork: Addressing Challenges and Limitations

This section of the chapter discusses observations and challenges experienced by the researcher during gathering of data from the field. Van de Ven and Poole (2017: 867) point out that fieldwork "involves the study of ongoing organisational life in its naturally occurring settings with first-hand observations from a particular subject's frame of reference." They observe that various names have been used to refer to fieldwork such as qualitative research, case study, participant observation, ethnography, and clinical research (Van de Ven and Poole, 2017 and Ntseane, 2007). It is important to note that while different tools can be proposed for gathering of data, these do not always work in a manner as initially envisaged and planned. This section of the chapter is divided into two (2) partly parts, firstly it discusses challenges and tactics used during gathering of data using semi-structured questionnaire, and secondly, it discusses the experiences encountered during the recording of diaries. The

section concludes with outlining implications of observations for undertaking research in areas with similar spatial morphology as the Umkhanyakude region.

3.8.1. Access to Clusters and Households in the Region

The preparation for interviews in the clusters was informed by the spatial formation of the Umkhanyakude region. Northern region spans across from the south of Mozambique to King Cetshwayo in the north. This is the longest distance to travel in the region. The plan was to move from the north of the region to the south. This meant starting the interviewing process from the Umhlabuyalingana, then proceed to Jozini, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and complete the process in the Mtubatuba cluster. This allowed the researcher to maximise on time and resources spent collecting data. The routes were shortened as households outside of the 20-kilometre radius were largely located in the boundaries of clusters. For instance, the area of KwaNdaba in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster is near Ndumo in Jozini cluster. The areas are separated by a road. The researcher was therefore able to undertake interviews in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster and proceed to Jozini cluster without having to travel a longer distance.

It is worth noting however that having areas for interviews closer to each other was not always the case. On the 8th of May 2017, which was the first day of the fieldwork, interviews commenced in Mpophomeni, which is approximately 46 kilometres from the Manguzi town where two (2) of the research assistants had to be picked up. A total of 92-kilometres had to be travelled to and from Manguzi before commencement of interviews. The same could be said of Hlabisa cluster, which is approximately 200-kilometres from the Manqakulana village. On the 12th of May 2017, a total of 560-kilometres were travelled between Umhlabuyalingana, Hlabisa and Hluhluwe clusters. These distances were travelled using a vehicle.

Given the terrain of the region, not all households were accessed through a vehicle. This was the case in the Umhlabuyalingana, Jozini and Hluhluwe clusters where the researcher travelled over three (3) kilometres on foot from one homestead to another. In the Jozini cluster for instance, the terrain was extremely steep, and the pathways did not allow for vehicle access. The respondents often indicated that "*Asinazimoto la*, *sihamba ngezinyawo*, simply translating we do not have cars, we walk on foot. You must get used to walking too." Walking long distances had serious implications for the study in terms of time needed to conclude fieldwork. These distances also posed some security threats, as the researcher had to travel in thick bushes without knowledge of the exact location of the next homestead. One instance was when respondents in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster warned the researcher not to leave the vehicle unattended, as vehicle theft was very common in the area. As a result, the researcher had to make means to ensure security not only himself, but also of the

resources used in the collection of data. In this case, the researcher resorted to parking the car in the central homestead and walk to other adjacent homes. It was only in instances where an access road or a wild track was not available that the vehicle would be left unattended in main dirt road.

In addition to physical access is social or negotiated access. The negotiated access is an agreement and consent achieved between researcher and respondents to participate in the study. In rural areas however, obtaining negotiated access to interview people is dependant not only on respondents agreeing to be involved in the study, but also other prominent figures such as *Induna yesigodi* (local chief), ward councillor, local priest and the *iphoyisa lenduna* (advisor to the local chief). Any of these figures play an important role in the affairs of rural villages. In undertaking fieldwork, the researcher needed to ensure that these, depending on their prevalence and level of authority, were made aware of the study, its objectives, the intended participants and duration. The involvement of these is important as at any stage, their dissatisfaction may lead to disruption of the study. In Umkhanyakude region with its rural character, *izinduna* are prominent and play a crucial role in the affairs of rural communities. Worth mentioning is that local chiefs were easily accessible and willing to assist. In one instance in Jozini cluster, the local chief requested that the study be introduced at the local *imbizo* (a gathering or meeting) where the entire advisory forum was present. The advisory forum disseminated the information to households, therefore making it easier for the researcher to conduct interviews. The level of involvement of local chiefs in communities was illustrated by how respondents frequently asked the researcher if the local chief was aware of the study.

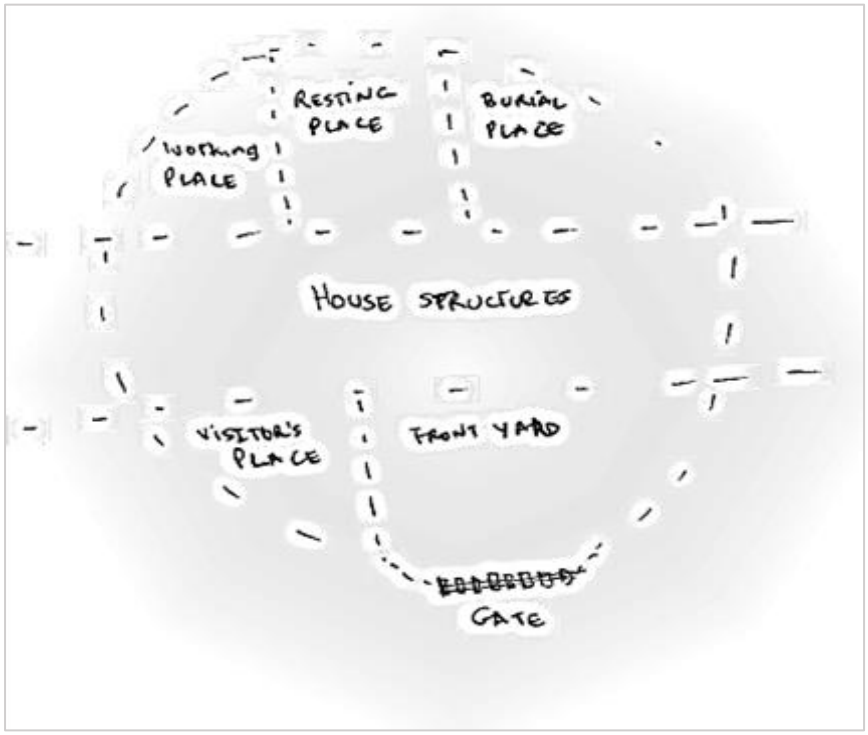
The respondents would breathe a sigh of relief once they were assured that the local chief was aware and given approval for the researcher to undertake the fieldwork. The ward councillors were not as prominent as local chiefs. It was only in Hlabisa and Hluhluwe clusters where local councillors illustrated interest in the study and provided support by introducing the researcher to some ward committee members. The ward committee members assisted with directing the researcher to areas to the most vulnerable households.

From observation, the local chiefs were more welcoming and willing to allow the research process to be undertaken. The local councillors were reluctant. The local councillors asked several questions relating how the study would assist the poor through creation of employment opportunities? How will it assist poor, women and child-headed households have access to food? Will the study be used to access services such as water, housing and electricity? For them, the study had to contribute in material terms to challenges facing people in their wards.

Gaining access into the households was one of the critical aspects of fieldwork. Once more, access to households can be categorised into physical and negotiated access. At a household level, several factors determined both physical and negotiated access. The physical access was determined by *ukukhuleka* and clan praising while negotiated access was determined by researcher appearance, scent, complexion, sex and accent. These factors contributed largely to how the researcher was perceived and received by respondents.

A common trend was observed in the remote rural clusters such as Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Umhlabuyalingana in relation to the use of different spaces in the homestead. The use of spaces is largely like that of the early origins as outlined in Chapter 2. As illustrated in figure 3.1, these included cattle pen, burial place, space for visitors, houses for wives and children, *indumba* (house for ancestors) and main house structure.

Fig 3.1: Use and meaning of spaces in a rural homestead



One of the observations was how the researcher was not allowed to enter the household without acknowledgement by the respondents, particularly the head of the household. The refusal to enter homesteads was prevalent in remote rural clusters such as Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Umhlabuyalingana. Even in homesteads where the physical gate was non-existent, it was considered impolite to enter the homestead without the acknowledgement by the head of the household.

Different from the normal *sawubona* (hello), *ukukhuleka* is considered as the most respectful way to greet when entering a homestead as it involves clan praising. In acknowledging the person approaching, the head of the household responds '*ngena'* (come in). Once inside the homestead, the visitor (researcher in this case) waits in an area designated for visitors. The designated area includes *isigqiki* (a stump stool) or a tree closer to the gate. In some homesteads, the area for visitors was not well designated, and as a result, the researcher was left to find any place to wait before being attended by household members. The researcher was not allowed to walk pass through the front yard. In a case where the researcher had not been met by any member of the household, he had to wait by the front yard, shouting '*siyakhuleka*' until he was acknowledged by the household.

Following *ukukhuleka* and praising of clan names were introductions, which were part of the process of the researcher getting acquainted and accepted by the respondents. The introductions included several questions on identity of the researcher, the weather of the day, topical news as well as wellness of the study respondents. It was in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster where the introductions took more time as most of the respondents knew the researcher. Some of the introductions took over 30 minutes as respondents asked "*wemntaka MaZungu, sewakhula kanjena*? *Usuyindoda phela manje* (MaZungu's child, you have grown a lot, you are now a man). How is your mother, where do you stay now? Do you work? Are you married? When are you getting married?" In the Zulu culture, these questions were important as part of the process of approving physical access of the researcher.

Linked to approval of physical access to homesteads was negotiated access. The degree of importance of factors determining negotiated access to respondents varied. For instance, scent was not prevalent as complexion and command for local lingua. In instances where respondents perceived the researcher to be pronouncing worlds differently, they would start questioning the identity of the researcher. Respondent 3 in Hlabisa cluster (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) for example asked,

> Are you sure you are from Manguzi? You do not seem to be from there. You smell so nice. Have expensive closes. It shows you work. Can you speak *IsiThonga* (local lingua)? I know people from the Nhlozi clan to be from the Nibela in Hluhluwe. I did not know that they were also in the Manguzi.

The command and/or lack thereof of local lingua by the researcher had both positive and negative impact on the acceptance by respondents. Interestingly, in the Umhlabuyalingana and Jozini clusters where the accent of the researcher is most similar to that of the local people, the researcher was easily acceptable. In the other three (3) clusters namely, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Mtubatuba, the researcher accent was questioned as it differed from that of

the respondents. Frequently amazed, the respondents asked if the researcher was honest that he was from within the region. These questions created some feeling of uneasiness as the researcher had to explain and convince the respondents that he was from the region. The explanations were often substantiated by the researcher having to explain his identity, the clan names and at times, location of family relatives. Obtaining approval from respondents was crucial for the success of interviews. This signals that beyond the formal, guided ethics approval process by the universities, there still exist on-the-field approval process which is not recognised in the mainstream processes of ethics approval. In the Umkhanyakude region, this informal approval process was motivated specific socio-cultural norms and values which are context specific. The approval of legitimacy of the researcher was also important for ascertaining whether the researcher understood lived experiences and existing oppressions in the Umkhanyakude region. In turn, this ensured that the researcher did not take lightly their living circumstances and livelihood mechanisms. Rather, the researcher was part of them.

Another challenge encountered in the field was complexion of the researcher. Paradoxically, complexion was never considered a matter of concern by the researcher as the researcher has the same skin colour as all respondents involved in the study. While the complexion of the researcher was not questioned as much as it was the case with accent, nine (9) respondents explained that the researcher looked different from them. Respondent 1 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in Hlabisa cluster stated that "*unekhompi* (light skin tone). You will not look like that if you stayed in Manguzi. That place is very hot. Anyone can see that you are not from here." Respondent 7 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in Hlabisa cluster questioned,

> *Uyacwelezela, uyithola eManguzi lekhompi*? (You are shinning, do you get this light skin tone staying in Manguzi). This means I must also move there, maybe I can be like you? You do not look like people from area.

While the respondents raised these in a light-hearted manner, it raised a question of trust and approval between the researcher and respondents. It also raised a point of discomfort as the complexion of the researcher was seen as superior to that of respondents. The emphasis that the researcher stayed in urban areas because of *ukucwebezela* (skin tone) signalled that respondents were establishing social class relations. It was important that the researcher assured respondents that their complexion was not inferior to that of the researcher. The complexion of the researcher signalled no importance or superiority between the researcher and respondents in the study. Equally, the researcher ensure that the dress-code was appropriate a young male in a rural setting. As such, the researcher wore no jewellery as this could have intimidated the respondents and/or made them feel less important, poor and inferior.

In addition to the complexion was the sex of the researcher. With the researcher being male, this affected acceptability of the researcher both in positive and negative ways. The researcher interaction to male respondents, female respondents and child-headed households varied. The common assumption is that with researcher being a youthful male, interacting with female respondents would prove challenging. Some of the women would ordinarily refer to the researcher as ‘my child’ in appreciation that at such age, the researcher was doing productive work rather than being involved in alcohol and drugs. It was interaction with male respondents which proved a challenge. Male respondents were not as welcoming as women respondents. The observation is that male respondents grew impatient with the interviews. In most instances, after realisation that the study was purely for academic purposes and not material gain, they would suggest that their wives, older daughter, or any other member of the household continue with interview. For male respondents, food security is well understood by women. This was observed in several instances where male respondents would abruptly stop the interview and ask their wives to continue answering questions. For men, their responsibility is to provide finance for purchasing of food. Women must purchase food and prepare it for the household.

While the interaction with the male counterparts was more formal, wry, and straight to the point, it was interaction with women which was more interesting, as these provided detailed accounts of their experiences of obtaining food. This largely was due to the emotive tone with which they outlined their food experiences. The hardships and sacrifices they made in their efforts to access food could be felt in their voices and seen in their faces. Some of the female respondents explained that all that they lived for is their children. Their well-being was second from that of their children.

The feeling of sacrifice, commitment, and sense of responsibility to support their households was not as conspicuous from their male counterparts. Arguably, it has something to do with the psychological behaviours and reproductive and productive responsibilities associated with men and women. From observation, men could not provide deep insightful annotations because of their detachment from household food security activities. Several reasons can be attributed to this detachment from household food access activities including static gendered cultural roles which determines household responsibilities. For instance, cooking in the Umkhanyakude region is the responsibility of women. This is despite the fact that there has been a shift in food acquiring activities with women increasingly playing an active role. This shift stems out of the historical migrant labour system which forced women to be the decision maker on day-to-day basis as the majority of men had migrated to cities. This arrangement continues to exist today.

The active role of women in household food dynamics was more prevalent in women-headed households. Unlike in male-headed households, some of the women must single-handedly provide for households with over 10 members. Most of the women-headed households do this without any stable household income. Rather, these women must try and find any opportunities including selling of mats, *vetkoeks*, traditional medicine, as well as developing household gardens and occasionally asking for food from neighbours. They understand that they are both 'fathers and mothers' of their children and must do all that is necessary to ensure survival of their families. Women are so active in household food security dynamics such that they are willing to take on any opportunities even if these are seen as less important. For instance, respondent 23 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster stated that,

> In this family, we buy food using social grant of the three (3) children and pension grant earned by my mother. I also sell *fat-cakes* and sweets at the local clinic. I use the money from this to buy small food items particularly in the middle of the month when the other food items are finished. My husband produces palm wine, but seldom contributes to food. He does once in a while, when he managed to make enough money from selling palm wine.

Beyond gender, age plays a crucial role in the dynamics of fieldwork. Interestingly, during the initial framing of the study, age was not considered as an issue to affect data collection processes. The study targeted respondents which are head of households, and by assumption these would be middle and older aged persons. The researcher did not give much thought to the possibility of existence of child-headed households in the study area. The understanding was based on traditional, nuclear definition of a household, that it is composed of parents and children. The parents were assumed to take the responsibility of providing food for their dependants. Even in instances where one parent was not available, more particularly women-headed households, the commonplace assumption was that a female as head of household is an adult as defined by various institutions including the United Nations and Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). This assumption suddenly changed during fieldwork as there were households headed by children. All these households were headed by females whom in most cases had primary or no education. The engagement with child-headed households was the most interesting. While the respondents might have not understood some of the questions, their responses to how they managed to access food where thought-provoking. Respondent 36 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in Jozini cluster explained that,

> The questions you are asking me must be referred to people who work and have money to buy food. For people who do not work like me, we do not think the way

> you do. All of us in this family have to do whatever we can to get food. We do not think of buying food because we do not have means to do so. We depend on the messy of our local councillor and the neighbours who on monthly basis gives us food to eat. Our pastor, my aunt also gives us food whenever they can. I am unable to answer your questions because most of them suggest that we can obtain food ourselves when we cannot.

The researcher tried to profile these households and report them to the local war-rooms and the district offices of the Department of Social Development (DSD). Of the three (3) households, two (2) were already known, and had been supported through food and blankets. It was only the issue of identity documents and shelter which still needed to be provided to the households.

The expectation of material gain from participation in the study was another challenge experienced in the field. Following the ebullient introductions, the researcher was allowed to introduce the purpose of the interview. The introduction was made as simple as possible to prevent misunderstanding by the respondents. Sihlongonyane (*Pers. Comm*, 18 February 2017) observed that "you must be able to in one (1) or two (2) sentences, articulate your study, its aims and objectives. Failure to explain in simple, few words mean the next person would have a challenge understanding of what the study seeks to achieve." The introduction of the study was received with mixed feelings. While the researcher made means to simplify the process of introduction of the study, including introducing this in *IsiZulu*, a number of respondents projected their own expectations of the study. These expectations were related to how the study would be of material gain to them. The respondents would often ask, "I am willing to answer your question, but we do not have water here, will your study help us have water?" It was crucial that the researcher explain clearly that the study is purely for academic purposes. The researcher and respondents would not benefit any material or financial gain and that the study was for contribution of body of new knowledge.

While this explanation was given by the researcher, some households still held a belief that the researcher was not honest and stood to gain materially from the study. It was therefore important that the researcher managed these expectations as they had the propensity to derail the interviewing process and the study at large. Worth noting is that expectations of material gain by respondents does not only exists in rural areas but also in urban areas (Mey and van Hoven, 2019 and Nyumba *et al*., 2018). Hunt and May (2017: 1) observe that "negotiating the expectations of others is a routine part of our everyday lives." The respondents participating in any research project will always have their own preconceived expectations of their involvement (Nyumba *et al*., 2018). The researcher needs to be vigilant

and ensure that these are managed throughout the period of the fieldwork. In a country where there exist high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment, expectations of material gain from research will often be part of the research effects of these structural, economic impacts influences what people do, their attitude, perceptions and expectations. When respondents interact with an outsider, who may appear to present an opportunity to access resources that they do not already have, they are bound to raise expectations in hope that the outsider would satisfy their needs. Gärdenfors (1993) in Olkkonen (2015: 13) observes that,

> Expectations are an inseparable part of interaction, whether in interpersonal, intragroup, or organizational relationships. People have expectations when they enter a room, when they encounter a new person, or when they choose to act in a certain way. Expectations draw information from previous experience and form an assessment "where past and future meet to drive present behaviour. In other words, people search for causal explanations of others" behaviour and make predictions of future behaviour as a way of making sense of the social world.

Conferred mainly in areas of academic research in public relations, expectations are understood as factors that result from situations where issues are left unanswered (Luoma-aho and Olkkonen, 2016). In instances when there is common understanding between the researcher and respondents, expectations are always there as from their participation, respondents want to have sense of benefit, which in most cases, is material gain. This was illustrated throughout the fieldwork exercise in this study.

In managing expectations, the researcher had to emphasize the objectives of the study to ensure that all respondents participated in the study with common understanding to that of the researcher. This ensured that no expectations were created which could lead into bias in the information provided by respondents. To address this, the researcher put emphasis the aim and objectives of the study, rationale for selecting the participant, and the importance of participation in the study. The participation in the study would not lead to any financial gain as the study was purely for academic purposes. The collected data would be treated with confidentiality and no names or profiles will be used without consent of the participants. In addition, it was important for the researcher to create a calm and relaxed environment to prevent tensions and perception that respondents were compelled to participate in the interview. This led to some respondents who initially had indicated their unwillingness to participate in the interviews to change their minds and participate. Respondent 38 (*Pers. Comm,* 11 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster explained that, "well, let us continue. Maybe I will learn something from your study."

Mey and van Hoven (2019) and Nyumba *et al*., (2018) observe that the buy-in from respondents can also be achieved through Participatory Action Research (PAR). The PAR approach is “democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing qualitative approach” (MacDonald, 2012: 34). By actively involving people in research, researchers acknowledges that people have a right to determine what they consider important and recognises the need for “local people to participate meaningfully in the process of analysing their own solutions, over which they have power and control” (MacDonald, 2012: 36). This way, both researchers and respondents can build relationships through partnerships, cooperation and negotiation as well as commitment to addressing a common subject matter. These partnerships ensure that respondents are not just passive participants of the research process, but active participants who understand the importance of the study, and because of their involvement. It is worth mentioning however that the PAR approach requires substantial resources and its time consuming (Nyumba *et al*., 2018).

The process of undertaking research in rural areas demands that the researcher constantly adapts to conditions in the field. Adapting to conditions on the field suggests that the researcher considers commonplace cultural beliefs, traditions and beliefs. Prior to undertaking research mostly particularly fieldwork, there needs to be a considerable effort made to understand the study respondents, their common values, accent, local lingua, religion, tastes, common attitudes as well stereotypes. This allows the researcher to position themselves in a way that makes them part of communities. In the study for example, the researcher had to memorise clan names of the common surnames in clusters of the region. In one instance, a woman respondent of a same age as the researcher explained how she struggled to answer questions because of the constant staring from the researcher. In such instances, the researcher had to find a way of not maintaining too much eye contact by only do so on intervals such as when asking a question and confirming that the respondent understood the question asked. While maintaining eye contact is considered an acceptable behaviour in some cultures as it illustrates that the person is paying attention and honesty, this is seen as a sign of disrespect in the Zulu culture, particularly when done by a young person to an elder.

Adapting to behavioural approaches was also crucial particularly in instances where the researcher needed to seek clarity from the respondents. When unclear or contradictory statements were made, some of the respondents considered it impolite when they are interrupted in the process of responding to the questions. This was particularly the case with male respondents, who preferred to complete their responses before clarity seeking

questions were asked. The male respondents found this aggressive. Respondent 22 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster noted,

> Please allow me to finish. I may not be giving you the information you want, but what I am telling you is what happens every day. So, please let me finish, and then you can ask your question.

The conduct and reaction of the researcher to the responses was important, as any act of surprise or disbelief could easily have led to bias in how respondents answered questions. The researcher had to all times, maintain a uniform, polite interest on the responses by respondents. This ensured that respondents spoke in a manner that was appropriate, and thereby avoiding hostility and reluctance to further participate in the study.

3.8.2. Administering Household Food Diaries

Like the administering of semi-structured questionnaire, several challenges were encountered during the recording of diaries. These challenges were mainly due to high illiteracy levels, reluctance (and consistency) to record diaries, loosing of diaries and inaccuracies in recording of information. A substantial number of head of households could not read or write. HHD 2 (*Pers. Comm*, 16 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster asked,

> You want me to fill this every day? That is not possible. I have never written a diary in my entire life. I do not think people here do that. We go through same things on the daily basis. There is no need to write them. I can simply tell you what I did last week and the week before that. It is all here in my head; I can memorise it. I therefore do not need to write it down. In any case, I cannot write. You will have to come back and explain this when my children are back from school because they can read and write.

This experience was a widespread as most households in all clusters were reluctant to record their diaries. Households deemed it unnecessary to record their lived realities, as they could easily memorise these. In addition, their daily routines are the same, and thereby making it easy to recollect their food experiences. The reluctance to record diaries was illustrated by some households (two households) misplacing their diaries and one (1) household using their diary for making fire. HHD 5 (*Pers. Comm*, 17 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> I have been looking for the paper you gave me, I cannot find it. Is it possible that you can give me a new one so that I can start anew recording it. I think one of my children used it in making fire in the morning. I apologise. I will now ensure that I keep this in my house to avoid losing it next time.

The high illiteracy levels and reluctance also led into inaccuracies in the recording of diaries. The inaccuracies included some of the households not providing information on how they acquired food on some of the days, the type of food utilised on specific days as well as not providing additional information as it was required by the researcher. HHD 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 20 May 2021) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> I buy food twice in a month, first week and third week of the month. The information then remains the same until the next time I buy or get food from the local *spaza* shop. It is for this reason that I decided not to fill the rest of the pages because the information is the same.

The households also explained that the layout of diaries led to them recording inaccurate information. For purposes of guiding households on type of information to be recorded, the diaries were structured in terms of food types, household food strategies used to access food, and the frequency at which household strategies were used to acquire food. The diaries provided fields to record additional information (comments) that could have been omitted, as it was not reflected in options provided in the 'tick-a-box' section of the diary. It is in the commentary section where respondents were allowed to record additional information on their food activities.

Fig 3.2: Layout of household diaries

Day	Time of the Day	Food Type		√	Comments	Food Access Strategy		√		Frequency of Use per week	√
Monday	**Breakfast**	1	Soft maize porridge			1	Purchased		0	Never	
		2	Tea/coffee			2	From family garden		1	Once	
		3	Tea/coffee and bread			3	From extended family		2	Twice	
		4	Cereal			4	From acquaintances		3	Three	
		5	Pap			5	From friends		4	Four	
		6	Food left from the previous night			6	From neighbour		5	Five	
		7	Other			7	Other		6	Six	
									7	Every day	
									8	Do not remember	
	Lunch	1	Pap/Phuthu and beef stew			1	Purchased		0	Never	
		2	Pap/Phuthu and chicken stew			2	From family garden		1	Once	
		3	Rice and beef stew			3	From extended family		2	Twice	
		4	Rice and chicken stew			4	From acquaintances		3	Three	
		5	Samp and beef stew			5	From friends		4	Four	
		6	Samp and chicken stew			6	From neighbour		5	Five	
		7	Pap/Phuthu and vegetable curry			7	Other		6	Six	

Astonishingly, during the first week of recording diaries, majority of households explained how they struggled to correctly record their diaries. Firstly, the challenge with diaries were

options outlined on ‘food type’ which did not have some of the food eaten by households. HHD 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 20 May 2021) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster asked “what is cereal? I have never bought that in this family. Is that not food eaten by wealthy people?” Secondly, the households explained that they purchase food on specific period of the month, and thereafter, eat similar food almost on daily basis.

It is worth mentioning that the design of diaries assumed that households had some level of education. This assumption led to several challenges in rural areas such as Umkhanyakude region where majority of population have either some primary schooling or no schooling at all. By limiting recording of food experiences to only a written format, this disadvantaged households who were not able to read and/or write. This also failed to acknowledge other intrinsic ways in which people record their activities in these areas. This was explained by Dr. Ngcobo during the National Conference by the National Institute for Human Social Sciences (NIHSS) that his research study into virginity testing in KwaZulu Natal, discovered how tests were recorded by using reeds rather than traditional, written records. Dr. Ngcobo (*Pers. Comm*, 18 November 2018) explained that,

> As much as is it nice and always to the advantage of the researcher to have respondents who can read and write, this must always not be used as the only way of recording as it suppresses other ways, intrinsic ways, used by those we call illiterate. In my study on virginity testing in a rural village of KwaZulu Natal for example, I find out that the elderly lady who performed virginity testing and could not read or write, used reeds to record number of young girls who had tested at a specific time. She could tell you exactly how many girls tested in which month. It was so intriguing. Now, had I not allowed myself to learn of these ways that exist out there, I would have missed this great opportunity to learn of this simple, yet critical recording strategy. We need to move off our comfort zones to be able to unearth, untold stories.

The assumption and expectation from the researcher that all respondents must be able to record their experiences through writing compromised the quality of recorded information as those who had difficulties with writing lost interest and could not freely express their thoughts, feelings and experiences. To circumvent this, the researcher needed to be flexible to accommodate means to ensure that diaries are recorded. It was for this reason that an effort was made to translate all diaries into *IsiZulu*. In addition, in households where the head had little education and could not read or write, an arrangement was made that the younger, school going children of the same household were trained to assist in completing the diaries. There were, however, instances where some households (3 households) had neither

educated head of the household nor children, the researcher requested the neighbours to assist in recording of the diaries.

To ensure that diaries were appropriately recorded, the researcher decided to contact households (telephonically) every day of the week when diaries were to be recorded. Making contact was important for purposes of ensuring that they do not forget recording their diaries but also more importantly discussing any challenges that they might have encountered in the process of recording diaries. While initially, this worked well, overtime it created an impression that recording diaries were less of the responsibility of respondents, but that of the researcher. There were instances where respondents waited for the researcher to make contact to remind them to record their diaries. Some households went as far as saying that they would only remember they needed to record the diaries after the researcher made contact. For these households, recording of diaries was taken as an added responsibility, and this raised question of the authenticity and bias in the recorded information as lack of motivation could have led to households recording incorrect information.

Apart from the aforementioned challenges, the culture of recording activities or diaries is non-existent in rural areas. This was evident from a number of households who questioned the reasoning behind having to record 'lived realities' which they could easily memorise. The same is observed by Banda and Kirundu (2005) in their study examining reasons underlying high performance of urban schools against rural schools in the Iganga District in Uganda. Banda and Kirundu (2005: 6) argue that urban people attach more value to education than rural people who even when you get to their homes, there is "no evidence of newspapers, magazines and brochures, no charts or pictures on walls, and there are hardly any written materials and they do not watch their parents read and write anything." Furthermore, for cultural reasons, children in rural areas are limited to what they can discuss with their parents unlike their urban counterparts who are encouraged to ask questions and voice their opinions. Furthermore, this tendency is entrenched by lack of infrastructure such as libraries, electricity and children having to travel long distances from school to home. It was for this reason that it became a challenge to encourage households in clusters of Umkhanyakude region to maintain discipline while recording diaries more particularly when they had to do so over a prolonged period. In turn, what happened is that overtime, households lost interest in recording diaries as they had to re-write same information on day-to-day basis.

It is important to note that while diaries are crucial for offering a deeper insight into experiences and behaviours of study respondents, they also have their own shortcomings. For instance, Yi (2008), Hewitt (2016) and Crosbie (2006) argue that diaries have susceptibility to lead to misunderstanding and inaccuracies in recorded data as the

researcher and respondents do not always maintain face-to-face contact during the recording process. These inaccuracies cannot be examined and resolved immediately just as it is done with interviews where there is an immediate contact between the researcher and study respondents. In the Umkhanyakude region, where there are challenges with network reception and long distances travelled to reach respondents, time taken to address misunderstandings and/or challenges faced during the recording of diaries is prolonged further. As a result, this casts doubt on the authenticity of the information gathered. It is for this reason that when undertaking research in rural areas, researchers need to have alternative ways to immediately reach respondents.

The experiences discussed above have implications for conducting research in rural areas. Firstly, it illustrates that undertaking research in rural areas demands that the researcher is versatile and willing to adapt to the local conditions of the study area. Secondly, the process of planning, crafting of questionnaire, ethics clearance and approval only goes as far as setting the minimum level of preparedness of the researcher. There is a second approval process which is conducted by respondents in the field. This second approval is important as it determines the success and/or failure of the study. Thirdly, the preparedness of the researcher does not suggest that the research will follow the planned process. There are numerous unknowns in the environments where researchers work. These unknowns increase the likelihood of disruption of the research process should the researcher not be able to negotiate and adapt to maintain their acceptability. While the research tools and techniques are being altered and improvised, it is important that this is not done to the detriment of the aim of the study.

Fourthly and most importantly, the researcher must be always seeking to balance the new study conditions, demands and expectations against the original aim and objectives of the study. In this process, the researcher needs to critically self-reflect on his positionality in the research process, from the formulation of the research aims and objectives, the collection of data, analysis and write up. The process of self-reflection is important to prevent bias in how the entire study process is conducted. It acknowledges that the researcher is part of the social world they are exploring, and that world is already interpreted by actors (Holmes, 2014). Thus, the social-historical location of the researcher influences their orientation, that is, the researcher cannot be separated from the social process they study (Holmes, 2014). In this study, the researcher consciously and sub-consciously brought his experiences which then shaped his positionality in the interaction with the respondents, their responses, behaviour, stereotypes, attitudes and expectations. The researcher' positionality has largely shaped the researcher process, interpretations and outcomes of this study. While this is the

case, an effort was made in the study to minimise bias through self-reflection on arguments, viewpoints and perspectives made in the study.

One particular instance where the researcher had to self-reflect, was after the realisation of the role played by women in household food security strategies. The process of self-reflection involved assessment at the researcher's preconceived perceptions and understanding of gendered responsibilities against the emerging information from the field. For instance, continuing to listen to male voices over that of women during interviews was unfair as these equally played a significant role in household food security. As a result, it was necessary that women voices find expression in the study through encouraging their participation. To avoid creation of tensions within households, the researcher ensured that women were encouraged to participate without trampling on the feeling of authority of their male counterparts. Amongst other things, the researcher had to restructure the introductions to emphasise the importance of participation of the spouse in the interview, dispel the myth, perceptions and expectations of material gain from the study, conform to the local accent, manage presentation and appearance as well as practice the clan singing and praising.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design for collection and analysis of data from the five (5) clusters of the northern region of Umkhanyakude. It has illustrated how the study has employed qualitative methods in the collection of information from the field. The study also utilised combination of both qualitative and quantitative tools for analysis of data. Utilising both these data analytical approaches was important for developing better understanding of food security dynamics in the region, as well as ensuring that these complement each other, and thereby increasing the validity of results. The qualitative methods provided exploratory edge in unpacking household security strategies, which were then confirmed and quantified through quantitative data analysis techniques. The chapter also discusses at length, observations and challenges experienced by the researcher during the collection of data in the field.

The observations and challenges discussed in this chapter signals two (2) implications for undertaking research in rural areas. Firstly, the 'second approval' by respondents in the field illustrates how research is not just a procedural, scientific, and systematic investigation of information, but a human enterprise, largely influenced by tastes, perceptions and attitudes of the study. The second approval forms part of the human element of research, which signifies the need to move beyond the orthodox, procedural, systematic research process. In clusters of Umkhanyakude region for instance, the practice of *ukukhuleka*, clan praising and understanding of use and meaning of different spaces are some of the context specific

practices which were not known to the researcher prior to going into field. This points to the fact that although a considered, pointed process is followed during the development of proposal and research tools and techniques, these do not give surety that they will be compatible with conditions on the field. The geography, interests, experiences, social norms, and values of institutions in the study area has an influential impact on governing systems, structures and the way of life.

In most instances, the interests and expectations of respondents differ from that of the researcher. The social institutions such as cultural value systems which govern life and how they interact with outsiders are diverse are embedded in communities. The issue of geographic spread particularly in rural areas is critical as it is prone to create delays and loss of resources used in gathering data in the field. These necessitates adaptation of the research process to suit conditions in the field. In this study, the researcher had to carefully plan travel routes to maximise on time and resources. Equally, the researcher had to acquaint himself with the common accepted procedure for greeting as part of obtaining approval from the respondents. This therefore necessitates that constant critical self-reflection and adaptation on the positionality of the researcher be maintained throughout the research process.

Secondly, is the importance of managing expectations of the respondents for their participation in the study. For instance, the fieldwork in this study was undertaken during a year after the convening of local government elections in 2016 and the National Freedom Day, the 27th of April 2017. Leading up to local government elections, a plethora of promises were made by local politicians as part of obtaining local support from communities. These promises are often not satisfied by the local politicians, and as a result, leads to people not wanting to participate in activities that do not directly benefit from them and/or in instances where they do, they demand material compensation from for their participation. This was illustrated by three (3) households in the Hluhluwe cluster who blatantly objected to participate in the study stating that they would not allow for further exploitation of their circumstances without compensation. It is important that the researcher develops means to manage expectations of respondents by carefully explaining aims and objectives of the research and emphasising that the study is purely for academic purposes in simple terms. Managing expectations particularly of material gain, also ensures that there is no bias in collected data as respondents would participate with apt understanding of study aims and objectives.

Managing expectations suggests that timing is considered when undertaking research as it can influence research findings. The timing of the research suggests that collection of information is “sampled according to the passage of time” and is also “triggered by some focal experience of the participant” (Iida *et al.*, 2012: 279). The South African calendar has several holidays which allows those working in cities to travel back to their rural homes. During their visit, the level of access to food increases as they bring with them substantial amounts of food. In this study, it is for this reason that the months of June, September and December were considered not appropriate to conduct household interviews. The plan was also to avoid months where major festivities such as youth and heritage celebrations are undertaken. These celebrations provide some level of access to food for individuals and households. With this in mind, it was important to undertake fieldwork during the period not affected by major events such as holidays, public celebrations and government elections. The month of May was the appropriate time to conduct fieldwork as it only has one (1) holiday, the first day of the month. Conducting fieldwork during this period ensured that the commonplace, day-day food security mechanisms are gathered and analysed in the study.

Chapter 4: Theoretical and Conceptual Analytical Framework in the Study

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the broader theoretical and conceptual analytical frameworks for understanding food dynamics in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The broader theoretical and conceptual framework is developed based on a literature review of existing studies and theories on food security. The existing literature has largely focused on orthodox, structural approaches of food security. The focus on these orthodox theoretical and conceptual perspectives on food security remains important as they largely shape the food security discourse. The thrust of the chapter is that food security has increasingly become complex, and cannot be understood from a single theoretical perspective, but through a multitude of approaches and perspectives which are interdisciplinary in nature. It is for this reason that while this study initially reviewed traditional theoretical perspectives such as modernist theory and orthodox food security concepts e.g., poverty, unemployment, access, vulnerability, and multiple livelihood strategies to understand food dynamics.

Henceforth, the initial theoretical perspectives discussed in the chapter include modernist approach, systems theory, entitlements approach, complex, behavioural and post-modern perspectives. These orthodox theoretical perspectives failed to analyse socio-cultural dynamics of food security which are embedded in social systems and structures in clusters of the region. Thus, in order to unpack these socio-cultural dynamics, this study undertook a review of theoretical perspectives which led to an identification of 'beyond-the-economic' concepts and theoretical framework within the auspices of new institutional economics characterised by social, political and cultural disciplines. These were identified following the collection and analysis of data from the field. These were identified following the collection and analysis of data from the field. Central to the analytical framework are three (3) concepts namely: embeddedness, socialisation, and embodiment. These concepts are important for understanding the socio-cultural factors of food security, which move beyond the orthodox, structural analyses of food to notions of socio-cultural habitus and new institutional economics. The chapter concludes that dynamics of food security in rural areas must be situated in the notion of socio-cultural habitus which is largely influenced by processes of socialisation (socio-cultural networks and social power relations), embeddedness (structural systems, territorial and cultural embeddedness) and embodiment (social relations, rural moral economy and rural informality).

In terms of structure, the chapter is divided into three (3) broad sections, firstly, it discusses the theoretical perspectives secondly, it sets out the conceptual framework for understanding food security, and thirdly, it discusses the implications of conceptual framework on existing policy on food security and nutrition in South Africa. The conceptual framework is further

divided into two (2), firstly, it discusses orthodox, economic analytical dimension of food security, and secondly, social, and political dimensions premised on new institutional economics approach to food security. The following section discusses the theoretical framework and follows up with conceptual framework and concludes with the discussion of the concept of socio-cultural habitus which unpacks social and cultural norms and values embedded in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region.

4.2. The Broader Theoretical Framework of Food Security

Initially, based on the existing literature and how food security studies have been framed globally, the study was inclined towards the orthodox economic theories to understand dynamics of food in rural areas with similar spatial morphology as that of the Umkhanyakude region. The analysis of the data from field signalled complex, intertwined systems, relationships and power dynamics that exist in rural areas. To understand these, it was crucial to analyse food dynamics beyond the structural theoretical perspectives to include perspectives from planning and social sciences, that is, complexity, systems, behavioural and post-modern perspectives. These perspectives lay a foundation for understanding the evolution of approaches used over the decades to understand food security. Furthermore, these theories analyse the interactions between people and the relationships they have with the environment in which they live (Valle, 2000 and Heylighen and Joslyn, 1991). In an environment where social networks form the core of the societal fabric, analysis of relationships between people and environment are fundamentally important. The underlying theoretical perspectives are indicated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Theories and their relevance in the study

Theoretical Lens	**Fundamental Concepts**	**Period**	**Importance in the study**
Modernist approach	• Enlightenment • Rationality/reason • Facts • Technological advancement	1900s	Understanding foundation of the importance of technological improvements in changing production systems of food and shaping how food supply and food security is defined today.
Systems Theory	• Systems • Complexity • Connections • Relationships	1930s	Understanding of various systems and relationships that people form for purposes of ensuring access and availability of food.
Entitlements Theory	• Endowments • Resources • Household • Rights • Access	1981	Understanding of the resources, commodities and relations that people use to address poverty and starvation, as well as the law stands between food availability and food entitlement.

Complex Theory	• Complexity • Chaos • Order • Networks • Connections • Linear systems	1960s	Understanding of various systems, relationships and complexities that people are faced with in their quest to ensuring access and availability of food.
Behavioural Theory	• Behaviour • Perception • Experiences • Attitudes • Intention • Action	1800s	Understating human behaviour and set of beliefs that guide decision making of individuals and households towards ensuring access and availability of food.
Post-modern Perspectives	• Development • Modernism • Post-modernism	1980s	Seeking multifaceted approaches to addressing food security considering societal issues including power, institutions, religion, poverty, politics etc.

The modernist approach is one of the theoretical perspectives which is an entry point for analysis of food security dynamics. The debates and perspectives of today on food security are largely influenced by earlier modernist arguments and ideas. The debates on food security began as early as 1798 when Thomas Malthus pointed out that "the population growth would unavoidably supersede the food production" (Simon, 2012: 4). Substantial literature on the subject began surfacing in the 1930s following the end of World War I and the start of the great depression. During this time, the great concern was on increasing levels of food insecurity at the world level. As part of the world affairs, it was decided that the issue be addressed by an administrative body called League of Nations, which essentially oversaw all global matters, more particularly those relating to international disputes. The body also sought to understand origins of World War I for purposes of ensuring that wars could be avoided in future (US Department of State, 2015).

To address food security concerns at the time, the League of Nations undertook a study which sought to understand the extent of food insecurity of nations, and the impacts of this on health of populations. In a report titled '*Nutrition and Public Health'* produced in 1935, it was revealed that the war and the on-going economic meltdown had serious impact in reducing availability of food globally, more particularly in countries of the developing world, which at the time, were referred to as poor countries (Simon, 2012). The League of Nations followed these findings by development a number of nutrition policies which had to be coordinated by various counties especially countries will high food insecurity status. The administrative body recommended that for purposes of increasing nutritional status of countries, food production had to be increased through promoting technological advances in

the agricultural sector (Simon, 2012 and Nangulu, 2009). The League also argued whether removing trade tariffs barriers between countries would not be responsive towards addressing food insecurity status of countries (Simon, 2012).

The years following 1930s adopted similar approach for ensuring availability of food towards the world with advancement of agricultural techniques to increase food production taking centre stage. However, the 1960s experienced a different course towards ensuring food security of nations. The rise of the green revolution movement helped boost agricultural productivity worldwide through the introduction of bio-engineered seeds that worked in conjunction with chemical fertilizers and heavy irrigation to increase crop yields (Sebby, 2010, United Nations, 2011 and Simon, 2012). It should be noted however that even though food production increased, a number of negative effects including degradation of natural resources widening of the income gap between wealthier and poor, small farmers (United Nations, 2011 and Sebby, 2010). The produced food also did not reach all the population of the developing world (Sebby, 2010). To address these concerns, the World Food Conference was convened in 1947, which made the first explicit acknowledgment that food insecurity was not an insignificant issue, but concerned the whole of mankind (Tsegay *et al*., 2014, Napoli, 2011 and Maxwell, 1996). The conference began to re-develop the concept of food insecurity to include other dimensions beyond the issue of availability. The debates on the definition of the concept began to include issues of access and utilisation of food. These need to be included as production of large quantities of food did not always suggest access to that food by the entire population.

The period following convening of the conference saw exponential growth in the development definitions of what constitutes food security. Tsegay *et al*., (2014: 6) point out that “the concept of food security has approximately 200 definitions”, which indicates that following the conference, various approaches were developed to address food insecurity. Amartya Sen also contributed to the various definitions of food insecurity by emphasising that “starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being not enough food to eat” (Sen, 1981: 1). From the late 1970s to late 1980s, central to the global discourse on food security was pillars of access, availability and quality of food being produced. It was for this reason in the World Food Summit (WFS) in November 1996, a new definition of food security encompassing all pillars were introduced. Food availability means sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports including food obtained through aid (FAO, 2008 and FAO, 1996). Food access suggests that people must always have to adequate economic, political, legal, and social resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Food quality

means that food eaten by households must have adequate diet that allows them to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met (Ziervogel and Frayne, 2011, FAO, 2008 and FAO, 1996).

The summit defined food security as a situation that "exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996: 2). This definition introduced a new pillar of food security, namely food stability (Alemu, 2015, Ziervogel and Frayne, 2011, Masuku and Sithole, 2009 and FAO, 1996). The position was that for people to be food secure, they must always have access to adequate food. They must not risk losing this access because of sudden shocks, threats or cyclical events (FAO, 1996).

In the late 1990s, the discourse on food security was greatly shaped by the development of the Millennium and Development Goals (MDGs), at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (The Presidency, 2011 and FAO, 1996). The countries who are signatories to the United Nations had to develop programmatic interventions to achieve targets set in the declaration. One of the goals was the MDG1 which aimed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. This MDG is in line with the definition of food security coined by the World Food Summit in 1996 in that it acknowledges pillars of access, availability, utilisation and food stability. These debates on climate change, food stability (sustainability), sustainable development goals have shaped discourse at global, regional, national and local levels. In the African region for example, several studies have been done focusing on issues of availability of fertile land, rural labour, gender, poverty, and income as well as food prices (Stats SA, 2019, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013 and The Presidency, 2011). This thinking began to lead to paradigm shift to the post-modern perspectives on food security, it also led to a debate on social systems which exist in societies directly and indirectly creating fertile ground for household food insecurity. The social systems of food security can be described through systems theory.

The discourse on systems theory first gained momentum in the 1940s when a number of theorists such as Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Alfred North Whitehead, Anatol Rapoport, Ralph Gerard, Kurt Lewin and Roy Grinker reacted against the reductionism that had begun the science landscape (Laszlo and Krippner, 1998 and Heylighen and Joslyn, 1991). Central to their arguments was that the world in which we live is connected through complex systems which are open to and interact and form relationships with their environments (Laszlo and Krippner, 1998). With this understanding, systems theory advocates that rather than reducing

entities to properties of their parts or elements, the focus must be on the arrangement of and relations between the parts which connect them into a whole (Heylighen and Joslyn, 1991).

The systems theory is important in the study as it provides a trans-disciplinary framework for a critical and normative exploration of the relationships between people's behaviours and actions and the environment in which they live (Friedman and Allen, 2010 and Parsons, 1951). By providing such analysis, the theory assists in dissecting the complex dynamic relationships that exists between human beings and the environments in which they live. Understanding these complex dynamic relationships require a multi-faceted, holistic approach and systems theory provides such approach by not reducing the dynamics to a level of individual stimuli (Laszlo and Krippner, 1998). As discussed elsewhere in the study, underlying root causes of household food insecurity vary, and the causes themselves are dynamic. The livelihood strategies which households employ to ensure access to food always involve a series of complex systems which cannot be understood by looking at one while neglecting the relationship it might have with the other. These strategies are what Amartya Sen through his book titled '*Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation'* refer to as entitlements (Sen, 1981). These entitlements are a "set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces" (Sen, 1981: 497). They are a "full range of goods and services that he or she can acquire by converting his or her endowments: - assets and resources, including labour power through exchange entitlement mappings" (Devereux, 2001: 246). In terms of food security, this involves "everything that a person has that can bring food on the table; it could be in the form of food or non-food material" (Muzerengi *et al.*, 2021: 2). Sen (1981) observes that famine results not from shortage of food but from failure of entitlement. This view shifts away from the orthodox, Malthusian focus on seeing population growth as a problem, but rather maintaining optimism on the capacity of people to deal with threats that confront their lives (Rubi, 2010 and Devereux, 2001).

For Sen (1981), people experience food insecurity when their complete right set does not give them sufficient food for survival. This is compounded by the fact that their power to negotiate becomes less when they are in poverty. To deal with poverty and food insecurity, people explore various ways to survive including finding employment, selling their belongings to get money and in some instances, be given money or gifts by others to buy food for their families (Ruiters and Wildschutt, 2010, Devereux, 2001, Muzerengi *et al.*, 2021). The ways (entitlements) in which people obtain food is into four (4) groups namely, production-based entitlement (growing food), trade-based entitlement (buying food), own-labour entitlement

(working for food) and inheritance and transfer entitlement - being given food by others (Muzerengi *et al.*, 2021, Devereux, 2010 and Sen, 1981).

These categories clearly indicates that the entitlement approach largely defines food security from the access point of view. For instance, the trade-based and own-labour entitlements largely deals with people's ability to access food through income derived from employment opportunities. The approach also explains that food availability does not always translate to food access. This is particularly true in South Africa where the country is "supposedly a food-secure' nation, producing enough calories to adequately feed every one of its 53 million citizens." However, "despite some progress since the birth of democracy in the country in 1994, one in four people currently suffers hunger on a regular basis and more than half of the population live in such precarious circumstances that they are at risk of going hungry" (Tsegay *et al*., 2014: 6).

A similar situation is explained by the Muzerengi *et al* (2021) in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland South Province where even though there is enough food available in the supermarkets, this is not accessible to everyone. The entitlements approach therefore explains that access to food is largely prohibited by existing legal and policy frameworks developed by a country. For instance, in Zimbabwe, food insecurity has been declared as national disaster. To address this, the government has put in place various statutes that regulates the food market including the importation of food from the neighbouring countries within the Sub-Saharan region. The same has been done by the South African government by introducing the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations in 2019, thereby regulating the foodstuffs intended for both infants and young children (FAO, 2022 and Muzerengi *et al*., 2021). In both instances, the regulations had adverse implications for people to easily access food as restricted importation of food led to increase in certain food prices. Muzerengi *et al* (2021: 2) posits that the regulations stood as a "barrier between food availability and food entitlement, that is, the law acts as a barrier that restricts people from getting food from the shops, farms and neighbours only to mention a few. Even though food is available, it might not be easy to access it because of either exorbitant prices or inaccessible roads leading to hunger and starvation of the general populace."

While Amartya Sen has made significant contribution to food security discourse, particularly by shifting it away from the modern debates with fixation on food supplies to ability and/or inability of people to acquire food, several criticisms have been levelled against this approach. The early critics focused on the relationship between 'food availability decline' and 'exchange entitlement decline', which was said to be complex and refuted the assertion that "famines were not triggered by catastrophic declines in food production or food availability"

(Devereux, 2001: 247). The critique was based on the interpretation of data of various famines, which was reported to refute the assertion by Sen on famines and food production. This complexity was compounded by the ambiguities in the definition of entitlements over time. Devereux (2001: 252) observes that the approach was only concerned with the "legal ownership by individuals of alienable commodities" while ignoring the possibilities for "claims over resources such as access and usufruct rights, as well as contexts where property rights are exercised institutionally, such as common property regimes."

In this study, the entitlements approach is important as it uses individuals or households as unit of analysis. This allows for critical analysis of food security which engages the social relations and power inequalities that exist at micro, household levels, and how this power is exercised by different individuals within households to access resources, and eventually address food insecurity. Devereux (2001: 254) points out that "the distribution of endowments - and of decision-making power over both endowments and entitlements - is typically extremely skewed and is likely to be a source of tension and conflict rather than consensus." Secondly, the approach focusses on the coping mechanisms of households facing food shortages. This is important as it places at the centre, the capabilities of people in dealing with food insecurity. It also opens an opportunity to move beyond the economic analysis of food, to include social and cultural dimensions of food, which in Sen's approach are defined through inheritance and transfer entitlement.

Sen's approach on entitlements can be linked closely to the complexity theory. The two (2) theories are closely linked to each other in that they put at the centre all the mutually dependant parts that are used by people to earn a living. Equally, these begin to understand households as not a unitary unit with common interests, level of access to resources and decision-making powers, but as an environment where there exist individuals with different levels of vulnerabilities, unequal power relations and constant fight for resources to address food insecurity. These household dynamics can be best understood through complexity theory which has its origins from the chaos theory which developed in the 1960s from the work of the meteorologist Edward Lorenz who developed a meteorological model based on differential equations (Valle, 2000).

At the heart of complexity theory is the understanding that complex behaviours emerge from simple rules, and that all complex systems are networks of many interdependent parts, which interact according to those rules (Valle, 2000 and Levy, 1994). Complexity theory borrows from underpinning meanings and fundamentals of chaos. It "recognises that numerous independent elements continuously interact and spontaneously organize and reorganize themselves into more and more elaborate structures over time" (Valle, 2000: 4).

These elements and systems can naturally evolve to a state of self-organized criticality in which behaviour lies marginally between order and disorder. Complexity theory seeks to reconcile the unpredictability of non-linear dynamic systems with a sense of underlying order and structure (Kiel and Elliott, 1997 and Levy, 1994).

In the study, complexity theory provides a framework for understanding food security and livelihood dynamics and nuances in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal. The theory assists in providing meaning among other things on why households employ certain livelihood strategies over others, the behaviours that influence their actions and non-actions, whether these are planned or *adhoc* (happenstance) food security strategies.

The behavioural theory seeks to understand observable behaviour of people (Morris *et al.*, 2012 and Prager, 2012). The theory observes that due to the circumstances that people are faced with, they then learn to respond to the stimuli of their environment. The more they interact with the environment, that interaction then begins to shape their behaviour (Morris *et al.*, 2012 and de Mar, 2003). The study explores ways in which people learn to behave in particular ways as they seek to address food shortages in their households. How do the responses they take gradually shape their behaviours, and what kinds of behaviours do they develop? This is important as it provides an alternative basis for understanding why people take certain actions (livelihood options), and not take other actions, the experiences they might have had before which ultimately shape their behaviours and responses to their state of being food insecure. The analysis of behaviours of people and their environment begins to unpack factors relating to existing societal diversity, conflicts and contestations, gender and sexuality which are crucial in food security discourse. These factors have largely been situated within the post-modern perspectives and viewpoints.

Post-modernism is an indefinable, contentious term which was originally invented in the 1940s as a reaction to the modernist project (Nicol, 2009 and Appignanesi and Garratt, 2004). Perspectives and arguments of postmodernism gained momentum in the 1960s, and these sought to “describe new sensibility in literature which either rejected modernist attitudes and techniques or adapted or extended them” (Nicol, 2009: 1). In the following decades, literature on postmodernism grew largely to other disciplines such as social theory, philosophy, history and media studies. While the different disciplines have varying meanings (which in some cases are complex, illusive and confusing) of what postmodernism entails, postmodernity is understood in the study as a term which appreciates diversity because of economic, cultural, social, and technological forces that have largely changed people’s behaviours, perceptions, actions and the way they feel (Nicol, 2009 and Lyotard, 1984).

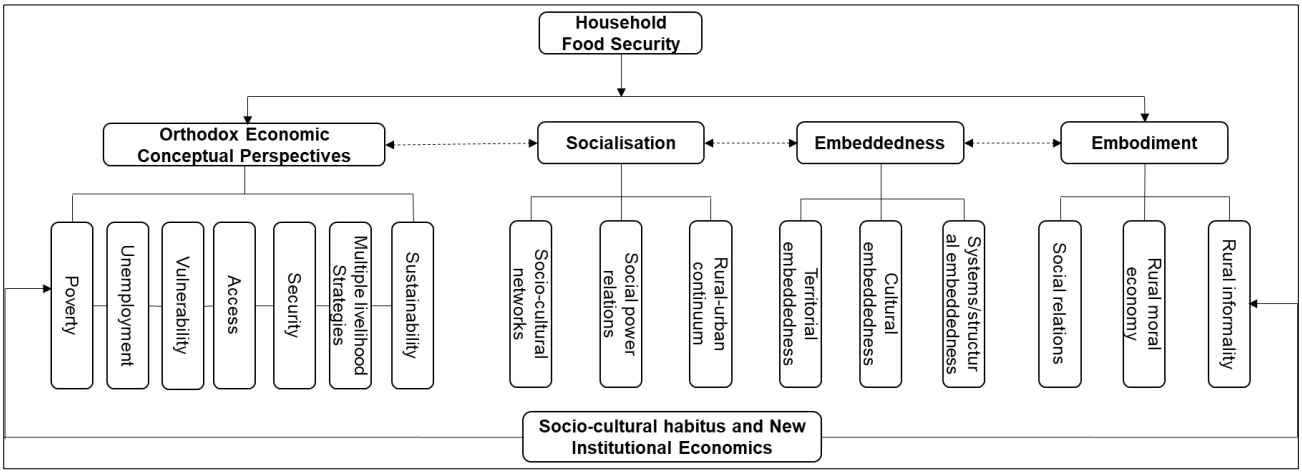
The discourse on food security has shifted since the World Food Conference of 1974. Initially, the discourse focused on the need to have food supply at global and the national level. In the 1950s, the thrust was on ensuring food first to nations. In the last 30 years, the concept of not ensuring food availability, but also access and utilisation of food (Maxwell, 1996). During this time, the notion of ensuring sustainable access and availability of food was introduced as a basis for redefining food insecurity and interventions for addressing food insecure countries. This also led to introduction of new literature into various issues such as gender, soft infrastructure, HIV/Aids, power, climate change, access to resources, politics, and other related food security issues (Appignanesi and Garratt, 2004, Maxwell, 1996 and David, 1990). Analysis of these issues began to move beyond the narrow, structuralist discussions on food security to include socio-political and cultural dimensions. This study has sought to use the post-modern viewpoints to unpack household food security dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region. These perspectives are important as they unpacked complexities and nuances of food dynamics beyond the economic dimension of food. The postmodern perspectives led to the discussion of diverse factors of food security, for example, institutions, norms, values, cultures, gender, in rural areas. The exploration of these issues revealed the complexity of rurality and its behavioural dynamics. This complexity is illustrated by various concepts which underlie the concept of food security. This section of this study discusses various concepts to better understand micro, nuances of food security.

4.3. The Conceptual Analytical Framework of Food Security

The above discussions illustrate the multidisciplinary nature of the concept of food security. The concept is embedded in a variety of disciplines such as economic, sociological, cultural, or anthropological and environmental disciplines (Molm, 2010, Cohen and Leung, 2009 and Jordan, 2004). The multidisciplinary nature of the subject of food security illustrates the complexity that is enmeshed in the subject given that there is no singular action or intervention that can be used to address effects of food shortages. This therefore suggests that unlike in the past where there was an inclination towards the supply-side approaches of food security, there is a need to look beyond these and understand the social, cultural, or anthropological approaches to addressing the food insecurity. This is critical given that it has been illustrated in many reports that food availability does not always translate to food access and stability for all. Taking poverty for instance, it is directly linked to food insecurity, and has economic, social, and anthropological underpinnings entrenched in its nature of existence (Jordan, 2004). Efforts to address poverty would have to be multi-pronged, and not only focus on economic and employment approach, but the must include social, cultural, and political dimensions of poverty.

Similar understanding needs to be employed in understanding dynamics of food security particularly in areas with limited or nonexistence of economic and employment opportunities. It is for this reason that this study discusses various concepts as an analytical framework to understand food dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region. The analytical framework is developed from two (2) key foundations, namely orthodox, economic concepts and social-cultural concepts which underlined in socialisation, embeddedness and embodiment. The first part of the conceptual analytical framework discusses the orthodox, economic concepts and the second part discusses social and cultural concepts of food security. The conceptual analytical framework is illustrated in figure 4.1 below.

Fig 4.1: Analytical framework for food security in the Umkhanyakude region



4.3.1. Orthodox Economic Analytical Framework

This section of the chapter discusses the orthodox, economic concepts of food security. These concepts include poverty, unemployment, vulnerability, access, security, multiple livelihoods and sustainability.

a) Poverty

Poverty, which has largely been defined by Suich (2012: 2) as “lack of, or inability to achieve, a socially acceptable standard of living”, or the possession of insufficient resources to meet basic needs has existed for centuries. The studies by Green (2012) and Verenini and Oliveira (2012) indicate poverty increased rapidly in the period following the industrial revolution mid-17th and late 18th century. This is the period when population and average incomes began to exhibit exponential, sustained growth due to improved technological advances in industries (Morris *et al.*, 2012). Towns and cities as economic hubs began to attract large numbers of people who moved into these areas in search for economic and employment opportunities. It is for this reason that cities such as London, Portsmouth, Manchester, Birmingham,

Frankfurt, Detroit, and Texas grew rapidly during this period because of growth in production levels (Morris, *et al.*, 2012).

Interestingly, not all those who moved into these areas managed to obtain employment opportunities (Morris, *et al.*, 2012 and Ashworth, 1954). During the same period, many cities were plagued by social issues such as crime, grime, drug abuse, informal settlements, and informal trading areas (Cherry, 1974 and Ashworth, 1954). This was particularly the case in cities of the developing world where the social ills began to exponentially grow and were commonplace. Several reasons can be attributed to prevalence of social ills in cities of the developing world namely colonialisation, apartheid, globalisation, political instabilities, structural adjustment programmes as well as non-industrialisation (Morris, *et al.*, 2012 and Owusu, 2007). Taking apartheid for instance, through the repressive laws, this led to the establishing of native, informal settlements at the outskirts of towns and cities (Huchzermeyer, 2002 and Malinga, 2000). These informal settlements lacked social and economic opportunities, and as a result, led to increased crime, grime, drug abuse and high levels of poverty (van Ham and Tammaru, 2021).

The above discussion of poverty is based on the understanding of the concept from the economic point of view, which limits poverty to issues of lack of income and unemployment. It is worth noting that studies in the 1980s began to move beyond this reductionist definition of the concept of poverty to social and cultural dimensions of the concept (Ojong, 2011 and Chambers, 1995). Chambers (1995: 173) for example points out that "the realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic", and thus measuring incomes as indicators of poverty, though important, does not reflect all the dynamics and complexities of poverty. Krantz (2001) and Chambers (1995) observe that poverty must be understood within the context of resources that people can access and claim, the conditions in which they have access to these resources and the level of choice that they have on what kind of resources to claim (Krantz, 2001 and Chambers, 1995). It also includes the relationships or social networks that people have with each other to build their capabilities to access resources to address poverty, food insecurity and other household needs. In this study, the understanding of poverty beyond the economic analysis is centred on culture of poverty thesis (Jordan, 2004).

The culture of poverty is premised on the notion that poverty stems out not from the lack of income but is a result of "deficient character of the poor along with their deviant behaviour and the resultant self-reinforcing environment that restrict their access to economic viability and success" (Jordan, 2004: 19). Gans (1960) in Patterson (1994: 116) also argue that being poor means "an economically and politically deprived population whose behaviour, values -

and pathologies are adaptations to their existential situation, just as the behaviour, values, and pathologies of the affluent are adaptations to their existential situation." Poverty includes vulnerability, inequities, powerlessness, and lack of access to social amenities such as health and education facilities (Suich, 2012, Laderchi *et al*., 2003 and Davis *et al.*, 2001). Laderchi *et al* (2003) point out that four (4) different approaches must be used in defining the notion of poverty. These approaches include monetary, capability, social exclusion and participatory approaches. The monetary approaches "identifies poverty with a shortfall in consumption (or income) from some poverty line" (Laderchi *et al*., 2003: 247). The capability approach focusses on the ability of individuals to achieve better living conditions. This approach "rejects monetary income as its measure of well-being, and instead focuses on indicators of the freedom to live a valued life" (Laderchi *et al*., 2003: 253). The social exclusion approach involves processes of marginalization and deprivation which lead to people being wholly or partially excluded from actively and meaningfully. Lastly, the participatory approach differs from the conventional monetary and capability approaches in that it "aims to get people themselves to participate in decisions about what it means to be poor and the magnitude of poverty."

The above discussion illustrates the complexity of the notion of poverty. It is important that the concept is not understood from the simplistic, reductionist explanations, but must employ an all-encompassing approach in understanding poverty. The approach must seek to move beyond the economic analysis to include multiple strategies and networks used by people, particularly in rural areas to access food. This will ensure that programmatic interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity in rural areas are do not only focus on economic dimension of poverty such as income and unemployment, but also social and cultural dimensions of poverty such as the behaviour, values, beliefs, attitudes and social relations. However, this does not underplay the important of economic dimension of food such as unemployment, which remains prevalent in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region and South Africa as a whole.

b) Unemployment

High levels of unemployment remain one of the commonplace development challenges in the world (van Ham and Tammaru, 2021, Krantz, 2001 and Thow *et al*., 2018). It is a challenge that has long existed following the introduction of the labour system during the mechanisation of mass production (industrial revolution) period in the 18th century (Jin, 2008, Hackett, 1992 and Montagna, 1981). The period prior to the mass mechanisation experienced no unemployment as the production of the goods was not systemized (Jin, 2008 and Montagna, 1981). The period was largely characterised by agricultural activities where

farmers produced their own goods and goods for their landlords, and did have their labour paid for (Montagna, 1981). The invention of machines for production of goods, use of steam and other kinds of power and the adoption of the factory system necessitated the need for labour to administer the machines (Hackett, 1992). This meant employment of people into factories and farms for production of goods and services.

The period following the industrial revolution experienced even higher rates of unemployment. The great depression of 1929 is one example where there existed high levels of unemployment globally (Taylor 2008 and Margo, 1993). In the United States for example, unemployment rates were reported to have increased from 3.2% in 1929 to 8.7% in 1930 and 15.9% in 1932 (Margo, 1993). These continued to increase in the following years to a point that in 1937, a New Deal was introduced for purposes of steadying alarming rates of unemployment (Taylor, 2008). While the New Deal led to sustained economic growth, high rates of unemployment continued to soar. Steytler and Powell (2010) observe that the one factor that will also always mar the New Deal reputation is unemployment which continued to be approximately at 10% following the introduction of boost measures to the economy. The growing economy could not absorb surplus labour following the shutting down of factories, warehouses and railroads. Equally, the economy began to move from move from labour intensive mass production to introduction of machines and equipment to speed-up recovery. The increasing unemployment rates continued well into the 1960s and 1980s (Steytler and Powell, 2010 and Taylor, 2008).

In the recent past, the widely acknowledged economic meltdown in 2008 further increased levels of unemployment. This meltdown had similar ramifications as that of 1929, particularly in countries of the developing world (Saville, 2014, Mouhammed, 2011 and Steytler and Powell, 2010). In South Africa for example, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country was reported to have plummeted from 7.4% and 2.8% in the first two quarters of 2009 (Steytler and Powell, 2010). During the same time, levels of unemployment rose from 21.9 to 24.3% in 2009. In the following year, it worsened even more. The loss of 171 000 jobs elevated unemployment rate to 25.2% in the first quarter of 2010 (Steytler and Powell, 2010). Today, unemployment levels are reported to be approximately 34.5% (Stats SA, 2022). The high levels of unemployment have adverse effects on the ability of people to access food and other household needs.

In defining the concept of poverty, it is important to understand its theoretical foundations. The concept can be traced back to theories such as classical economic theory (Mouhammed, 2011, Beissinger and Moeller, 2000, Brunner and Meltzer, 1978 and Viner, 1936). The classical economic theory provides the premise for analyses of the labour market.

Mouhammed (2011: 100) points out that central to the theory is the notion of “demand and supply of labour.” The decline in the production of labour leads to increased demand for labour (Mouhammed, 2011). At the point where the demand meets the supply of labour, this signals full employment (Mouhammed, 2011 and Viner, 1936). At this point, which is also referred to as equilibrium, there may be frictional and/or involuntary unemployment, which essentially is a result of dynamic nature of the labour markets such as random fluctuations in demand for labour (Mouhammed, 2011 and Phelps, 1995). Both the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and South Africa (Stats SA) outlines definition of unemployment. These institutions define unemployment as a “person who amongst other things is not working, currently available for work and seeking work” (Byrne and Strobl, 2001: 1). Stats SA (2014b: 19) further states that a person is unemployed if they are not employed in the reference week; actively look for worked or tried to start a business in the four weeks preceding the survey interview; would have been able to start work or a business in the reference week; and had not actively looked for work in the past four weeks but had a job or business to start at a definite date in the future.”

This study explains that while this definition covers both economic and employment aspects, it does not include social, political, and cultural dimensions of food security. These dimensions are considered important in understanding food dynamics particularly in rural areas where searching for employment opportunities is not as meaningful as it is in towns or cities (Byrne and Strobl, 2001). Searching for job opportunities is also said to be costly in these areas as people might have to travel long distances, and in turn use substantial portion of their financial resources on transport. This then raises a question on how to best define the concept of unemployment for purposes of acknowledging rural dynamics where people might be willing to work but are not looking for work because of limited or non-existent economic opportunities in these areas. This study adopts a broad definition of unemployment which includes all factors of unemployment such as people who are unemployed but are actively searching for employment opportunities, those who are unemployed and are not searching and those willing to work but are not searching for employment opportunities.

The above discussion illustrates pivotal relationship that exists between the concept of unemployment and food insecurity. Whereas the study argues for the importance of social and cultural dimensions of food insecurity, it also emphasises importance of access to income for the ability of households to access food on sustainable basis (Zhang and Lamichhane, 2014 and Green, 2012). The concept is therefore used in the study to unpack the structural, economic dynamics of household food security. This use of the concept is

important for setting the premise through which to understand related vulnerabilities which households are exposed due to their lack of access to income.

c) Vulnerability

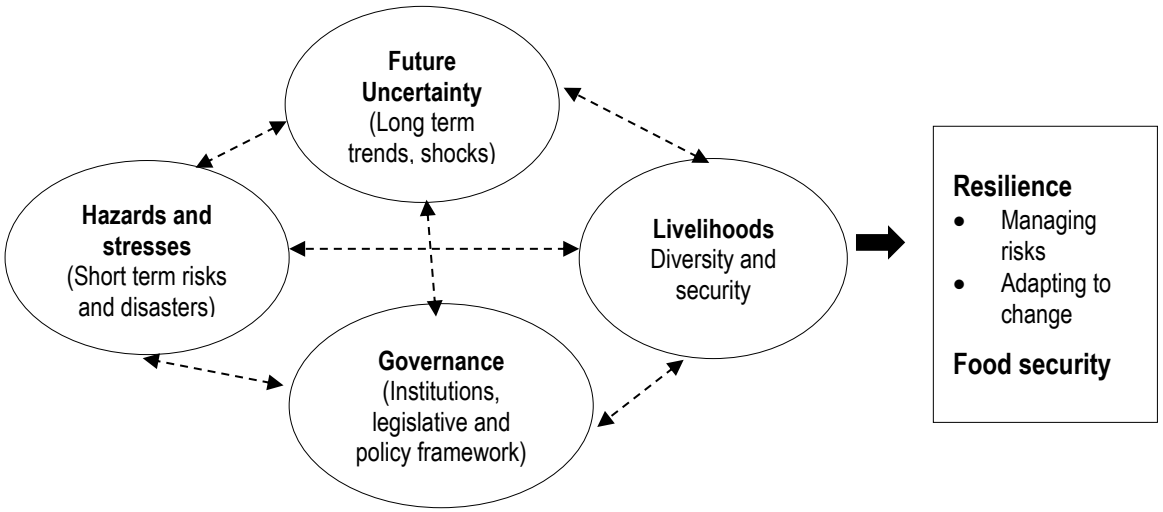
The notion of vulnerability is closely related to poverty and unemployment. Dissimilar to poverty, which has been widely studies since the inception of industrial revolution, the discourse on vulnerability only began receiving some currency in the early 1990s in the discipline of environmental sciences when ecological theorists began raising concerns regarding the increasing environmental hazards such as changes in the climate and weather patterns (Christmann *et al.*, 2012). The ecologists such as Ulrich Beck (1986) began to introduce new thinking which shifted away from the commonplace view of a secure world to one which acknowledged uncertainty, insecurities and environmental risks (Christmann *et al.,* 2012 and Beck, 2009). The subsequent work from writers such as Luhmann (1991) and Japp (1996) refined perspectives of Ulrich Beck. These ecologists explained that the world is susceptible to dangers and risks which must be mitigated to protect environmental ecosystems. A specific assertion was put forward that the risks to the environment must not be understood as uncertainty, but as vulnerability. Vulnerability was said to be a more appropriate concept as it was measurable and is largely influenced by decision making processes, while the normative concept of uncertainty is not easy to measure (Christmann *et al.*, 2012).

While the concept initially dominated the environmental sciences landscape, it gradually received attention in other disciplines such as social and economic disciplines. This was a result of realisation that people are not only vulnerable to natural risks but are also vulnerable to economic and social uncertainties (Moser, 1998). This literature grew extensively within the livelihood discourse which sought to understand how people can be assisted to move out of poverty by focusing on their capabilities and assets (Cannon *et al.*, 2004 and Chambers, 1995). It was in the livelihood discourse that vulnerability and poverty were sometimes used interchangeably. This however received a backlash from some of the writers such as Chambers (1995) who argued that vulnerability is the after effect or is a result of concepts of poverty. The central thrust is that when an individual is poor, their state of poverty exposes them to a myriad of circumstances (Moser, 1998 and Chambers, 1995). Vulnerability was used as an analytical framework to understand as one dimension of deprivation along with poverty, physical weakness, social inferiority, isolation, powerlessness and humiliation (Cannon *et al.*, 2004, Moser, 1998 and Chambers, 1995). Thus, vulnerability spans more than just lack of income or poverty but involves individual's exposure and feeling of defenceless (Chambers, 1995). It is dynamic and not static as poverty is. Moser (1998: 10)

observes that “vulnerability is more dynamic and better captures change processes as people move in and out of poverty.”

This study considers the discourse from natural and social sciences to understand the concept of vulnerability in food security. The study borrows from the work of Chambers (1998) and the Department for International Development- DfID (2000) that vulnerability includes seasonality, trends, and shocks that affect people’s livelihoods. It is a state that comprises circumstances and processes which determine the exposure and susceptibility of an individual to risks and hazards, as well as the capacity to respond effectively to the risks, be it physical, social, economic or environmental risks (Christmann *et al.,* 2012 and Birkmann, 2007). This definition acknowledges the broader economic and social factors which determine the facets of vulnerability, and the capabilities of people to respond or adapt to these (Pasteur, 2011). This begins to introduce the concept of resilience, which essentially measures the capacity of households to respond and adapt in the face of risks, trends and shocks (Feeny, *et al.*, 2013, Christmann *et al.*, 2012 and Pasteur, 2011). The concept of vulnerability and capacity of people to deal with shocks is summarised in figure 4.2 below.

Fig 4.2: Vulnerability and resilience framework



Source: Pasteur (2011: 3)

The vulnerability and resilience framework outlines the premise within which to understand the various risks that people are susceptible to. It outlines both the internal and internal risks which affect people’s capabilities. The external risks include exposure to resist shocks, stress and risks that are influenced by elements such as institutions, policy legislative frameworks (Pasteur, 2011 and Krantz, 2001). The internal risks involve feeling of defencelessness, lack of means to cope without suffering physical illness, economic impoverishment, humiliation and psychological harm (Krantz, 2001, Moser 1998 and Chambers, 1995). To address

vulnerability, it is important to understand both the internal, individual risks and the broader policy and legislative landscape and its effects on food security (Christmann *et al.*, 2012, Ellis, 2003 and DfID, 2000). Cannon *et al* (2004: 4) point out that the following needs to be explored in determining the level of vulnerability of individuals; well-being (nutritional status, mental health; livelihood and resilience (assets and capital, income, education), self-protection (degree of protection afforded by capability and willingness to for example build a safe home), social protection (relationship and level of support from society), social and political networks and institutions (institutional environment setting up good conditions for dealing with shocks.

The concept of vulnerability is important for this study as it provides premise for analysing elements of food insecurity in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region and importantly, the strategies (capacities) which are used by households to access food. The vulnerability and resilience framework allows for analysis of future household vulnerability to food insecurity. Scaramozzino (2006: 1) points out that the framework is "not simply concerned with current outcomes but looks at their future incidence. Hence, it looks at food insecurity *ex ante*, rather than examining it as an ex-post outcome." The concept also acknowledges the existence of different levels of vulnerabilities within the households. Members have different levels of vulnerabilities with regards to food and their capacity to respond to food insecurity vary (Abdu-Raheem and Worth, 2011 and Ellis, 2003). This is important to understand and ensure that interventions to address household food insecurity do not treat members as similar, but also acknowledge existing vulnerabilities within the households. Lastly, the concept underlines that the statues of households may change over time (Moser, 1998). For example, a household might be food insecure because of ill-health of a member who provides income to buy food. However, once that individual is healed and in good health and is declared fit to work, the level of vulnerability decreases. The fluidity of vulnerability status of households suggests that time to time, households' access to food will shift in accordance with their level of vulnerability (Moser, 1998).

d) Access

The concept of access is widely used in various disciplines such as economics, social sciences, environmental sciences, engineering and property rights (Ribot and Peluso, 2003 and Penchansky, 1981). The concept was first coined in the property rights theory which shaped the discourse on how property must be appropriated, accumulated, transferred and distributed (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). For property rights theorists, access and property are intertwined. Whenever one seeks to understand access, they must understand it in relation to property which is a "civil right" people are entitled to because of their participation in the economy and as stipulated by law (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 155). The understanding of

access in property studies brings to the fore issues of power and ownership. The individual's access (or ownership) to property is largely defined by the level of power which can be defined by various factors such as financial resources (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). The individual's power can be better explained through social sciences which further developed the concept of access beyond the property rights approach.

For social scientists, access is defined by bundles and webs of powers that enable people to gain and benefit from various activities for purposes of maintaining a livelihood (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). This access to livelihoods changes over time due to internal and external vulnerabilities. As power changes, so does the level of access to various resources by individuals or households. This fluid nature of power can be traced within the socio-political space where changes in "political-economic circumstances" give way to "change of term of access" and in the long run, this leads to even change on those individuals or groups who have power which benefit them to access to resources (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 158). Michel Foucault in his writings on power, knowledge and governmentality, acknowledges fluidity of power relations. Foucault (1978) in Ribot and Peluso (2003: 158) observes that power has much to do with "positionality and the particular imbrications of men and things." The analysis of power brings the attention of wider social dynamics and relationships that can thwart and/or allow people to access or benefit from resources (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). Whereas power will always be present in any social relationship, it is worth noting that power dynamics are context specific, and efforts to address access needs to be customised and respond directly to the environment.

This understanding of power and access illustrates the importance of these concepts for household food security in rural areas. Access has been identified in numerous studies as one of the crucial pillars of food security along with food availability and food utilisation (Battersby, 2012, Masuku and Sithole, 2009 and FAO, 2008). In food security studies, access to food means both economic and physical access (Battersby, 2012 and FAO, 2008). On the one hand, households need money to buy food (economic access), and on the other, they need to have easy access (physical access) to where food is located, be it at the local supermarket, local community convenient shop (also commonly known as *spaza* shops). Both economic and physical access are also influenced by several factors such as food prices, poverty, unemployment, political instability, climate and legal and policy frameworks (Thow *et al*., 2018, FAO, 2017, Kirsten, 2015 and Arezki and Brückner, 2011). Understanding both these types of access to food is important as availability of food does not always suggest physical access to it. FAO (2008: 1) points out that "adequate supply of food at the national or international level does not in itself guarantee household level food security." In instances

where people are poor, unemployed or have insufficient incomes, their access to food, regardless of whether they are near food supply store, will be constrained. It is for this reason that efforts to address household food security must not only focus on economic access (income, expenditure, markets, and prices), but also access to resources such as land, water, finance, knowledge and technology, decision making and soft infrastructure networks to achieve secure food security status.

e) Security

The concept of security first emerged in the civilian or military studies in the period following cold war between 1914 and 1947 (Brauch, 2011, Naidoo, 2001 and Cooper, 2000). Given the war that had gripped countries and the perceived conflict between the countries affiliated with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet Union, it became important that security, human security, needed to be prioritised (Naidoo, 2001). The growing concerns centred on how the state had to maintain peace and security for its countries. Countries, particularly those affiliated with NATO decided that more resources needed to be allocated towards security for protecting sovereignty of their countries. Obtaining human security was used as a motivating factor for countries to pledge and allocate resources to challenge each other under the auspices of either NATO or the Soviet Union (Naidoo, 2001 and Mattoo, 2000). Subsequent policies and interventions were geared towards strengthening security measures and achieving human rights (Coates, 2014 and Gokmen, 2014). This culminated into a situation where more resources were allocated towards ensuring security of the sovereignty of countries. Human security was at the centre and used as motivating factor for countries to pledge and allocate resources to challenge each other under the auspices of either North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the Soviet Union. This then paved way for policy development and programmes aimed strengthening security measures, which was in large part pioneered and implemented by the government. The motive was to create peace, welfare and some instances develop human rights (Mattoo, 2000). The state or government played a fundamental role in safeguarding security and sovereignty of countries. It developed and overseen implementation of policy programmes.

It is worth noting that while countries had common goal of human security, this did not suggest that they wholly agreed on all policy directions. Some of the policies sow divisions between countries as different states competed for economic and political power, and this resulting in severe decline in international trade and bilateral relations between countries (Gokmen, 2014 and Coates, 2014). This led to debates as to whether security needed to be defined beyond human security and state sovereignty (Naidoo, 2001). This therefore broadened conceptualisation of the concept of security to include economic, social and

environmental security (Dornelles 2002 and Naidoo, 2001). While the state remained the central role player, there were also demands for inclusion of other actors. Naidoo (2001: 2) points out that the greater emphasis was placed on the "interdependency and trans-nationalisation of non-state actors." The state could no longer continue to be a sole role player but needed to be rolled-back and allow the private sector and organised communities to play central role in ensuring security (Naidoo, 2001 and Cooper, 2000). This led to rise in regional economic blocs, multinational corporations (MNCs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which played an important role in fostering new bilateral trade flows between countries (Gokmen, 2014 and Brauch, 2011). The new trade relations also brought with them risks and threats, which had to be managed by the state. This period largely redefined the role of the state in administering the economy, relationships between countries and ensuring security and sovereignty.

In defining the concept of security, this study borrows from the Dictionary (2015: 1) which defines security as "freedom from danger, risk, *etc*.; safety." This definition relates to the initial development of the concept in the miliary studies where the concern has always been to limit risks and threats to human security and state sovereignty. Within the food security discourse, security relates to the level of risks against assets and capabilities of individuals (Rudolph *et al.*, 2012). This includes assets such as income, education levels and social relationships that individuals always use to access food. Any threats to these assets may lead to increased level of vulnerability of individuals. The higher the level of vulnerability, the lower the level of security and *vice versa*. Households often must develop multiple ways to reduce their levels of vulnerability. These multiple ways are referred to in this study as multiple livelihood strategies.

f) Multiple Livelihood Strategies

The concept of multiple livelihood strategies emanates from the livelihoods discourse which largely grew in the mid-1980s to early 1990s (Flynn, 2004, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson, 1999, Ashley and Carney, 1998, Moser, 1998 and Chambers, 1995 and Chambers and Conway, 1991). During this period, the discourse on concepts such as poverty began to take a sharp turn from draconian poverty relief programmes such as the Structural Adjustment to the recognition of much more localised and multi-pronged approaches (Ashley and Carney, 1998). This was based on acknowledgement of the importance of community participation, which essentially encouraged the involvement of communities in the decision-making processes (Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson, 1999 and Ashley and Carney, 1998). In its simplest form, a livelihood suggests means of earning a living (Chambers and Conway, 1991). The Advisory Panel of the World Commission on Environment and Development

(WCED) in 1987 explained that a livelihood is “adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs” and, includes ownership and/or “access to resources and income earning activities” (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 5).

In the context of poverty where income-earning activities might be limited, people are forced to find other ways to earn a livelihood. These other ways have in many instances have been referred to as informality, which initially were seen as being problematic. However, in the 1980s, this view began to shift, and informality was viewed as an opportunity that offers the poor and those excluded by the formal sector to earn a living (Ojong, 2011 and Chambers, 1995). In the wake that the poor cannot access opportunities, more particularly employment opportunities, they resort to diversifying their means of living (livelihood strategies) to among other things increase their incomes, reduce vulnerability, and improve quality of their lives (DCoGTA, 2013 and Ojong, 2011). Chambers (1995: 192) likens people (the poor) to “foxes” which have a “portfolio of activities”, as the various members of the household all are continually seeking “different sources of food, fuel, animal fodder, cash and support in different ways in different places at different times of the year.” They differ from those working in the formal sector who often have one single source of livelihood. They, the poor, have multiple livelihood strategies.

In this study, multiple livelihood strategies are defined as various activities that individuals are involved in to earn a living (Ojong, 2011 and Owusu, 2007). This concept is fundamentally important for this study as it provides an analytical framework for better understanding livelihoods of individuals and households engaged in both the formal and informal economy, as well as capturing dynamics that come with the dual involvement of individuals and households for purposes of always ensuring access to food, and in so doing achieving status of sustainable access to food. Owusu (2007: 450) point out that it is important to acknowledge the “usefulness of the informal economy and the survival approaches” in addressing poverty and vulnerabilities that confront them.

g) Sustainability

The concept of sustainability has received colossal attention in the last thirty (30) years. While substantial literature on this concept was generated following the Brundtland Report of 1987, Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) argue that the concept was originally coined years earlier than the report. It was developed in the 17th century in the forestry industry in Germany, where the concept meant “never harvesting more than what the forest yields in new growth” (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010: 3437). The German farmers were concerned about “about their prey becoming extinct” and ensuring that soil remained fertile for future yields (*Ibid*). In the following years, the concept was widely developed in various disciplines including social,

economic, political and ecological sciences. The commonplace definition of the concept through the World Conservation Strategy of 1980, the Brundtland Report of 1987 and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio of 1992. The popular known Brundtland Commission Report of 1987 titled "*Our Common Future*" began to note the negative impacts of efforts by humans to grow economies on natural environment and advocated for the need to manage adverse damage of effects of industrialisation (United Nations, 2010, Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010, Adams, 2006 and Harris, 2003). The WECD (1987) in (Harris, 2000: 5) defined sustainability as the "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." At the centre of this concept is the emphasis of the "long-term stability of the economy and environment; this is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision-making process" (Emas, 2015: 2).

The concept has not been developed without criticisms. Central to the criticisms was that the central pillars of the concept were contradictory in nature, and this raised a concern on how these could be balanced during implementation (United Nations, 2010 and Harris 2003 and 2000). Harris (2000: 5) argues that the definition of the concept is normative and makes it "impossible to use it for operational purposes." There also exists ambiguity in the definition of the concept based on the point of the perspective being used, namely, economic, social or environmental perspective. The economic perspective for example, advocates for maximization of human welfare over time, while an ecological view is inclined towards the resilience and stability of ecosystems (United Nations, 2010 and Harris, 2003). Mensah (2019: 2) points out that "notwithstanding its pervasiveness and popularity, murmurs of disenchantment about the concept are rife as people continue to ask questions about its meaning or definition and what it entails as well as implies for development theory and practice." It is for this reason that in the recent past that the definition of sustainability has been broadly developed to include society, environment, culture and the economy as these are largely intertwined (Mensah, 2019 and Petrovich and Saeed, 2017). Sustainability as the paradigm must always seek to achieve a prosperous society with balanced healthy environment and sustained economic growth (Mensah, 2019, Petrovich and Saeed, 2017 and Emas, 2015).

The realisation of the objectives of the concept of sustainability was obtained through the development of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) which sought to address growing environmental and economic concerns amid growing global population. Emanating from the initial Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed and monitored between the period

2000 – 2015, the SDGs “are a call to action to protect the planet, end poverty and guarantee the well-being of people” (Mensah, 2019: 11). Formulated into 17 SGDs, these seek to amongst other things: eradicating poverty and hunger whilst ensuring healthy life; improving universal access to basic services such as water, sanitation and sustainable energy; fostering the innovation and resilient infrastructure, creating communities and cities able to produce and consume sustainably; reducing inequality particularly that concerning gender; improving the environmental integrity through combatting climate change and protecting the oceans and land ecosystems; promoting collaboration between different social agents to create an environment of peace and ensure responsible consumption and production (United Nations, 2022 and Mensah, 2019).

In the study, sustainability offers an important analytical framework as it brings together complex and conflicting elements of planning and development and attempts to find synergies and trade-offs to foster balanced development trajectory. The analytical approach that seeks to understand complex and nuanced relationships is important for analyses of food security dynamics. The causes of food insecurity in rural areas are complex and multidimensional, and as a result require an approach that is holistic in nature and seeks to understand embedded social, economic and cultural dynamics of food. It is for this reason that beyond the orthodox, economic concepts of food, this study discusses a socio-cultural conceptual framework of household food security.

4.3.2. Beyond the Orthodox Economic Framework

The socio-cultural analytical framework of food security is anchored on the notion that people are born into social structures and systems which consciously and subconsciously shape their behaviours, perceptions, tastes and attitudes (Wacquant, 2016 and Cohen and Leung, 2009). The social structures include culture, social class, social status, roles, groups, and social institutions (Caliwan, 2013 and Bates and Bacon, 1972). The social structure is important for guiding how people behave, their social status, perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and actions. Caliwan (2013: 2) further observes that “all of the components of social structure work together to maintain social order by limiting, guiding, and organizing human behaviour.” The social systems, form part of what Nee and Ingram (1998: 19) refer to as institutions, “web of interrelated norms – formal and informal - governing social relationships.” These systems are intertwined with social structures that define and guide cultural norms, values and practices as well cognitive processes, and are understood within the domain of new institutional economics (Nee and Ingram, 1998).

Central to the concept of new institutional economics is that “norms governing interpersonal relationships both constraint and facilitate behaviour by defining the structure of incentives –

material and nonmaterial – for individuals situated in a group" (Nee and Ingram, 1998: 19). These are embedded in social systems and structures and are embodied by people through the socialisation process. Central to this is the notion of embeddedness, which can be traced back to the various writings of Karl Polanyi between late 1960s and 1980s and Clifford Geertz (1973). As a concept, embeddedness has been central in economic, cultural and sociology studies. Moody and White (2003: 105) argue that "embeddedness is a multidimensional construct relating generally to the importance of social networks for action." They further observe that people who are "integrated in multiplex relations of social networks face different sets of resources and constraints than those who are not embedded in such networks." In his pioneering of the concept of embeddedness, Polanyi (1977b) distinguishes between three (3) different types of embeddedness namely: - social, network and territorial embeddedness. For Polanyi (1977b), these were important for understanding how, global economies in the 19th century operated, the influence of socio-political factors which influences the economy, and thereby creating new economies, territorial configurations and conditions of networks. The current discourse on the concept has developed other types of embeddedness including economic, cognitive, structural and political embeddedness. While all these are related, this study focuses on cultural and territorial embeddedness as an analytical framework for food security dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region.

Cultural embeddedness suggests that individuals in communities must strive towards the achievement of collective goals, rather than individual goals. Achieving these social goals therefore demands that people form social relationships, social groups and/or social networks used as means to achieving common goal. These are culture embedded societies which "emphasize maintaining the status quo and restraining individuals' actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order" (Davidov *et al.*, 2014: 266). In the Umkhanyakude region, South Africa and the Sub-Saharan Africa, this resembles what is commonly referred to as *Ubuntu*.

The notion of *Ubuntu* is a Nguni word that signifies a traditional African quality to aspire to always be unified and support each other as human beings (Mangharam, 2011, Ntshangase-Mtolo, 2009 and McClendon, 1997). This great aspiration to unite as human beings has always been contained in the *IsiZulu* language such as the saying that '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'*, which simply translates, a person is a person through other people, *and bonke abantu bayadingana*, meaning everyone needs others, which today, remains part of the "long cultural tradition that emphasizes interdependence" (Mangharam, 2011: 28). Interestingly, *Ubuntu* as a cultural practice is not taught, but is perpetuated through social structures and systems that lead people to certain psychological mindsets, behaviours and outlook of the

world (Cohen and Leung, 2009). This subconscious learning and encoding of *Ubuntu* forms part of the socialisation process which manifests through institutions embedded in societies. The notion of *Ubuntu* is also related to the concept of moral economy, which unpacks dynamics, behaviours and perceptions of food by people living in rural and urban areas.

While the concept of moral economy has traditionally been used to understand how the markets are "influenced and structured by moral dispositions and norms, and how those norms may be compromised, over-ridden or reinforced by economic pressures" (Jackson *et al.,* 2008: 12). Invented in the 18th century, the concept of moral economy has been used to describe many things in different disciplines such as history, political science, sociology, and anthropology (Gotz, 2015, Friberg and Gotz 2015 and Adams, 1993). Gotz (2015: 148) observes that "for centuries moral economy has been endowed with a more universal meaning. It has served as a synonym either for a divine order given to the world or for the human condition." Gotz (2015: 147) points out that as a concept, moral economy offers an "antithesis to the rational choice imperatives that conflate rationality and utility maximisation."

Within food security studies, the concept of moral economy relates to non-market transfers that take place alongside other complex coping strategies, which at most are embodied through various means including social networks and relationships between people. These networks are developed from implicit mutual agreement or obligation to share food, time and resources (Banerjee *et al.,* 2005 and Start and Johnson, 2004). By sharing food and resources, households thereby share the risk and lower their level of vulnerability (food insecurity). Household agreements and relationships are built from the sense of reciprocity, which strengthens the trust. While households in the Umkhanyakude region explained that sharing of food is done without an expectation for the same food to be given back in return, it is worth mentioning that there are implicit obligations and cooperation that exist between families. This cooperation between people can be defined through what Banerjee *et al* (2005: 1) refers to as peer-to-peer reciprocity. Peer-to-peer reciprocity enables people "to share resources in a networked environment without worrying about issues such scalability" (*Ibid*). Dissimilar from the exchange of goods in a traditional market, resource exchange in peer-to-peer networks does not involve monetary transactions, but in-kind payments which are done without expectation or obligations (Thiele *et al*., 2019, Gu et al., 2008 and Banerjee *et al*., 2005). This sense of reciprocity and mutual support between households relates to what some neoliberal economists refer to as emotional economy.

The neoliberal economists in the western world observes that emotions are important for economic intelligence, decision making, organisational culture and commercialisation of

experience (Christie *et al.*, 2008 and Elster, 1998). Their discussion of emotional economy revolves around “what emotions really are and how they can be (self) managed to achieve more efficient performances and greater economic gains” (Andrade, 2013: 2). Andrade (2013: 4) further points out that the economists considered emotions to be “capabilities that can be learned and developed and which can therefore receive prior investment for future return and satisfaction.” The emotions become an important determining factor in terms of management of employees and consumers for purposes of ensuring satisfaction of these while simultaneously achieving growth of the company. In the property sector for instance, the common belief is that decisions on what price to pay are motivated by the “emotional values” that the household associated with the property as a potential future economic investment (Christie *et al.*, 2008: 2299). This study however adopts a different view of emotional economy and how this operates in rural areas such as the Umkhanyakude region. In the region, emotional economy exists and is embedded in the social systems of *Ubuntu*.

In the process of preparing for burial of the deceased, neighbours and related family members support the bereaved family by undertaking all the household chores including collecting wood, water, cleaning the homestead as well as digging the grave on the last day of the burial. This support amongst the households is crucial to ensure that those in need do not deal with challenges on their own, but have support from others, therefore making the pain of bereavement more bearable. The support is also provided during the burial and after burial is concluded. During burial, neighbours and relatives assist with cooking and cleaning of all pots, plates and cutlery. In instances that the bereaved household does not have enough cutlery, neighbours and relatives would provide the family with their own cutlery.

In the days following the burial, the neighbours would on frequent basis visit the family of the deceased to comfort them and check whether there is any urgent need that they need attended to. All this support is provided without any expectation of financial gain. It is a practice undertaking with an understanding that all families experience death and would also require support from their neighbours and relatives. It is this common understanding which fosters cooperation and reciprocal relationships as households respond to each other’s needs and vulnerabilities (Molm, 2010, and Bowles and Gintis, 2000). This illustrates the higher degree of community participation existing in rural areas which fosters social responsibility amongst people living in these areas. These strategies give households a sense of mutual insurance in that they have an understanding that the neighbours or relatives they have assisted with food will return the favour in future. In a way, households are using their emotions to invest and strengthen relationships that they can use in future. This is the

emotional economy that cushions households against greater levels of vulnerability, risks and threats to their livelihoods.

This illustrates the importance of cultural norms and beliefs guiding how people live, the action and non-actions as well as decisions they make in the Umkhanyakude region. While this study does not aim to give a full account of definition of culture, it highlights the importance of this on food security in rural area. As it has been noted by several researchers including Alonso *et al* (2017), Creanza *et al* (2017), Cronk (2017) and Haring (1949), culture is an elusive concept and is intrinsically difficult to define because of its multifaceted nature. Haring (1949: 26) argues that "culture is one of those terms whose reference to observed phenomena or to the process of observation is not clear. An effort to define such a term invite confusion no matter how impressive the logic invoked." Haring (1949) further observes that this confusion is often because of abstractions that are derived from observations not scientifically verified data.

Furthermore, culture as a concept is dynamic in nature. Whereas some cultural beliefs and practices may persist overtime, these are also "inherently evolving, as it is shaped and reshaped by the social, political, economic, and ecological environment and in turn (re)shapes this environment. For instance, Alonso *et al* (2017: 3) observe that "traditional knowledge is not a static or fixed body of information but should rather be understood as a dynamic learning process that responds to changing circumstances and needs of the group." Karpov (2016) views this as a process of socialisation where norms, values and ideologies are taught, learned and internalised for purposes of attaining social and cultural continuity. Šaras and Perez-Felkner (2018: 1) further point out that,

> Individuals develop social and cultural competencies through interaction with other individuals and social institutions and response to their macro- and micro-sociocultural contexts. Socialization does not occur in a vacuum: this process operates in social locations that both afford and constrain interaction and opportunity.

In rural areas such as Umkhanyakude region, age is critical in the process of maintaining cultural continuity as it the old people who teach the younger generation of traditional values, norms, beliefs and practices. This is particularly the case in food security as older people share agricultural practices for subsistence purposes. The use of old cow dung as fertiliser and knowing seasons when to plant are some of the traditional agricultural practices which is taught and transferred from one generation to another. These are inter-generational practices which in most instances are transferred from between different generations through oral means and not properly recorded. Thus, some of the practices have been lost over time.

These changes are also as a result of what is considered acceptable regionally and globally. Šaras and Perez-Felkner (2018: 1) point out that as "adaptation to and internalization of social norms, values, and behaviours", this has led to diffusion and acceptance of universal norms and beliefs, thereby changing the local societies into one global community. This dynamism is observable where knowledge, norms and values are shared across individuals to ensure that their behaviour is in line with the expectation of the society.

Therefore, much of the norms that people learn are not enforced on them but are learned from a young age through the process of embodiment. The personal characteristics such as love, hate and fear for example, are not taught, but imbibed through being in society. It is for this reason that even though human beings have similar bodies the world over, their actions and the way they see the world differs (Cohen and Leung, 2009). For instance, people do not laugh, eat, walk, stand and the even use their bodies in the same way. This has to do largely with some characteristics that people embody from their childhood. Cohen and Leung (2009: 3) observe that these are,

> Culturally encoded in the body and perpetuated that way hidden in plain sight by ways of talking, walking, standing, sitting, eating, and so on that often come to seem 'natural' to us. These 'natural' ways of being in the world are often not consciously reflected on, but they push us invisibly (and without argument) toward certain psychological mindsets and a certain outlook on the world.

Leung *et al* (2011: 591) further point out that although much of studies on embodiment are "grounded in the bodily interactions with the environment", the "associations between bodily experiences and abstract concepts are not randomly formed, rather, the development of such associations is situated in a socio-cultural context, informed by cultural imperatives, values and habits."

Implicit in the above explanation is the importance of the *IsiZulu* language as an institution shaping people's behaviour and actions. Gelman and Roberts (2017: 7900) argue that it is "broadly agreed that language is a distinctive human capacity and a powerful engine of cultural transmission. It is one of the major transitions in the evolution of complexity, specifically in the intergenerational transmission of information." Infused with the *IsiZulu* language are behaviours, meanings, and senses that people imbibe is important for household food security. Leung *et al* (2011: 591) for example point out that "all human beings are granted a body, through which we operate on our environment." In so doing, the way our body acts upon the world will "overtime instantiate and carry important psychological meanings suggesting that body-environment interactions can substantively shape our everyday sense making" (*Ibid*). For example, how household households decide on the

strategy to use to acquire food and how they utilise food may be influenced by some of the encoded cultural values and habits. This illustrates how there also exist gender-related embodiments, where different gender types see social reality differently because of “certain bodily state infused gender-related expectations” (Leung *et al.*, 2011: 600).

It is worth noting that food strategies used by households will differ from one cluster to another. The particularity of these is determined mainly by the resources found in the different clusters, and thereby making food strategies territorial in nature. This sense of particularism of these food practices relates to the notion territorial embeddedness or what Friedmann and Weaver (1980: 195) refer to as selective territorial closure. They observe that the “selective territorial closure refers to a policy of enlightened self-reliance at relevant levels of territorial integration: district, region and nation” (*Ibid*). The selective territorial closure is achieved through convergence of three (3) abstract spaces, namely: - cultural, political and economic spaces. The cultural space suggests that “sufficiency of livelihood implies a moral judgement that will be made only if there exists a tradition of shared symbolic meanings”, the political space denotes “equalisation of access to the basis of social power requires a set of political institutions, actors” and economic space denoting the “finite set of interdependent productive activities and known levels in the development of productive forces” (Friedmann and Weaver, 1980: 196). Thrift (2009a) in Merriman *et al* (2012: 4) agrees with this understanding of concept of territory and explains territoriality as a “unifying diverse and eclectic subject matter that ranges from the patterning of economic and social life to physical processes and natural environments.”

The concept has also been used in disciplines such as animal studies, geography, anthropology, economics, philosophy, social sciences, urban planning, urban studies as well as political sciences. Often intertwined with concepts of place, environment, landscape, region, locale, space and spatiality in contemporary geography studies, the concept of territoriality adopts work from various theorists and writers including Doreen Massey, David Harvey, Manuel Castells and Henri Lefebvre, who also developed their work from that of earlier theorists such as Aristotle and Plato, Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel. For instance, in animal ethology, the notion of territoriality has been used to understand how these live in a particular space, their representation of the space that is provided to them as well as how they use (also control) resources available to them within that space (Raffestin, 2012). Territorial behaviour is the commonplace throughout the animal kingdom as animals use territorial behaviour as basis for mating and social organisation (Klauser, 2012 and Egdar, 1973). The same can be said of humans, who also develop their own representation of space, have certain influences, control and relationships which help them survive.

Raffestin (2012: 121) refers to this as territoriality, which is the “ensemble of relations that a society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs, towards the end of attaining the greatest possible autonomy compatible with the resources of the system.”

Central to the notion of territoriality are resources. The concept of resources is well articulated and defined in economic geography studies. Zauszniewski (2016) points out that literature on resources centred on how these are distributed, their characteristics, and what distinguished some areas from others, and how resources could be best utilised. It was through these debates that the economic concepts and theories of local advantages, regional economies, space economy, centripetal and centrifugal forces of development originated. It is not the intention of this study to discuss the notion of resources within the context of economic geography, but rather resource geography, which essentially looks at distribution of resources (Zauszniewski, 2016 and Gluckler, 2014). This is done deliberately to position discussion in this study in terms of issues relating to access to resources, how this affects decision making of individuals and households, the threats to access to resources, how households deal with these threats, and more importantly, whether their ability to deal with threats suggests positive adaptive capacities. Understanding power relations and conflicts in allocation and access to resources is important for purposes of unearthing oppressions that persist in societies. These oppressions are articulated in the concept in the concept of resourcefulness.

Zauszniewski (2016: 1551) conceptualises the concept of resourcefulness as a “collection of skills that can be learned, either formally or informally.” These skills are important for an individual to consistently attain their life goals through access to various resource types. Zauszniewski (2016: 1551) refers to these skills as personal resourcefulness which means self-help, or the use of one’s own efforts and internal resources. Zauszniewski (2016) further emphasises that personal resourcefulness alone is not enough. The man lives in no isolation from others. Over reliance on individual capacity may in some instances, not suffice. Thus, it is necessary that over and above the personal resourcefulness is the need for social resourcefulness which involves broader communities and how people can join hands and assist each other.

The concept of resourcefulness is important in the study for explaining the distribution of resources, reasons that determines uneven distribution of resources as well as why some have more access to resources than others. Mackinnon and Derickson (2012) writes about the politics of resourcefulness which is essentially embedded in the discourse of engaging and negotiating oppressions and injustice in terms of resource redistribution to build households, communities, cities as well as regions that are closer to equitable distribution of

resources. It is this notion of access to resources that sits centrally to the conceptualisation of resourcefulness. What resources are available and how people access (or cannot) these largely determines the sustainability of their access to food, their livelihood.

It should be noted though that despite the existence of a prevailing structure of culture, norms, and socialisation, there is prevalence of contestations, conflicts, varied interests, marginalisation and oppressions, as access to resources is not given, but negotiated through various means. Several factors determine who accesses what kind of resources (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2014 and 2005 and Ribot and Peluso, 2003). Ribot and Peluso (2003: 153) observe that one of the fundamental factors determining access to resources is "ability to benefit from things - including material objects, persons, institutions, and symbols." This ability, Zauszniewski (2016) refers to as personal resourcefulness that people must access various resources to earn a livelihood. However, implicit within this understanding of concept of access to resources is the process of constant negotiation between individuals to access and obtain resources. What this suggests are existing power relations which must be negotiated as people build relationships to achieve their different interests. As a result, it is these negotiations which determines who "does what (and who does not), get to use what, in what ways, and what" (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 154).

Worth noting is that because of Umkhanyakude region being rural, predominantly traditional area where gender stereotypes continue to be prevalent, men often assume and are given more power to make household decisions. While men often assume, and some instances are given this level of power, this does not necessarily suggest that there is not negotiation and compromises made between household members. The discourse on gender in rural areas has shown that women have increasingly taken centre stage as agents of change in their households and communities. While in many instances they would not openly and boldly articulate their positions, they find innovative, somewhat subtle ways to influence decision making. While this research did not profoundly attempt to understand nuances in terms of decision making more particularly in terms of gender dynamics, it was clear though from engagements with household members that while men eventually become faces of decisions made, there is a lot of negotiations that take place prior to those decisions being made. These negotiations often occur in instances where: grandparents are still alive and actively involved in activities of the household; children are of working age and contribute (largely financially) to household needs more particularly food; the household head (man) does not have work and/or does not contribute to household food security; and the woman is the active member obtaining food for the household.

While historically and traditionally men were regarded as head of households, and in many instances remain so, prevalence of women headed households have made women realise the skills (personal and social resourcefulness) they have, the potential, powers, voices and their critical role in building families and communities. The roles and relationship between man and women in relation to household food security is further discussed in Chapter 8 of the study.

Emanating from the above discussions of are informal, socially engineered structural systems which govern interactions, relationships, and life in rural areas. Several factors have been observed as contributors to rural informality (Weng, 2015). Informality may entail different things, for instance, informal housing, informal employment, informal business and informal networks. In most instances however, the term informal is used to refer to the various types of work including,

> Home-based work to poor working conditions, lack of benefits, and small firm size - all factors implying a degree of vulnerability. Informality can also refer to unregistered or underreported economic activity (Bulmer, 2018: 4).

While the causes of informality in the Umkhanyakude region can be due to factors that are particular to the region, it is also true that this rural informality cannot be understood outside of the existing rural-urban interactions, relationships and dichotomies. As is illustrated in the rural-urban migration discourse, rural and urban areas continue to be dependent to one another through transactions in resources, infrastructure, goods and services as well as information. The scholarship on development has observed that interactions between these has made it difficult to clearly define what constitutes rural and urban. Okpala (2005) in Dabson (2007: 6) points out that “the old orthodoxy of a discrete and dichotomous approach to urban development as distinct from rural development no longer accords with reality, considering the complementary functions and flows of people, capital, goods and services, employment, information and technology between the two areas. Rural and urban areas are economically, socially and environmentally interdependent.” This is the same observation made by Tacoli (1998: 147) that “in reality, however, things tend to be far more complex, the boundaries of urban settlements are usually more blurred than portrayed by administrative delimitations.” Mylott (2009: 1) further points out that land uses in these “are no longer mutually exclusive, but rather exist on a continuum of community types that are increasingly interconnected.” This is true in the Umkhanyakude region where there exist relationships between urban centres within clusters and the rural areas adjacent to them as well as the region and towns and cities such as Richardsbay, Mpangeni, Durban and Johannesburg.

The interaction between rural areas and cities is strengthened by two (2) key factors namely, migration of people and flow of goods and services. In the introduction of Umkhanyakude region in Chapter 2, the study explained the core-periphery relationship between the region and urban areas such as Johannesburg. As a result of lack of economic and employment opportunities, large number of people migrate out of the region to cities in search of better living conditions. This then makes the region to be labour reservoir and cities enclaves of economic opportunities for people of Umkhanyakude and other rural areas. Beyond acting as a labour reservoir, the region is also one of the areas identified by the government for infrastructure investment to grow the local economy, more particularly local tourism and commercial agriculture. The investment in agricultural services has led to the government earmarking the region as one of food baskets of the province of KwaZulu Natal and South Africa as whole. The N2 linking the region Durban in the south and N17 linking it to Johannesburg in the north-western part are two (2) major transportation routes used for transportation of goods. These are the major physical rural-urban link between the rural Umkhanyakude and urban areas.

The study also illustrates in Chapter 5 that, the rural-urban continuum through the rise of virtual money systems such as e-wallet, cash send and money-market cash transfers which play a crucial role in the transmitting of money from urban to rural areas. In rural areas such as the Umkhanyakude where majority of households live in areas without easy access to infrastructure such as banking, transport and roads, virtual money becomes critical as these can have money reflected in their mobile telephones. This allows households to access various services (even before withdrawal of the transferred money) such as buying food on cred from a local *spaza* shop or borrowing money from local *umashonisa* or access transport to town. This would not be possible if households could not provide surety that they have access to money. The importance of these virtual money transfer systems has been observed in other countries such as Kenya. The introduction of M-pesa (which is an amalgamation of ‘M’ for mobile, *pesa* as Swahili term for money) has been celebrated as it,

> Allows immediate money transfers from town to village and *vice versa* with consequence on time and money savings, rapid solutions to daily problems affecting vulnerable communities, opening up to new ways of managing the cash flows of those whose lives can be improved with very small amounts (Ndiaye, 2013: 156).

The same can be said about countries such as Uganda and Zambia where the use of mobile money transfers such as the MoMo Pay ensures immediate access to money particularly by the rural poor, but also sometimes by the urban poor, as people, most particularly parents, transfer money to their children who at most are students, unemployed and looking for work

(MTN, 2020). These banking systems are some of the organising elements maintaining the rural-urban interconnections and relationships.

In rural areas (as well as in urban areas), informal economy has widely been accepted as significant contributor to local economies and livelihoods of the rural people, particularly the rural poor (Weng, 2015). In these areas, informal economy is complex as it is often "rooted in customary land and resource governance norms traditionally practiced by local communities" (Weng, 2015: 4). These informal activities also include the farming (often subsistence), logging and mining (Weng, 2015). In this study, rural informal activities (rural informality) are defined as non-farm activities which largely take place outside of the formal institutional regulatory frameworks (Hilson, 2016). It is for this reason that the contestation has remained the need for these to be regularised and incorporated into the formal economy. These involve informal trading activities, informal employment and informal financial organisations and networks used by households to have access to income to purchase food. These informal means of earning a livelihood cannot be understood using the lens of a single theoretical perspective but requires a multitude of perspectives as it cuts across various disciplines.

4.3.3. Food Security and Socio-Cultural Habitus

The discussions of the analytical concepts illustrate that food security in rural areas do not happen in a vacuum but are shaped by social systems and structures (Wacquant, 2016 and Ngarachu, 2014). This Pierre Bourdieu refers to a habitus, as "enduring transferable system of schemes of perception, appreciation, and action. These schemes, which are of a practical kind, are the result of the incarnation of social structures" (Belvedere, 2013: 1095). Beyond the social systems and structures, are people's past experiences past events, and these shape people's perceptions, practices and actions (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014 and Collet, 2009). Like the process of socialisation, habitus is created and reproduced through social order is continuously learned through systems such as language, education, values, norms, practices, and systems that guide everyday life (Collet, 2009 and Hong and Zhao, 2009). These set of norms are at large, unconsciously acquired by individuals and households through experience and socialization as embodied dispositions, leading people to act in particular ways as is expected and normalised in a particular social environment (Gillespie, 2019 and Wacquant, 2016).

In this study, the concept is referred to as socio-cultural habitus in acknowledging the importance of social and cultural norms and values which are embedded in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. Framing the concept in this manner is important for analyses of underlying factors shaping people's behaviours, perceptions and actions, as well as how

these are culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimised through an interplay of agency, structure and institutions (Wacquant, 2016). Just as in the discourse on new institutionalism, these institutions reinforce and restructure socially and culturally accepted norms, behaviours, actions and perceptions. Gillespie (2019: 1) observes that,

> The habitus (re)produces both itself and its subjects through its institutions. It also reproduces the socio-cultural conditions through which subjects relate to one another. The *habitus* reproduces both itself and its subjects also entails the production of a self-perpetuating system of unequal power relations that does not require direct political struggle between subjects to function. Instead, the *habitus* produces relationships of domination through its institutions by default, because institutions distribute cultural capital differently and differentially among individuals.

As is illustrated in the concept of resourcefulness, it is important to understand these relationships of domination as they determine who accesses what resources. It also helps understand the gendered dynamics of food, and how these lead to unequal distribution of food at a community, household and individual levels. These existing unequal, gendered access to food signals critical policy implications.

4.4. Conclusion

A number of assumptions can be made from the above discussions of the theoretical perspectives and analytical framework for food security in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. Firstly, glaring is the dichotomy between western and African governance systems. The former is anchored largely in laws and policies at national, regional and local levels, while the latter is largely anchored in the values of the family and cultural values and beliefs of what is right or wrong, what is a good or bad character and in the forms or patterns of behaviour that are considered by the members of the society to bring about social harmony and cooperative living, justice, and fairness (Lai and Lin, 2017, Idang, 2015 and Porpora, 1989). This knowledge is passed from one generation to another through the socialisation process. Idang (2015: 99) notes observes that the “acquisition of culture is a result of the socialisation process.” Fafunwa (1974) in Idang (2015: 99) argues that the,

> Child just grows into and within the cultural heritage of his people. He imbibes it. The child observes, imbibes and mimics the action of his elders and siblings. He watches the naming ceremonies, religious services, marriage rituals, funeral obsequies.

The sharing of knowledge between generations is common in food practices in African communities. While this the knowledge is not properly recorded, the older people ensure that the information how these are practiced is transferred to the younger generation. This way,

practices of the food security in African communities are firstly imbibed than being guided by national, regional and local laws and policies. This does not however assume minimal role of the structural economic dimension of food security.

Secondly and somehow implicit in the discussions is the embodiment of conflicting and shifting social and gender relations, politics of home, normative stereotypes and power dynamics which play themselves at the level of the household. Emanating from discussions with respondents was changing gender identities and sense of responsibility in terms of who may obtain food in a household presents yet another new dynamic and implications on household food security. The dominance of women-headed households in most of clusters of the region signals an important role played by women in ensuring availability of food to their household members. The reality is that these women are working tirelessly to access and ensure availability of food to their households on daily basis. In an effort not to risk romanticising their struggles, there is a need to acknowledge and appreciate their efforts on household food security in rural areas.

Thirdly, is the importance of *IsiZulu* language in the socialisation of certain cultural norms, values and behaviours in rural areas. Through *IsiZulu*, households are able to pass information from one generation to another, and thus ensuring that cultural value system and way life is maintained in societies. This is important for social engineering of communities and ensuring that people are socialised on common values, beliefs, vision and acceptable behaviours. The language is therefore important as an institution that shapes people's behaviours, actions, beliefs, decisions and actions.

Fourthly and lastly, using the socio-cultural habitus as an analytical framework illustrates the importance of analysing food dynamics beyond the orthodox, structural dimension of food, but to include the social and cultural factors which bring to the fore, issues of institutions, norms, values, behaviour and perceptions shaping people's decisions in relation to food. Equally, this framework helps analyse the issue of unequal power relations and how this determines food access and availability in rural areas, and thereby signalling the need for shift in policy framework.

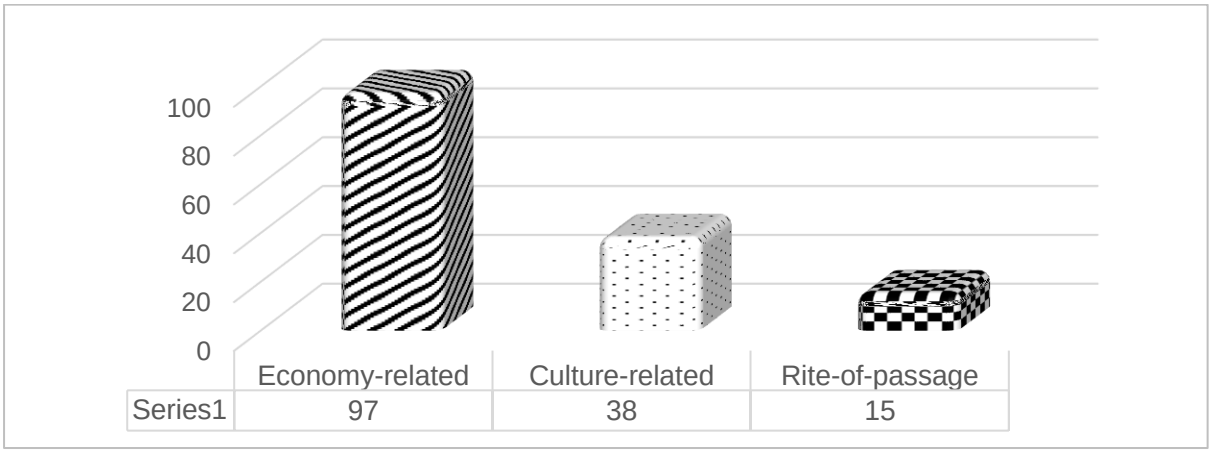
Chapter 5: Economy-related Household Food Security Strategies in the Umkhanyakude Region

5.1. Introduction

A total of 150 interviews were conducted in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region to understand how people mitigate the challenge of food insecurity. From the interviews, a range of responses were recorded, some of these were activities, some were relations and others were processes which people use to support themselves for survival purposes. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the economy-related food strategies that are used by households to achieve food security. In terms of structure, the chapter firstly indicates the number of responses per strategy and organises activities into three (3) categories of food strategies. Secondly, it introduces each food strategy, defines it and explains how it is used by households to achieve food security. Thirdly, it outlines similarities or disparities within the clusters, and links findings and analyses into existing broader literature on each food strategy. In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates how some of the food strategies have led to creation of long-term relationships between households which are maintained through mutual and reciprocal relations. These reciprocal relationships are used to cushion households against food insecurity, shocks and vulnerabilities. It also demonstrates how strategies of food are deeply embedded in local institutions as well as how these continue to be socialised through various social systems and structures.

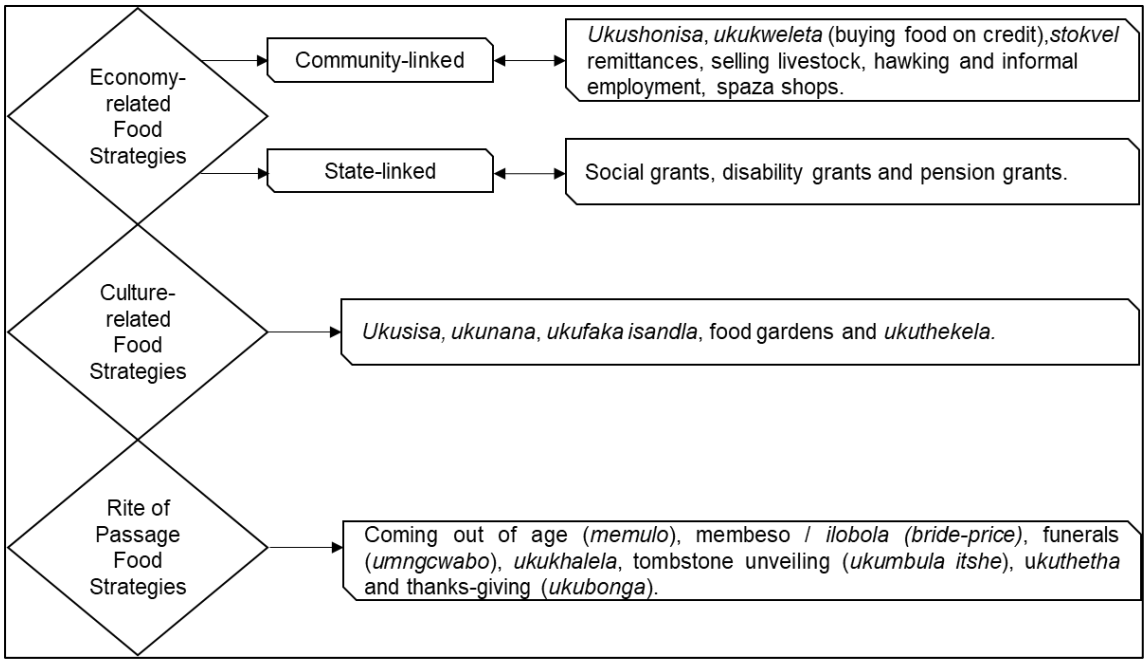
Using a conceptual framework approach as discussed in Chapter 4, in the analysis of collected data, these activities are categorised into three (3) main groups namely, economy-related, culture-related and rite-of-passage activities or food strategies. These categories are themes which best encapsulate all activities or processes from respondents as these activities include those that firstly, make use of financial resources (money) to obtain food, secondly, those that are embedded in Zulu cultural systems and practices, and thirdly, those that involve celebration of different stages of a person's life (rite of passage). The responses from respondents on various food strategies are indicated in figure 5.1 below:

Fig 5.1: Responses from respondents on food strategies



A considerable number of these responses were expressed in the *IsiZulu* language and were largely embedded in the cultural practices and systems. The *IsiZulu* language was therefore important institution through which to understand embedded systems, practices and activities by households to achieve food security. These activities included *ukushonisa, ukukweleta, stokvels*, remittances, selling livestock, hawking, *spaza shops*, child social grants, pension and disability grants, *ukusisa, ukunana, ukufaka isandla,* food gardens, *ukuthekela* as well as celebratory events such as *memulo, membeso, ilobolo, umngcwabo, ukukhalela, ukumbula itshe, ukuthetha and ukubonga*. The food strategies are organised into three (3) categories as indicated in figure 5.2.

Fig 5.2: Categories of household food strategies



This section of the chapter discusses the first leg of the category of food strategies, namely economy-related food strategies. The economy-related food strategies are household activities for income-generating that are adopted in the form of wages or salaries. Stifel (2010) refers to these as non-farm household economic activities. He points out that defining economy-related strategies this way is important as it does not confine economic strategies to a specific area trade (sector) and environment. The definition "allows for income to be earned anywhere, including urban areas" (Stifel, 2010: 85). The study adopts this definition of the concept as some of the economy-related strategies used are not initiated by households living in any of the clusters of the region, but by their household members in other areas including such as Mpangeni, Richardsbay, Durban as well as Johannesburg.

As indicated in figure 5.2, the economy-related are further divided into two (2) sub-categories namely: - community-organisationally-linked (COL) and state-organisationally-linked (SOL) food strategies. The COL food strategies are embedded in community social systems and values and organised by individuals or social groups with a common vision and objectives, for instance, a *stokvel*. These are the main economy-related strategies which people commonly use to earn a livelihood. These include *ukushonisa* (micro-lending), *stokvels*, remittances *ukukweleta* (buying food on credit), selling of livestock, hawking and informal trading and informal employment. The SOL food strategies are government interventions aimed at assisting the poor households to have access to financial resources for basic household needs. In South Africa, there exist seven (7) types of government administered grants namely old age (pension), war veteran, disability, grant in aid, care dependency, foster grant and child support grant. This study focuses on three (3) grants, namely: - child support, pension and disability grants. These are SOL strategies were explained by respondents as key food strategies in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The section below discusses COL food strategies in clusters of Umkhanyakude region.

5.1.1. Community Organisationally linked (COL) Food Security Strategies

Rural areas all over the world are commonly known for their lack of economic and employment opportunities. As a result, people living in these areas must find other ways to access income to purchase food and necessities for their families. The Umkhanyakude region resembles this generic characteristic of rural areas. It is for this reason that households in the region resort to strategies such as *ukushonisa* to achieve food security. *In IsiZulu*, the phrase *ukushonisa* is derived from the word *ukushona. Ukushona* directly translates to loss or death. While there are other words used to refer to death in *IsiZulu* such as *ukufa*, the traditions, norms, and beliefs demand that the dead be respected and be referred to in a dignified manner. It is for this reason that when a person has passed on is referred to as *ushonile* rather than *ufile*. With a meaning derived from *ukushona*, *ukushonisa* simply translates to killing or burying another person. *Ukushonisa* can also be used to suggest that someone is making you to lose. This strategy is framed in this manner as majority of people who are often involved in this fail to repay the high interest rates, and as a result further plunged into debt and level of vulnerability. Rather than achieving food security through the money they lend from *omashonisa*, households further slip into high levels of food insecurity (*bayashona*).

In defining *omashonisa*, Venter and Botha (2014: 103) observe that these are individuals or entities that provide “informal unsecured short-term loans are mainly used to satisfy existence needs, and are often obtained “from friends, family or colleagues and spaza shops

which are all used to fulfil primary needs. They are usually used to satisfy food, transport, electricity or medical needs." The process of *ukushonisa* suggests lending of money by informal micro lenders. In the Umkhanyakude region, the process of informal micro-lending involves individuals who either have formal employment, and use their savings to lend to borrowers, and/or those who have businesses (formal and informal) and use their profits to informally lend to borrowers. In some instances, individuals (often women) organise themselves into groups (*stokvel*) for a purpose of saving money which is then distributed amongst members at mutually agreed time. These financial savings are from time to time loaned out to borrowers to accrue interest. From observation, *ukushonisa* involved largely women who either are in formal employment, have informal trading activity or are part of the *stokvel* group. These women who are *omashonisa* (informal micro lenders) lend money to local community members. The informal loan amounts often range between R500, 00 (US$34, 80) and R1, 000, 00 (US$69, 60), with 10% – 50% interest charged on loans regardless of the amount or term (Wonga, 2018).

In all clusters, the way *ukushonisa* works is that the agreement between the *umashonisa* (the micro lender) and the borrower is that money must be paid back in full or on in instalments. When the loan is paid in full after a month, only one instalment of interest is charged. In instances where an agreement is made that the borrowed money is paid through instalments, the borrower is therefore expected to pay the agreed instalment amount with interest. The repayments of interest rates therefore make it difficult for households to pay-back their loans as they end up re-paying interest rates. As a result, households end up paying high interest rates, not the borrowed capital amount.

From observation, *ukushonisa* is cautiously practiced in different clusters. Respondent 13 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that "you have to consider people who you know very well and live around you. This makes it easier for borrowers as they do not have to travel long distances to reach you." Respondent 17 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster also explained that,

> Families who struggle to have food or take their children to school are known in this community. We then know that they will always come and lend money for either food, school uniform for their children or buying medicine for their ailing family member. The fact that these families are known and live amongst us makes it easier to lend them money whenever they need it as we are certain that they will return it. Informal micro-lending is common in all clusters of the region as is illustrated by table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Number of respondents involved in *ukushonisa* in Umkhanyakude region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	2
Hluhluwe	2
Jozini	6
Mtubatuba	4
Umhlabuyalingana	4

A number of observations can be made from the above explanations by respondents of the Umkhanyakude region. Firstly, that there is a need for social trust that needs to be maintained between informal micro-lenders and the borrowers. Madestam (2014) and Wrenn (2005) explain the same in their definition of micro-lending that, it is a process involving trust and profits between money lenders and borrowers. Secondly, it illustrates the critical role played by micro-lenders in impacting livelihoods of households. Wrenn (2005: 4) outlines three (3) key roles played by informal micro-lenders, that, they assist the "poor households meet basic needs and protects against risks, are associated with improvements in household economic welfare; and assist in empowering women by supporting women economic participation and so promotes gender equity."

Thirdly and somewhat contradictory, is the susceptibility of borrowers to future financial instability and food insecurity. For instance, Respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Today, everything you do or eat involves money. As we do not work and do not always have money available, we are forced to lend money from *omashonisa*, who are always willing to give money, even at the time of request. The only sad thing about them is that you must pay more than you borrowed. Overtime, this becomes difficult as you end up paying the interest, not the money you borrowed. At some point, I had to give *umashonisa* one of my cattle as I could not pay back the money I borrowed. It saddens me when I think about it today.

Respondent 7, (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that "if you borrow R100, 00 (US$6, 96) you have to pay back R150, 00 (US$10, 44). If you borrow R200, 00 (US$13, 92), you have to pay R300, 00 (US$20, 88)." This suggests that households are expected to pay 50% interest on borrowed loans. Thus, *ukushonisa* has both positive and adverse effects on food security status of households. At the time of borrowing, household have access to food, meaning that their food security status is to a greater extent, secured as they have access and food available. However, high repayments threaten their future food security status as majority of these households do not have secure household income to pay back borrowed loans, let alone repayments of the accrued interest.

In South Africa, Harvey (2019: 1) observes that research on *omashonisa*, which depending on one's point of view, are also somewhat pessimistically referred to as loan sharks, has discovered "untoward headlines and unsavoury stories." Most borrowers often have difficulties paying back high interest of the money borrowed from informal micro-lenders. Overtime, disagreements ensue between the lenders and borrowers, and at times resulting in "humiliation" of the borrowers, more particularly in townships and informal settlements, where there exist large numbers of omashonisa and borrowers (*Ibid*). Venter and Botha (2014) also emphasise the similar pessimistic sentiments regarding informal micro-lenders. They point out that as much as this bridges the gap between these and the formal, regulated credit institutions, they also at times conduct their businesses in a manner that is exploitative at times and in detriment to the livelihoods of the borrowers. For instance, in the study of *omashonisa* in South Africa, Wonga Finance South Africa (2018) observes that when borrowers default on their repayments, the informal micro lenders would use illegal collection methods such as the retention of identity documents (ID), bank cards and pin codes. This is due to nonexistence of regulations guiding operations of these on daily basis. This has also been the case for poor households of the Umkhanyakude region where some of the households who were unable repay their loans had their identity documents taken away from them until such time that they have repaid the entire borrowed money and the accrued interest.

While there remains a lot to be understood in terms particular internal operations of informal micro landing environment, the National Credit Regulator (NCR) introduced new amended regulations guiding the way in which credit providers needed to assess affordability (Hlatshaneni, 2018). This follows the realisation that even those who worked in formal employment (the middle class) were involved in lending money from informal micro money lenders (Hlatshaneni, 2018 and Sosibo, 2017). Narrating the anecdote of Sebastian Mvundla, Sosibo (2017: 3) points out that,

> In what amounts to a subversion of social standing, Mvundla often finds himself lending money to people who earn quadruple or seven times his salary. A number of his customers do earn less than he does, but the majority fall within what is considered middle class in South Africa. The Bureau of Market Research described this category as earning between R49 001, 00 (US$3410, 55) and R783 000, 00 (US$54498, 07) a year, with monthly salaries ranging from R4 084, 00 (US$284, 25) to R65 250 (US$4541, 51). This group comprises only 18% of South Africa's working age population.

Worth noting is that *ukushonisa* is not the only strategy which while it is used to access food in the immediate term, leads to increased vulnerability in the future. The same can be said of *ukukweleta* (buying food on credit).

Ukukweleta is an *IsiZulu* word which simply translates to buying food from a local *spaza* shop on credit. It involves buying essential food items on credit on mutual agreement with *spaza* shop or food market owners that monies will be paid once the customer has earned their wages, salary, social or pension grant. As is illustrated in table 5.2*, ukukweleta*, which is also often referred to as *ukubhala edolweni*, meaning, writing on the knee, is common in all five (5) clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. When asked why it is referred as *ukubhala edolweni*, respondent 16 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> A knee is one of the most powerful parts of the body. If you were lying on the ground and I placed my knee on your body, you will never be able to stand up. By saying that they are writing on the knee, it is an expression that the credit will not be easily erased or forgotten, unless it is paid in full.

From observation, *ukukweleta* involves largely purchase of particular food items which are often utilised on daily basis such as maize-meal, rice, peanuts, tinned-fish and soya mince. While there are other food types such as salt, sugar beans, onion, tomatoes, beef and chicken meat, the cost of these is much higher, and as a result, households cannot afford to buy them once it is all utilised before the next wage payment, social or pension grant payments. Respondent 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> There is nine (9) of us in this family. My elder daughter is the only person who works at the local grocery supermarket in town. She has two (2) of her own children who receive social grant which she also uses to support us here at home. She does this while having to also look after herself as she has to rent accommodation in town as our home is far from her place of work. From a young age, she has always acted as the man of this house always working hard after coming back from school to raise money for food. I am so proud of her. I do not know where I would be without her.

In the region, *ukukweleta* involves social trust since the majority of households do not work and as a result does not have steady wages or salaries. In instances where customers fail to pay as agreed, the social trust is broken, and customers are not allowed to buy on credit. In the entire region, approximately 68% of participating households indicated certain food items are finished in the second or third week of the month. This was explained by respondent 5 (*Pers. Comm,* 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> We try and buy food in bulk because there is many of us and I cannot afford to be going back and forth from town. Transport is expensive as you have to pay for your seat and also your food. Usually, I buy a 25kg of maize-meal, 10kg of rice, 5kg of peanuts, 10kg of potatoes, onions and soya mince. We utilise this food until the end of the second week or sometimes in the third week. In the third week, I have to add another 10kg of maize-meal to utilise until the end of the month. *Ngikweleta* additional 10kg of maize-meal from the local *spaza* as I cannot travel to town to buy food as I would not have transport money. Also, Boxer Super Store *akakwelitisi* (does not give food on credit) like the local *spaza* shops.

Table 5.2: Number of households involved in *ukukweleta* in Umkhanyakude region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	3
Hluhluwe	2
Jozini	2
Mtubatuba	4
Umhlabuyalingana	7

During the interviews, a total of 18 households (12% of the participating households) explained that they used ukukweleta to achieve food security. The strategy is used in all clusters, most particularly in the Umhlabuyalingana (3, 8%), Mtubatuba (2, 6%) and Hlabisa (2%). Both Hluhluwe and Jozini clusters had lower number of households who explained that they used *ukukweleta* as a food security strategy. In Jozini and Hluhluwe clusters, the number of households using *ukukweleta* as food security strategy was minimal. In Jozini cluster in particular, respondent 31 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) explained that,

> Our local *spaza* owners do no longer allow people to buy food on credit. People never pay-off their debts. You find that someone will be buying food on credit from various *spaza* shops and accumulate insurmountable debt that they fail to pay at the end. It also makes no sense that the same people who want to buy food on credit from local *spaza* shops do not ask for credit when they buy food in grocery supermarkets such as Shoprite, Boxer, Cambridge and Spar. Whenever they earn their social and pension grants, you find in town buying food there, but whenever they do not have money, they come back to the local *spaza* shops *ukuzokweleta.*

The majority of households indicated that *ukukweleta* was not their preferred food security strategy, but they were at times forced by the urgent need to obtain food. Respondent 5 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster further explained that,

> It is not by choice or preference that I buy food on credit. It is never nice to see your children crying because they are hungry. When food is finished, you have to make means to immediately get it, and through *ukukweleta* you can get food on the immediate basis.

In all clusters of the region, the strategy is used by women. This is largely as result of women involvement in the processes of obtaining food in their households. Their involvement was easily observable during the interviews as they illustrated more interest in participating in the interviews, were more engaged and shared lived experiences of acquiring food.

The women have, over a long period of time, built social trust with the local *spaza* shop owners. The social trust is built over a period based on ability of households to pay back monies on food they bought on credit. In most cases, *ukukweleta* is used by households who, either have a member who has some formal employment or has a member who has access to pension or social grants. The *spaza* shop owners always seem reluctant to give people food who have no source to income as it becomes difficult for these to pay back money. Worth noting is that the majority of *spaza* owners in all clusters are Somali and Ethiopians, with very few *spaza* shops owned by local South African people. The exponential growth of *spaza* shop ownership has been studied by researchers such as Petersen *et al* (2019), Basardien *et al.,* (2014), Gastrow (2018) of the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP), and Ngwenya (2017). The growth of these has led to the coining of the word *Somalinomics* by economists such as Gastrow (2018). At the heart of their research is the point that rural and urban areas (townships in particular) has experienced significant increase in Somali *spaza* shops. Ngwenya (2017: 6) observes that,

> One wonders why as a new township, Cosmo City has very few South African owned *spaza* shops. Some South Africans tried a hand in the *spaza* retail business but later abandoned it. How has this sector become an exclusive domain of immigrants, considering its long history of association with black South Africans? Why has it become so difficult to compete with Somalis?

A number of reasons can be given to explain this. In the Umkhanyakude region, respondent 14 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that “Somali and Ethiopians are not like us. They are very patient and are always willing to help each other. We do not do that. We want to do things on our own, without help of anyone.”

Worth noting however is an explanation given by one of the respondents that some of the *spaza* shop owners always seem reluctant to sell food on credit to certain households especially those with no source of income as it becomes difficult for these to pay back. This is particularly the case for *spaza* shops owned by Somali and Ethiopians, who are all migrants

in the region. The local shop owners on the other hand, seem to be more lenient as they are willing to give food even to families with no formal income. This was explained by respondent 16 (*Pers. Comm*, 2017, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster that,

> My children have been raised from food *engikukweleta* from the local *spaza* shop. I have been buying food on credit from this shop for the longest time. I then pay back whatever money I have after selling *amacansi* (mats) *emholweni* (at the local social grant pay-point).

A number of reasons can be attributed to selling food on credit, firstly, lack of social trust between the households and Somali and Ethiopian *spaza* shop owners, and secondly, cultural dis-embeddedness of the Somali shop owners, and thirdly, different business practices. One of the Somali *spaza* shop owner in the Jozini cluster explained that,

> My friend, operating a *spaza* shop is difficult. You do not make lots of money because things are expensive, and you still have to pay transport costs and workers. Sometimes you must have security as people will steal saying you are not one of them. I cannot them give food on credit. I must always have the money upfront to stay in business. Giving people food on credit also create problems as some of them will not pay on time, but still come back to ask for more food. I am here to work, not to play (Respondent 27, *Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017).

Ukukweleta is not an exception in the Umkhanyakude region and other rural areas as the use of credit is prevalent in the formal financial system. Referred to as consumer credit, these are "subdivided into open accounts, personal loans at banks, other personal loans, credit card facilities and instalment sale transactions and lease transactions" (van der Walt and Prinsloo, 2012: 26). The consumer credit facilities function in a similar manner to u*kukweleta* and to a greater extent, has similar ramifications for consumers or households. One of the most glaring effects of *ukukweleta* is that it offers households with food in the immediate, while at the same time increasing the household vulnerability in future through increase debt. The same can be said of the consumer credit. Van der Walt and Prinsloo (2012: 26) further explain that,

> The use of consumer credit is related to the eagerness of consumers to sacrifice future consumption in order to obtain greater satisfaction from current consumption. Future consumption is surrendered because consumers will use income earned at a later stage to settle debts and meet interest commitments and will therefore have less spendable funds at their disposal at that stage if they do not increase their credit commitments further.

Reports from the South African Reserve Bank (SARB), National Credit Regulator (NCR) and BusinessTech have reflected that a majority of South African people are in debt, most particularly the low and middle classes. In June 2019, BusinessTech (2019: 1) reported that "South Africa's middle class is facing a massive debt problem, and wage stagnation means that many people are borrowing to pay for necessities such as food and transport." The report further observed that approximately 10 million people in South Africa are debt and have on average have eight (8) loans (BusinessTech, 2019).

The viewpoint of this study is that *ukukweleta* has similar implications to *ukushonisa* in terms of increasing household food access in the immediate term while increasing vulnerability in the long term. Both the strategies remain unregulated, yet they function similarly to existing formal, regulated processes of micro finance and consumer credit. The existence of *ukukweleta* exists due to the void and opportunity created by the highly regulated formal economy. Rogerson (2000: 673) refers to this opportunity as emerging from the "shadow" of formal "institutional and policy context." While they may sometimes be exploitative and increase vulnerability of households, these will continue to co-exist with formal, institutionalised processes if current policy frameworks and guidelines continue to exist. Equally, this study notes that the relationship between local shop owners and households goes beyond social trust, to include a complex system of commitment of households assisting each other. This complex reciprocal relationship was explained by respondent 32 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster that,

> I always go to my neighbour *ukuyokweleta* because even though I do not work, she always gives me food to feed my children. She is different from the Somalians who are not willing to give me food because I do not have formal employment or steady income.

Interestingly, not all household food strategies in the clusters of the region have similar characteristics of increasing future state of food insecurity of households. Some of the economy-related strategies help raise the security status of households such as *stokvels* and remittances. A *stokvel* refers to a variety of mutual benefit or savings societies (Bophela and Khumalo, 2019 and Verhoef, 2001). They are credit organisations in which a group of people by "voluntary mutual agreement, regularly contribute money to a common pool and circulate the pool among the group" (Verhoef, 2001: 263). In the region, there were three types of *stokvels*, namely rotational (short term), once-off savings (long term) and burial *stokvels*.

The rotational *stokvel* is short-term and involves exchange of monies between members on weekly, fortnightly, and monthly basis. The once-off saving *stokvel* is a long term *stokvel* where members deposit monies over agreed period (commonly 12 months) which is paid

back at specific time as agreed by members. The long term s*tokvels* are often used for major household needs such as education, house construction, purchasing vehicle or cattle, weddings as well as ritual ceremonies. In some instances, these are also used for purchasing of food during festive season, and thereby increasing their food security status during this period. This was explained by respondent 7 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hluhluwe cluster that,

> All families who participate in *stokvels* do not have any problems with shortage of food in December, January and February. They only start worrying in March as some of the food they would have bought in December would start running out.

While prices differed between clusters, the financial contribution ranges between R200 (US$13, 92) – R1500, 00 (US$104, 40). The short-term *stokvels* on the other hand, are used as rotational savings between members participating in the *stokvel*. These often involve financial contribution amounts between R100, 00 (US$6, 96) – R500, 00 (US$34, 80).

The burial *stokvels* involves provision of both financial and non-financial support to members and their household members in the event of death and burial (Matuku and Kaseke, 2014). One of the burial *stokvels* called *Ubumbano*, simply translating to holding each other, is made up of 16 women members. The members contribute on monthly basis an amount of R100, 00 (US$6, 96) to a member who is nominated as the Treasurer of *Ubumbano*. Respondent 4 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Since I joined *ubumbano*, I now have sisters and a family outside of my biological family which assists during difficult times. Having to bury your loved one is difficult as is it. The costs that come with burial, buying food to cater for visitors and the caretakers adds into the sorrow. Since I joined my sisters, I have buried both my father and sister with the support of *Ubumbano*. There immediately visited us, some coming with water, others wood and other food. This happened throughout the week until the day of burial. They also visited us after burial to further comfort us and assist with cleaning of pots, taking back the chairs and tent to the house of the local councillor. They made burial of both my family members very easy to do, and as a result, I will never leave *Ubumbano.*

The *Ubumbano* stokvel is similar to the *Udondolo* (meaning walking stick for the elderly*) stokvel* in the Jozini cluster where women have organised themselves and contributed towards burial such as: purchasing of the coffin, transportation of the deceased, food and beverages. Interestingly with *Udondolo stokvel*, the treasurer is a male member, who is a sole male member of the *stokvel*. Respondent 17 (*Pers. Comm,* 10 May 2017), who is one of the members of the *stokvel* explained that,

> *Udondolo* was formed by the Treasurer. He is the one who opened our eyes and has helped many families who would have struggled greatly to bury their loved ones with dignity. We then decided that he must be the treasurer of *Udondolo.*

As indicated in table 5.3 below, respondents in four (4) clusters, that is, Jozini (2 respondents), Hluhluwe (1 respondent), Mtubatuba (1 respondent) and Umhlabuyalingana (3 respondents) clusters, explained that they used *stokvels*, more particularly the rotational *stokvels* to increase household food security. None of the respondents in the Hluhluwe cluster were involved in *stokvels*. This must do largely with the sample size of the Hlabisa cluster and the sporadic geographic spread of homesteads as well as the high unemployment rates in the area. These factors have impact also on the local economy and availability of economic and employment opportunities.

The long-term stokvels are mostly used by women and young people in the Umkhanyakude region. The women were involved in long-term *stokvels* while young people were more involved in short-term rotational *stokvels*. None of the men participants participated in these. The participation of women in these was explained by respondent 23 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> Women are best at saving small amounts of money. This is because they do not have to take care of major household needs such as building a house or buying cattle. I cannot save money as all that I get, I use towards maintain all household needs.

Another respondent 27 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in Jozini cluster explained that,

> We have a *stokvel* with my friends. We contribute to the *stokvel* at the end of every month. This money is paid from person to another. Our *stokvel* is really good as it allows you to plan on what to do as you will know that during a specific month, you will have this amount of money. There is four (4) of us in the *stokvel*, and my turn will be in next two (2) months, in July. I am already planning the things I will do with the money.

Table 5.3: Number of respondents involved in *stokvels* in Umkhanyakude region

Cluster Name	**Number**
Hlabisa	-
Hluhluwe	1
Jozini	2
Mtubatuba	1
Umhlabuyalingana	3

In the Umkhanyakude region, those involved in *stokvels* are individuals who are both in formal and informal employment as well as those with informal trading businesses. Common in the region is that individuals in formal employment are involved in both long-term and short-term rotational *stokvels*. They can participate in the long-term *stokvels* as they have steady income for contribution to over the agreed period of the *stokvel*. The individuals involved in the informal sector, through ownership of trading activities or informal employment, are mostly involved in the short-term rotational *stokvels*. For these individuals, their involvement in these is solely about raising money to cater for essential household needs such as food, school uniform and medicine. Respondent 23 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster explained this by stating that,

> The most importance of the *stokvel* is that you know your turn to receive money will arrive soon, and you can use it to buy food and other things needed by the family, particularly the children. It is not easy to wait for too long to receive money as you are not even sure whether you will still have money in six (6) months from now.

From observation, the nature of all *stokvels* in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region resembles those in other areas in that they are formed without written rules of engagement but formed with specific assumptions and understanding. The assumptions include that all members are involved for monetary gain, they will act rationally as this is in their own best interest, contributions are fixed and regular as well as that funds are distributed that members benefit equitably and membership is voluntary (Bophela and Khumalo, 2019, Matuku and Kaseke, 2014 and Verhoef, 2001).

The importance of s*tokvels* cannot be ignored in the Umkhanyakude region. For poor rural women, these are crucial for ensuring that they have access to financial resources, and thereby ensuring them with "economic independence" (Verhoef, 2001: 260). They are instruments which ensures transfer of financial resources to households who ordinarily, would have difficulty having access to money. There is also a benefit of moral or mutual support that is made possible by the burial *stokvels*. This mutual support begins to create social capital, which Matuku and Kaseke (2014: 511) argue that "social networks and friendships, which provide a forum for discussing their personal lives and other issues and thus learn from each other's experiences." These social networks therefore foster a sense of community as members often move beyond the relationship in the *stokvel*, but also assist each other in other life circumstances including creating informal trading activities to enhance their livelihoods and household food security. The social networks form part of what Amartya Sen refers to as "a set of commodity bundles that can be converted to address food security

in a household" (Muzerengi *et al.,* 1996: 1). These are not easily measurable as strategies as they do not directly food security status of households. They are therefore non-food materials that households draw from time-to-time to access food.

Within the broader context, the importance of *stokvels* can be traced from the historical development trajectory of South Africa (Bophela and Khumalo, 2019, Matuku and Kaseke, 2014, Verhoef, 2008, 2001 and 1999 and Irving, 2005). The rural-urban migration suggested "loss of traditional sources of subsistence such as land and cattle" (Verhoef, 2001: 262). With the labour market becoming more male biased at the time, women were left with limited economic and employment opportunities. It was during this time that they got involved in various activities, mostly informal activities including prostitution and informal trading activities. As rural migrants settled in their new urban environment, their kinship relations began to change fundamentally, and thereby changing their way of live. In adapting to new way of living, these had to seek alternative survival strategies. Verhoef (2001: 261) explains that "women devised s*tokvels* to assist them in securing access to the means of production in the urban environment. In so doing, African women laid the foundation for the development of the most important financial savings institution in the informal sector of South Africa." In support of Verhoef (2001) this study argues for a shift in thinking to acknowledge importance of women and ways in which they can be supported working closely with financial institutions which benefit from interest accrued from long-term stokvels. The support for stokvels must not be done in isolation of other strategies such as remittances, which also play an important in providing access to finance to households.

The remittances play an important role in maintaining stability of food access and availability in the Umkhanyakude region. This study borrows definition of remittances from the work of Bryant (2019) Arif *et al* (2019), Banga and Sahu (2014) as well as the International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD (2015) and the World Bank Group (2018) which define remittances as money that is sent my migrant workers to their households for satisfaction of needs including food, education, health and clothing. IFAD (2015: 10) explains that these are,

> Cross-border, person-to person payments of relatively low value, but constitute a critical lifeline for millions of individual households, helping families raise their living standards above subsistence and vulnerability levels.

The study borrows this definition as it best describes what happens in the Umkhanyakude region. In the region, remittances are transferred both through formal and informal means, from family members who, in most instances, work in a city. The formal transfers involve transfer of money through bank accounts, e-wallet, cash send and money-market cash

transfers which are done in grocery shops such as Spar, Boxer Super Store, Shoprite Stores and Checker Hyper. Both banks and the grocery supermarkets can make profit by charging a minimum fee on the money transfer.

The informal transfers involve sending of money through informal means such as *ukuphathisa* (sending money with a friend, relative, acquaintance or public taxi). The informal transfers occur largely in farms and mines where workers often work with people from their village or town. They then develop a relationship and have a verbal agreement that whenever any of the colleague travels home, they would give them money to give to their households. Common today is the use of public taxi drivers for transferring of money to their rural families. Like banks and grocery supermarkets, taxi drivers also charge a fee for transferring money. Respondent 26 (*Pers. Comm,* 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> *Ukuphathisa* in the public taxi is better and faster. My son always sends the money with a taxi, and I receive it on the same day that he has sent it. I also receive the full amount as is, unlike in the bank where I always receive my money less than what he would have sent me. Therefore, I do not like banks, they do what they like with your money. I always encourage my son to send the money using a taxi, even though he sometimes complains that it costs him a lot as they charge him R50.00 (US$3, 48) every time he sends money home.

These informal transfers are not recorded as they do not appear in the formal banking or money transfer systems but utilises embedded informal tools such social and community relations of friendship, neighbourhood, kinship and referrals (Thebe and Mutyatyu, 2016).
The household member(s) working in the city would on monthly basis transfer a portion of their salary to the household members left back in the Umkhanyakude region. The most common transfers are between husbands and wives. This was explained by respondent 18 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster who explained that,

> The father of my children works in the mines in Witbank. I am here at home looking after our four (4) children. While I also sell cooked chicken gizzards in town, he also helps us with money for food and other things here at home. At the end of the day, he is the head of this family, and has to look after us, especially the children.

There are also other instances when transfers are done by other household members other than the head of the household, such as the aunt, uncle, daughter, son, nephew or niece. Interestingly, there was no instance when respondents explained that the women, either in a women-headed household or nuclear family, travelled to look for work and transferred remittances back to the rural home in the Umkhanyakude region. The number of households

explaining that they received remittances and used these as to augment their food security status are indicated in table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Number of households using remittances in the region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	-
Hluhluwe	1
Jozini	2
Mtubatuba	2
Umhlabuyalingana	3

A total number of eight (8) households, translating to 5,3**%** of the total respondents participating in the study indicated that they received remittances from family members working in cities. These were in households in the Hluhluwe, Jozini, Mtubatuba and Umhlabuyalingana clusters. None of the respondents in the Hlabisa cluster indicated that they received any remittances and/or used these as a food security strategy. As is explained in the discussions of *stokvels*, the Hlabisa cluster is the most remote clusters in the region with only one (1) service centre and vast distances between adjacent rural homes and the town. Unlike the Hluhluwe, Mtubatuba and Jozini clusters which are well located and have national roads connecting them to cities such as Mpangeni, Durban as well as Johannesburg, Hlabisa is very isolated and far from major connecting road networks and nodes. The Umfolozi Nature Reserve also isolates the area from the N2, therefore making it difficult for public transport to access the area. As a result, the majority of people, most particularly those in the remote areas, in the Hlabisa cluster do not travel to other areas looking for employment opportunities. People chose to stay in their homesteads, work on the land, rear livestock, hunt and seek work in local supermarkets to maintain their livelihood.

In the discussion of historical development trajectory of the Umkhanyakude region in Chapter 2**,** it is pointed out that the region has and continues to act as labour reservoir to towns and cities. Large numbers of people, especially the youth, migrate into other areas in search for better education and employment opportunities. During the interviews, the respondents, mostly men recounted how, during the times when they used to work in farms and mines in cities, they would send large portions of their income (remittances) back home to satisfy household needs. One of the respondents from Umhlabuyalingana cluster recounted his story during the time when he worked for Sibanye Gold Mine in Carletonville between 1991 and 1998. He explained,

> In March 1991, my older brother called me and said I should take a train to Carletonville in Johannesburg as his bosses had whispered that there were jobs in the mine. During that time, I used to work the fields my father gave me before he

passed on to feed my family. Because the rains were good during those times, unlike now, I would harvest a lot of maize which some I would store *kwi-nqolobane* (food storage warehouse) and some I would give to my neighbours. Fortunately, I also had my own oxen, so I did not have to pay anyone, as this can be expensive when you do not work.

At first, I was a bit reluctant to go as my second wife was still young and three (3) of my children were also young. I however respect my brother and did not want to seem like I did not appreciate the help he offered me. I then decided I will go and work in the mines. It was the first time I had left my home and go work to earn an income. So as much as I was excited, I was also worried that because I do not have higher level of education, I would not be able to get the job or communicate with white boss. Fortunately, when I got there, my brother told me that he was a foreman, so he communicated directly with the bosses of the mine. I realised that I was not going to struggle a lot because even with finding my own room, he managed to talk to the bosses who then offered me my own room while everyone who was new had to share with some of the people not even having the bed to sleep.

For the first two months I was not working, and I would on daily basis wake up and go to my brother's room and cook while he was at work. This then meant, for the whole two months I could not send any money home, and I did not know whether my family had some food to eat or not. One Sunday, my brother called me to his room and said I should wake up early the next day and wait for him in assembly point. He will then take me with to Shaft 1 to introduce me to his boss. That is what I did the next day, and that is how I got the job. The first few days were very tough as was part of the team that had to set up the rail for the cart collecting rock deposits. It was only after about six (6) weeks that I got used to the job. I remember how some of the men decided to leave and look for work in Johannesburg.

At the time, I was getting paid R250, 00 (US$17, 40) and I would send home R150, 00 (US$10, 44) every month. Because I was still new and did not have the TEBA bank account, I then joined with *ibutho,* which was a group of men who, on rotational basis, would visit their homes and take with them money to the families of members of *ibutho.* It was on the sixth month that I managed to visit my family. Then after, I would visit home twice a year, in the months of June and December.

> During the years when I worked at the mine, I ensured that my family was well looked after. I would not allow a situation where they would struggle for food. I preferred that it would rather be me going to bed in an empty stomach than my wives and children (Respondent 12, *Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017).

While not widespread, remittances play an importance role in maintaining some level of household food security and as a survival strategy in the Umkhanyakude region. These are used not only for obtaining food, but also other important household needs including education of children, house renovations, they act as safety nets, lift households out of poverty, and as a result reducing the over reliance by households on the government funded social programmes. IFAD (2015: 11) points out that remittances "provide regular inflows into household budgets that are subject to income volatility and seasonality in rural areas, and they are reliable and timely in times of crisis. This unique source of income allows receiving households to face unpredictable problems, to save residually from amounts received in good months, to affect monthly loan repayments, or to support investment in productive assets." Thus, these create social and economic stability of households, and that of communities.

At a broader level, remittances are crucial for injection of cash transfers into local economies (Bryant, 2019 and Banga and Sahu, 2014). The more the buying capability local communities have, the more demand there is for goods and services, which in turn leads to development of local markets and businesses (Bryant, 2019 and IFAD, 2015). Banga and Sahu (2014: 2) observe that "in many developing countries, more than 20% of GDP is contributed by remittances." In Mexico for example, Durand *et al.,* (1996) in Banga and Sahu (2014: 3) explains that "for every 2 billion US Dollars in remittances that entered Mexico, production in the economy increased by over a 6.5 billion US dollars." This is critical as the increase in the national economies leads to the expansion in financial infrastructure provides access to services that are often not available in more remote urban or rural areas (IFAD, 2015).

The remittances and migration discourse are largely inseparable, more particularly in the countries of the developing world. While migration is prevalent throughout the world, studies have explained and illustrated how the rate of migration has increased and will continue to do so in developing countries (Thebe and Mutyatyu, 2016, Banga and Sahu, 2014 and Donni and Badaoui, 2009). As is illustrated in the discussion of core-periphery relationship between Umkhanyakude region and urban areas in Chapter 2 that, this has been strengthened largely by the introduction of wage employment in towns and cities. Donni and Badaoui (2009) point out that remittances must be understood within the migrant worker system and splitting of households. Preceding the enforcement of the migrant worker system, the wife(s), and

parents of the head of the household would work together in sustaining the household. The wife(s) focused more on the upbringing of the children while parents were decision makers and communicators with ancestors. Changing household responsibilities was a result of changing patterns of household from traditional towards households "entirely of a single-family nuclear" (OECD, 2004: 1).

Other research studies such as that by Keswell (2003) have sought to explain how social engineering of the economy has largely shaped the structure of households. Keswell (2003: 2) points out that "the multifaceted support networks whether in the form of kinship ties through extended families, neighbourhood groups of various types, or friendship circles such as the numerous women groups prevalent in rural communities, can often mean the difference between survival and destitution." The same sentiments are echoed by Donni and Badaoui (2009: 2) who argue that it has become largely uncommon for families to live together and share resources as the extended household structure has become the "core of household income insurance." The splitting of households has become a crucial way of ensuring food stability. It has also become 'normal' and accepted that for the household to survive, the men must migrate to other areas to look for work.

The study observes that remittances will continue to exist and be central in rural household economics as long as rural areas continue to be seen as labour-reservoir for towns and cities. The lack of economic and employment opportunities in these areas also makes it difficult for people, most particularly young people, to stay and explore opportunities. In turn, their migration to cities will further exacerbate splitting of households and reliance on external income. While remittances remain one of the key elements maintaining the rural-urban continuum, there are other strategies that are used in rural areas to raise income to maintain secure household food security status.

The selling of livestock is one of the strategies for generating income in rural areas. In the Umkhanyakude region, livestock includes cattle, goats, chicken, piggery and donkeys. These remain some of the most valued livestock in the region. The value equated to livestock particularly cattle has long historical meaning associated with cattle being the central source of wealth for rural households. In the Zulu culture, possession of cattle by a man as a head of household is considered very important. For instance, there exist an *IsiZulu* phrase that "*ubuhle bendoda izinkomo zayo*", simply meaning, a beauty of a man is through his cattle. It is a saying which suggests that, for any male to regard himself as a man, he must own cattle. The cattle are used for various household needs including for raising income, ploughing the

field, food (meat) and performing rituals. The value equated to cattle still remains in rural communities today.

The strategy of selling livestock differs from other strategies discussed above in a number of ways. Firstly, it is not a strategy used frequently. Secondly, it involves men more than women. Thirdly, when applied, it is not only used for achieving food security, but also other specific household needs such as ill-health, paying university tuition, extension of a house selling of livestock is not the most used the food strategy by households. This was explained by respondent 30 (*Pers. Comm,* 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who stated that,

> Having cattle is the same as having money in the bank. Cattle is even better because you have control over it and can decide at any time to sell and have money to do things. I have 63 cattle and every year, I sell five (5) oxen to raise money to either fix my car, build an additional house for my children, or save for their education. I have two (2) of my children who are in Durban University of Technology and University of KwaZulu Natal. I must always have money, especially at the beginning of the year for their tuition, food and accommodation.

Similar sentiments were shared by respondent 18 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster who explained that,

> Selling your cattle is not like selling a chicken. You must think deeply because life challenges can come into your life at any point in time, and you will need to make a plan as a man to address that challenge. It will be during this time that cattle will assist you to raise money.

It is for this reason that the strategy was not commonplace in all clusters of the region as illustrated in table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5: Number of households selling livestock to purchase food

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	1
Hluhluwe	-
Jozini	-
Mtubatuba	2
Umhlabuyalingana	2

During the interviews, a total of five (5) households (translating to 3, 3%) in the Hlabisa, Mtubatuba and the Umhlabuyalingana clusters indicated they sold their livestock to raise money to achieve food security. The prices of livestock varied depending on the type of cattle sold and the period that it was sold. For instance, if a well grown ox that is sold during the month of December, there is a possibility that more monies will be accrued from the sale

transaction. Respondent 18 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> During December, there is a high demand for oxen as *stokvels* and people want to do rituals and thank their ancestors for the achievements during the year. The price of cattle is usually high during this period. An ox that ordinarily would be sold for R8000, 00 (US$556, 81) is sold for R10 000, 00 (US$696, 02) or even R12 000, 00 (US$835, 22). I sold one of my oxen for R11 500, 00 (US$800, 42) in December last year.

Worth noting however is that this study was undertaken during the period when the Umkhanyakude region was gripped by the drought which had put a serious strain on livestock of many smallholder farmers, who some had lost scores of their livestock. While the government had sought to respond by providing forage and drilling of boreholes for water. To prevent losing all their livestock to drought, households were forced to sell most of their cattle, and move the remaining cattle to the Umhlabuyalingana cluster where thick forests provided some feed for livestock. This was explained by respondent 29 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who stated that,

> I have lost thirty-two cattle because of this drought. I had to make means to save the remaining cattle, and fortunately, I have my brother who lives in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster. I have taken the remaining fifty-eight cattle to his homestead. I them on monthly basis travel there to check if they are all in good-health and vaccinate ailing ones.

With households having to find their own means to protect their livestock indicates lack of coordinated government efforts to support smallholder farmers especially those in rural areas.

The lack of coordinated efforts points to the need for policy that will identify needs of the smaller holder famers; identify training programmes aimed at capacitating rural smallholder farmers to best understand opportunities to increase number of their livestock; and, existing market opportunities for selling of meat and dairy products. It is important that special attention is given to women as they are “responsible for feeding and care and are the guardians of livestock diversity” diversity (Nabarro and Wannous, 2014: 477) in developing policy interventions. In addition, by improving women access to inputs and services has the potential to reduce percentages of food insecure nations, as majority of these are women-headed households. The focus on women will ensure that households have access to income, and in a way are not forced to use strategies which later increases their level of food vulnerability.

In the literature on rural development, the importance of livestock for maintenance of livelihoods of the rural poor has been extensively examined (Nabarro and Wannous, 2014, Swanepoel *et al.*, 2010 and FAO, 2009). Reports by the FAO indicates that livestock accounts for 40% of worldwide income from agriculture (FAO, 2011). In the Sub-Saharan African, livestock contributes approximately 85% of the agricultural gross domestic product of the region. At household and individual levels, livestock is crucial for addressing income poverty and food insecurity. Nabarro and Wannous (2014: 476) explain that "the rearing of livestock plays an important role in enabling smallholders to have resilient livelihoods and to avoid both food insecurity and poverty, as livestock can contribute up to 33% of household income. Overall, 75% of rural people and 25% of urban people depend on livestock for their livelihoods." In addition, livestock is often used as part of mixed farming systems by smallholder farmers to "help raise whole farm productivity and provide a steady stream of food and revenues for households" (FAO, 2009: 33). Other than these, livelihoods play other important roles in rural areas including provision of employment to small holder farmers and local communities, storage of wealth, household insurance, contributing to gender equality by generating opportunities for women and as an observation of religious customs (Nabarro and Wannous, 2014, FAO, 2011 and 2009 and Swanepoel *et al.*, 2010). The standpoint of this study is inclined to this understanding of the role of the livestock in rural communities, both as means to employment and household insurance during the times of increased household vulnerability risks and threats.

Worth noting from the above discussions of various economy-linked food strategies is that majority of these fall within what has in numerous studies is referred to as rural informality (Rogan and Skinner, 2014, Owusu, 2007, ILO, 1996 and Rogerson, 1996). The strategies of food *ukushonisa*, *stokvels* and *ukukweleta* are all 'other means' which households in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region use outside of formal employment to achieve food security. Over and above these, informality in the Umkhanyakude region manifests in the form of informal trading activities and informal employment opportunities. In the clusters of the region informal trading activities include selling of cooked maize, vetkoeks, traditional medicine, clothes (second hand clothes), cell-phone accessories, vegetables and operation of car spares shops and *spaza* shops. These informal trading activities also provides employment opportunities particularly to the young people in the region. For instance, young people are often employed local *spaza* shops as security guards, packers or cleaners.

Table 5.6: Number of households involved in Informal trading activities in the region

Cluster Name	**Number**
Hlabisa	1

Hluhluwe	2
Jozini	8
Mtubatuba	5
Umhlabuyalingana	3

Table 5.6 illustrates that a total of 19 households (13%) of the total households participating in the study use informal trading activities to raise household income to purchase food. The informal trading activities were mentioned as a food strategy in all clusters of the region. The lack of informal businesses in the Hlabisa cluster is attributed to two (2) reasons, firstly, the sample size and the remotely rural nature of the cluster. From observation, the majority of participants who used informal trading activities are those who either lived not far from a local clinic, school, *spaza* shop or the main road. For instance, in Jozini cluster, the sellers of cooked mealies travelled over 30 kilometres to sell their mealies in the Msiyane junction. The Msiyane junction is one of the busiest areas around Jozini town. It is situated approximately four (4) kilometres away from Jozini town. In the Umhlabuyalingana cluster, women who have vetkoeks businesses sell these in the Mpophomeni local clinic. While these operate in different settings, one being urban and market accessible, and the other being rural and lacking infrastructure and economic opportunities, the premise and objective of these business is similar. The objective is to sell to as many people as possible, minimise travelling cost and maximise profit margins. This was articulated by respondent 13 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who stated that,

> I sell my vetkoeks on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On the other days, it is other women who sell theirs as we have agreed to rotate. My home is not far from this clinic, and this makes it much easier as I do not have to spend money on transport. I only ask my children to help me with carrying five (5) buckets of *vetkoeks*.

This however differed with meali-mealie business owners in the Jozini cluster who had to travel over 40 kilometres to their places of work. Respondent 25 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster explained that,

> I buy green mealies from local farmers in the Umjindi area. As one of their old, established customer, they are now willing to sell green mealies to me on discounted prices. Rather than paying R40, 00 (US$2, 78) for 6 green mealies, I pay R35, 00 (US$2, 44). I then, with six (6) of the ladies who also sell green mealies, hire a local bakkie for a price of R250, 00 (US$ 17, 40) to collect the mealies from Umjindi farm. To save on transport costs, I buy green mealies that I am able to sell for a week. On daily basis, I normally sell between 80 and 120 mealies. On a busy day, I can sell 200 cooked green mealies. This then means I

> buy 120 mealies on weekly basis. All the mealies I keep in this storeroom as I cannot afford to take it home with me home since I travel 42 kilometres to come here on daily basis. The good thing with selling in this junction is that it is alongside the main R22 road, has lots of activity and there are always people around here. There is also a car wash and *spaza* shop across the road. We all have a good relationship with the owner of the carwash. He has security guards looking after his area at night. We have also asked that they also keep safe our storerooms as our mealies used to be stolen a lot initially. The owner has really been nice to us as he does not charge us anything for safeguarding our storerooms.

The informal trading activities are not only important for those who own them, but also provide working opportunities for poor people in the clusters, particularly young women. During interviews, a total of 12 respondents (8%) in all clusters explained that they worked in informal trading activities to achieve household food security. The nature of employment opportunities offered by informal trading activities included working in *spaza* shop, selling of items such as green mealies for green mealie owners, vetkoeks, banana, peanuts, peanuts, avocado, baskets and palm wine production. Most respondents who were involved in informal activities through 'employment' were in Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters with five (5) and three (3) respondents respectively. This illustrates the importance of informality in providing employment opportunities for people, who in the most part, do not have the required education and skills to participate in the formal market economy. This importance was explained by respondent 23 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster who explained that,

> Jobs for people like me without any education are hard to come by in this place. Even people who have completed Matric struggle to find any job here. I was saved by my aunt who hired me to sell cooked green mealies here at Bethesda clinic and in town. I am able to sell between 30 and 40 cooked mealies on daily basis. This gives me approximately R250, 00 (US$17, 40) of income every day which I then use to buy food and clothes for my children.

The question therefore relates to how involved in such informal traders can be supported so that their activities can always sustain them. As indicated above, this signals the need to refocus the debates, framing of informality and its importance on livelihoods of the people particularly those with no education, skills or are poor. In South Africa, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) has illustrated how in the last 10 years, informal economy has constituted a "significant source of employment in the country, thus warranting analysis and policy attention" (Rogan and Skinner, 2014: 2). The policy on informal economy firstly

focused on the doing away with what the former President Thabo Mbeki referred to as the second economy which is,

> Characterised by underdevelopment, contributes little to GDP, contains a large percentage of our population, incorporates the poorest of our rural and urban poor, is structurally disconnected from both the first and the global economy, and is incapable of self-generated growth and development (Rogan and Skinner, 2014: 4).

Policies such as the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGI-SA), the next major statement on economic policy imperatives called for the abolition of the second economy. The critique of this policy position from some certain quarters such as Aliber *et al.,* (2006) and Neves and du Toit (2012) and growing recognition of informal economy particularly in urban areas led to institutional and policy shifts. It is for this reason in 2012, policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 were developed. The NDP forecasted that the informal economy will create between one to two million new jobs by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Worth noting is that most of the respondents involved in informal trading activities were young women. While there were some young men, who, from observation also sell some of the items mentioned above, these were not involved for financial gain, but assisted their mothers who were also working and/or had their own informal trading business. The gendered dimension of these informal employment opportunities is in line with the explanation by the International Labour Organisation, ILO (1996) that, women are more likely to be involved in these informal trading activities as they are willing to accept low paying employment opportunities than men. The same is argued by Rogerson (1996: 171) who points out that informal trading activities are,

> Survivalist enterprises which represent a set of activities, majority of which tend to be run by women, usually fall short of even a minimum standard of income, with little capital investment, virtually no skills training and only constrained opportunities for expansion into a viable business.

In Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Umhlabuyalingana clusters, none of the respondents who sold cooked mealies, bananas and peanuts were men. All these were done by women, particularly young women as they are perceived and looked at as low paying, humiliating informal jobs. From observation, men worked in *spaza* shops as cashiers or shop assistants, shoemaking and taverns. Respondent 23 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in Jozini cluster explained that “you need men to carry heavy goods such as bags of maize meal, cement and cases of soft drinks. They also provide security which is important in these areas. Once more, this illustrates the

complexity of the informal economy, more particularly when efforts are made to improve working conditions and integrate those in the informal to the formal economy.

5.1.2. State Organisationally linked (SOL) Food Strategies

The study has observed in the review of literature in Chapter 4 that in societies, there exist complex systems which shape the meaning of life, actions, attitudes and behaviour of people. The same can be said of economic-related food strategies. These are shaped by institutional, policy and regulated systems by the government. Due to lack of micro finance systems for people without formal employment or a collateral, *omashonisa* have emerged to cater for this portion of the population. This signals how the economy-related food strategies do not occur in happenstance but are a result of structural systematic and institutionalised processes of the state and the market economy. Over and above the informal economy-related food strategies, there are state-led food strategies used by households to access food. In the Umkhanyakude region, the state-led strategies include child support grant, disability grant and pension grant. While these involve financial gain, they are categorised in the study as state organisationally linked strategies as they are institutionalised, guided by legal and policy frameworks and are administered by the government.

The SOL strategies are crucial in maintaining the welfare of many households in South Africa. These are perceived as one of powerful tools to achieve social protection by reducing poverty and inequality (particularly in South Africa) and globally (Gutura and Tanga, 2014). Reducing poverty is a global call by all states and international institutions including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB), Department for International Development (DFID), as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In South Africa, the SOL strategies are central for purposes of accessing food by households as significant percentage of households (over 40%) are reported to have no formal household income (SASSA, 2018 and Gutura and Tanga, 2014). These households are more prevalent in rural areas where there is a shortage of economic and employment opportunities (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2011). To circumvent high number of households in poverty, government grants were identified as one of the key tools towards keeping these above the acceptable poverty line.

Dissimilar to the COL food strategies which are administered through informal arrangements and structures, the SOL food strategies are structured and regulated. One of the central regulations of these are the minimum requirements which must be met by beneficiaries. Taking pension grant for example, beneficiaries of these must be of certain permissible age to qualify (SASSA, 2018). The same can be said of social and foster grants which also have minimum requisite requirements which need to be met. The dates of payment of the SOL

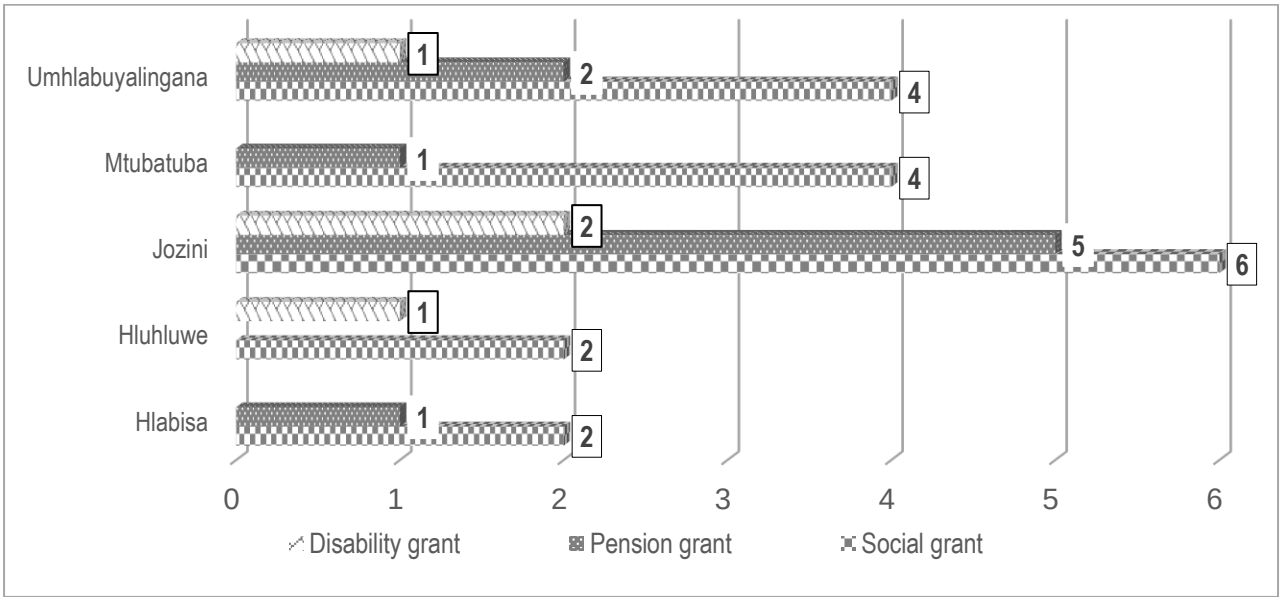
strategies to the beneficiaries is also fixed and known. As a result, beneficiaries of the SOL strategies can plan their spending patterns throughout the month. The formal arrangement and structure of SOL strategies ensures certainty, which results in improved level of access to food and other resources (financial) by households in rural areas. Households who earned any of the SOL strategies can buy food on credit and borrow money from informal micro-lenders. This was made possible because of the understanding and social trust built between the beneficiaries, the *spaza* shop owners and/or micro-lenders. They latter knew that these are guaranteed to receive their government grants at the end of the month and would then be able to pay off their debt. The same social trust could not be developed between either the *spaza* shop owners or micro-lenders and households who received no government grant and/or had no steady household income.

The impact of SOL food strategies goes beyond social trust. Hagen-Zanker *et al* (2011) observes that other impacts of government grants include improved health of household members, school attendance of children and access to job opportunities. The SOL strategies improve health of household members "by bringing income into the household, thereby acting as a preventive rather than a palliative intervention" (Gutura and Tanga, 2014: 660). They further observe that, in rural areas where social reciprocity is central in day-to-day lives of the people, the certainty embedded in SOL strategies "makes a remarkable difference to the status of the recipient and the ability to transact with those around them" (*Ibid*).

As is indicated in figure 5.3 below, a total of 31 households (translating to 20, 7% of households participating in the study) indicated that they used government administered grants to access food. The child support grants are the most used grants with 12% of the households indicating that they used these to access food. The child welfare grant is followed by the pension grants (6%) and pension grants (2, 7%). These grants are received at specific period, which is the first day and last day of the month. It is for this reason that majority of households in the region often have enough food to eat between first ten (10) days and last days of every month. Respondent 32 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> I have five (5) children with two (2) of them receiving child support grant. They are six (6) and eight (8) years respectively. I use R760, 00 (US$52, 90) that I receive to buy food and clothes for my family. As a result of the size of my family, the money I receive through child support grants is not enough to support my family. It is for this reason that I also sell mats to local people during the pay out of pension every month. The money I get from selling mats assists me to buy additional food and other necessary household needs.

Fig 5.3: Number of households receiving state grants in Umkhanyakude region



Worth noting is that some of the households pointed out that they received both child support and pension grants. From observation, these households were closer to secure food security status as they satisfied both the dimensions of food access and availability. This was explained by respondent 8 (*Pers. Comm,* 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster who explained that,

> I still stay with my mother who earns pension grant. I also have two (2) children who earn child support grant. As I take care of my mother, I have decided that she buys food at the end of the month when she receives her pension grant. I then withdraw the child support grant of my two (2) children in the second week of the month to add food that may be finished from that purchased at the end of the month.

The households who are recipients of government grants indicted that the local *spaza* shop owners were willing to give them food on credit as they knew that these households have steady income and would be able to pay their debt.

The role played by the state organisationally linked food strategies cannot be overlooked in the Umkhanyakude region. These ensure that the poor households have access to money on monthly basis, and thereby contributing towards income redistribution in a country which is highly unequal (Armstrong and Burger, 2009). Not only do these ensure access to income by poor households, but it also has impact in reviving rural and township economies which largely depend on smaller incomes earned by local customers. In his study on social grants in South Africa, Rossouw (2017: 1) observes that,

> Grant money is not only used to support beneficiaries. It is also used to provide broader support, and more than one-third of South Africans depend – directly and indirectly – on grant payments. The economies of small towns and villages would be hit hard because they are heavily dependent on grant payments being used to buy goods and services in local shops. One knock on effect would be that shop owners' income streams would be affected and they would not be able to pay employee salaries.

Other studies have focused on the impact of state social grants on health-related issues such as HIV/Aids, poverty and inequality (Chakona and Shackleton, 2019, Waidler and Devereux, 2019, Gutura and Tanga, 2014 and Crush and Frayne, 2011). In most of these studies, the findings have observed the importance of state grant transfers in improving lives of people and cushioning them against risks and threats to their livelihoods.

The prevalence of state organisationally linked food security strategies in the region is influenced by the long historical existence of social security system in South Africa which can be traced back into the apartheid period (Devereux, *et al.*, 2017, Booysen and van der Berg, 2006 and Samson *et al.*, 2006). While exclusionary initially as black people did not qualify, the social security system began in early 1920s with introduction of the Old Age Pensions Act of 1928 (Samson *et al.*, 2006). At the time, the government sought to provide social protection to particularly white elderly people who were vulnerable to poverty (Devereux *et al.*, 2017). This exclusionary social protection of the elderly white people led to widened inequality gap as majority of the black population continued to plunge into poverty. It was for this reason that when the democratic government was introduced in 1994, it "inherited a fragmented social security system rooted in a concern for the interests of the apartheid constituency" (Samson *et al.*, 2006: 2). It was therefore crucial that the government introduced fundamental social security reforms in line with the new constitutional mandate to ensure that everyone has a right to have access to social security (*Ibid*). Today, over 17 million beneficiaries receive different types of grants as determined through applicable qualification criteria (Devereux, 2017 and Devereux *et al.*, 2017).

Whereas these have to a greater extent cushioned poor households against poverty, they have not addressed high levels of inequality in South Africa (Samson *et al.,* 2006). In their study of the role of social grants on poverty and inequality, Armstrong and Burger (2009: 4) observe that "for the poorest amongst these households, the distribution effect was negative, indicating that state welfare transfers "worsened" the distribution of income, that is, rendered it less equal." This study holds a similar viewpoint that, while majority of households in clusters of the region explained the importance of state grant transfers in improving their food

security status, these did not do much in bridging the gap between these poor households and the middle and upper classes. This failure is due to two (2) reasons. Firstly, the size of households which receive these grants are large, and as a result the received grants must be shared amongst many members in the household. This was the case in the household of respondent 8 in the Jozini cluster where over 14 members live in one household and are supported by pension grant and child support grant of two (2) members of the household. Secondly, as result of large household sizes, the total amount of grants received by beneficiaries are too small and cannot cater for food demand of the household, let alone the individual needs of each household member. Thus, while the grants generate dependency, they also facilitate indebtedness creating a retrogressive well-fare rather than leveraging empowerment.

5.2. Conclusion

The discussion of economy-related food illustrates how accessing food by households in the Umkhanyakude region remains a daily negotiated process which cannot be achieved using a single strategy within the realm of institutional economics. Households employ a number of economy-related food strategies to obtain food that are embedded in the social structures of trust and reciprocity. These food strategies are deeply embedded in community institutions and are socialised through local systems and structures. Interestingly, while some of the strategies somehow assist households towards achieving a security food security status, there exist other strategies which increase their level of vulnerability. Most households seemed not concerned by their susceptibility to future food insecurity as their concern was to have food on the plate now. Most, if not all, households in clusters of Umkhanyakude region illustrated less concern for their future food security status. This was illustrated by their constant use of the various economic-related food strategies increasing their future levels of vulnerability of their security status. The constant struggle to have access to food leads to households not worrying about the future, but the present.

There also exist economic related food strategies which further strengthens livelihoods of households beyond the issue of food access, availability and utilisation. Most of these food strategies remain largely neglected and fall outside of the institutionalised and policy guided interventions. No official recognition is given to this vital savings mechanism in official statistics, which then creates fertile ground for,

> Underestimation of the importance of these organizations both as savings institutions and as mechanisms of poverty alleviation and social advancement. Insufficient recognition is also given to the importance of the savings records of

> such organization as a basis for access to credit, especially for African women (Verhoef, 2001: 261).

The question that arises relates to how rural economies can be configured to ensure that, at household levels, they support those efforts by women who continue to be looked down as their jobs are not regarded highly in communities in which they live. What awareness and support are needed to ensure that women are supported to leverage more from their work areas within which they live rather than having to travel to areas such as Nongoma, Mpangeni and Durban to sell their products. The informal institutions such as *ubumbano* and *udondolo* continue to play a crucial role in providing emotional and psychological support during times of grief, while also simultaneously providing financial support during the time of great need. There needs to be a way these can be empowered and included into the institutionalised government systems so as reduce over reliance on state resources such as the state employed social workers, while at the same time reducing the burden on households who are left to fend for themselves through these community social groups. What is necessary is to actively develop existing household systems and make them function better so that they have a wider reach and impact. These efforts must be made working closely with the communities are they best understand what works for them.

The nature of informal trading activities in the region is not different to informal activities in other areas such as urban areas. The majority of these were small-scale operations, have family ownership, labour intensive, are adapted to local conditions, often do not require skills from the formal school system except the ability to count. As such, they are territorial in nature and provide ease of entry into the activity and are unregulated. The existence of the informal trading in these clusters suggests the importance of rural informality for maintenance of livelihood in rural areas. It also presents the complexity of the informal sector in these areas in terms of regularisation through development of policy framework(s) to guide informal trading. For instance, the selling of green mealies, how can these businesses (predominantly women) be assisted to be formal businesses contributing to the local economies as well regional and the national gross domestic product. The operation of the rural economy remains not well understood. The benefits and risks associated with the sector needs further examination and consideration.

With regards to micro-lending, the standpoint of this study is that the role played by informal micro-lenders to restore the dignity of the rural poor needs to be acknowledged. The regulations must investigate how informal micro-lenders can be incorporated into formal credit facilities. A leeway must also be made for people who either have low paying jobs, those living in rural areas whose assets are those not recognisable by formal credit facilities

such as banking institutions, for example cattle, as well as those who have a bad credit profile or records in serving their loans (Wrenn, 2005). Not only will this strengthen informal micro-lenders but will also improve the negative stereotypes associated with these lenders as violent and humiliating to borrowers (Harvey, 2019 and van Aswegen, 2018). The exorbitant interest fees, must also be regulated as these further plunge poor households into debt, therefore further worsening their food security status (Wrenn, 2005).

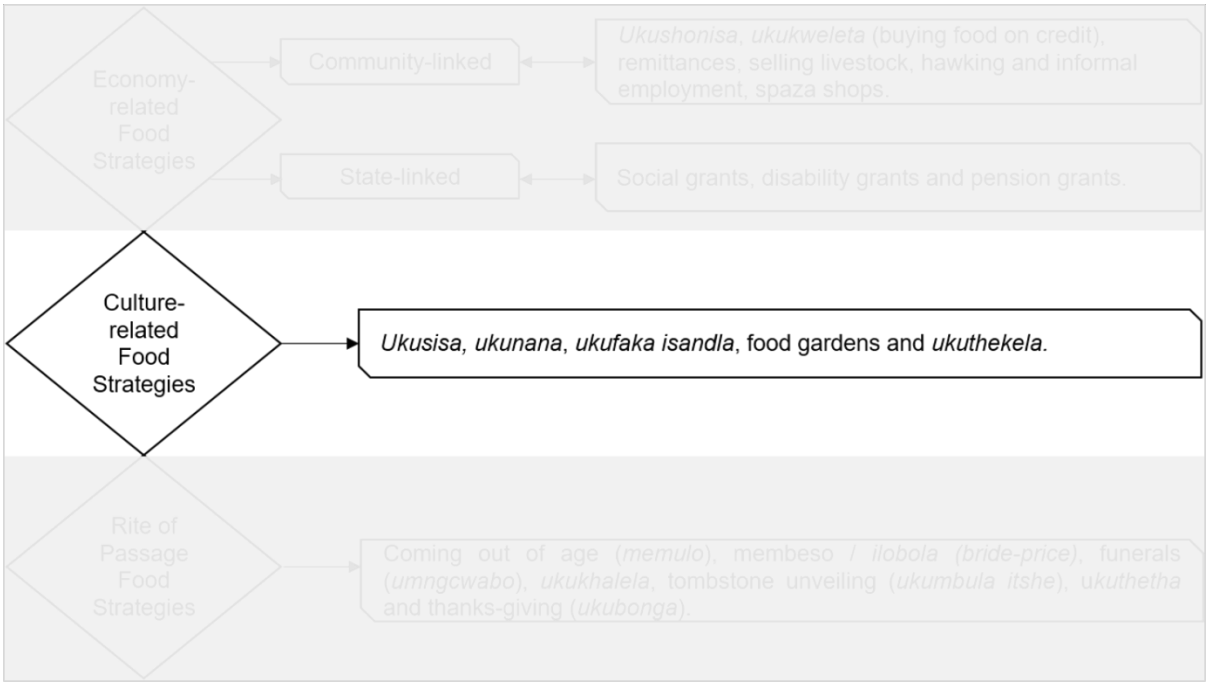
Chapter 6: Culture-related Household Food Security Strategies in the Umkhanyakude Region

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the analyses of household food strategies in the clusters of Umkhanyakude region. The purpose of the chapter is to discuss the second leg of food strategies, namely, culture-related food strategies. The culture-related food strategies include *ukunana* (simply translating to asking for food from relatives or neighbours); *ukusisa* (allocating livestock to a household member as future investment); *ukufaka isandla* (assisting a neighbour with ploughing or fencing the field); food gardens; and *ukuthekela* (sharing of seedlings and crops between households, individuals or villages). Many of these strategies are not only particular to the Zulu people but are common in other ethnic groups such as Batswana, Swazi and Xhosa. For example, the Batswana practice *ukusisa* is referred to as *letsema*. The culture-related food strategies are largely motivated by beliefs, values, norms, taboos, identities, attitudes, language, ritual traditions, and institutions that are embedded in society. They are accepted as practices of different groups within communities and are learned and transmitted between individuals and across generations through socialisation process (Alonso *et al.*, 2017, Ung, 2015 and Guiso *et al.*, 2006). In the study, these food strategies are largely embodied through traditional agricultural systems and practices by the Zulu people in rural areas.

In terms of structure, culture-related food strategies are discussed in the following manner, firstly, *ukunana*, secondly, *ukusisa*, thirdly, *ukufaka isandla* and fourthly, *ukuthekela*. Firstly, the chapter introduces and defines each strategy; secondly, it explains how it is used by households each cluster; thirdly, it presents and provides an analysis of data gathered from the field including outlining similarities or disparities within the clusters; fourthly, it links findings and analyses into broader literature on each food strategy; and fifthly, discusses whether the findings confirm or challenge the existing viewpoints and perspectives. In conclusion, the chapter indicates that these food strategies are embedded in the act of mutual support and sense of reciprocity which is a social norm involving in-kind exchanges between households, as they respond to each other's household needs. The culture-related strategies are indicated in figure 6.1 below.

Fig 6.1 Culture-related food security strategies in clusters of Umkhanyakude region



These are framed as culture-related strategies as they are embedded in cultural values, norms, beliefs cultural, practices and stereotypes, that are accepted as what defines day-to-day life. In defining the notion of culture, a number of components are considered crucial for delineating the understanding of the concept in the study are discussed. They are determining factors in terms of how life in communities is shaped and understood, what is good and bad, right and wrong as well valuable and invaluable (Alonso *et al.,* 2017). Such attributes are important for shaping the behaviour of the people in this cultural habitus in terms of their attitudes, actions and non-actions. It is important to understand these in food security studies as people's decisions on what and how food is produced and utilised (Alonso *et al.*, 2017). This point is emphasised by Agada and Igbokwe (2016: 37) who point out that "environments where people live, and their ancestral origins influence food culture and practices with food and food cultures passed on from one generation to another."

Dissimilar to the economy-related food strategies, culture-related food strategies were not mentioned as main strategies of obtaining food in all the five (5) clusters. The culture-related food strategies contributed a total of 25, 3% to overall percentage of household food security strategies in the region. While these may have not been the main food security strategies, it must be observed that they were used in a complimentary manner to the economy-related food security strategies. One of the good examples illustrating the complimentary relationship between these was when households would obtain food through *ukunana*. In this instance, this culture-related food strategy is not used as the main strategy to access and ensure availability of food on daily basis. It is however used a complimentary strategy in an instance

where other strategies, economy-related strategies are not to the exposure of households in the long-term.

In *IsiZulu*, *ukunana* translates to asking for any food item such as cooking oil, onions, salt, maize-meal, rice, potatoes between neighbours or relatives. The household in need for food approaches a household who has food that they need and ask for that specific food item. In all clusters of the region, it emerged that the household members involved in *ukunana* were particularly women and children. In the case of children, these got involved as their mothers would often send them to the neighbour or the relative where food is being requested. This was explained by respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster that,

> Sometimes you realise when you are already cooking that you do not have salt or peanuts, and you then must send the children to get these for you from the neighbour. Other times it could be that you have other tasks to do such as fetching water or having to look after a baby while cooking. I always prefer to ask from neighbours than family because they are always willing to assist with a clean heart and do not expect anything from me as they know my family situation. Asking for food from family relatives can sometimes be problematic because when there are conflicts or disagreements between families, you get told that you cannot raise your view because they have helped you before. It is as if they are doing you a favour, and you cannot disagree with them even when you can see that whatever they are doing does not sit well with you.

The respondent explained that the households who give food do not do this with the expectation that the same type and quantity of food given is returned. Rather, they give food with an understanding that in future, they will also be in shortage of food, and *bazonana* (process of *ukunana*) from their neighbour. Respondent 8, (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Most of families, particularly those that do not have anyone who as formal employment, rely a lot on *ukunana* from their neighbours and relatives to have food on the table. There are times, when I also run of out of food, and I go to my neighbour to ask for food. She also does the same when she has shortage of some food items. If I have what she is asking for, I give it to her without hesitation as I know that she also supports me and will continue to do so in the future. I however try not ask her for food every month as I do not want to be seen as a burden to her. She also has her family and children which needs to feed. It is for this reason that n*ginana* (I only ask for food) only staple food types such as maize-

meal, cooking oil or potatoes. Also, *nginana* when there is nothing else, I can do get food. In instances where I can still do something, for instance, buy food on credit from the local *spaza* shop, I do so.

HHD 2 (*Pers. Comm*, 29 May 2017) from Bhambanana in the Jozini cluster recorded that,

> *Ukunana* plays an important role in lives of many families in this area. As you can see, no one works in this family. We solely depend on the social grants of three (3) of my grandchildren and the money I make from selling green mealies by the main road in the Msiyane. Every month, I must either buy food on credit or ask for it from my sister and neighbours. While having to ask for food is not nice, I must do it. Unlike my children, who are adults, my grandchildren cannot understand when there is no food to eat. My sister is always willing *ukunginanela* (giving me food) without expectation of me returning food *engikunanile (food I have asked for)*. At least, asking for food from them is better than buying food on credit from local Somali *spaza* shops. They always want their money, sometimes with interest. There are two (2) Somali *spaza* shop owners who do not sell me food on credit anymore because my debt is insurmountable.

As a food strategy, *ukunana* is common in all clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. A total of 7, 3% of households participating in the study explained that *bayanana* (they ask for food) from their neighbours and relatives to achieve food security. From observation, *ukunana* was more prevalent in clusters that are remotely rural and does not have a major towns or service centres such as Jozini and Mtubatuba. The Umhlabuyalingana cluster is the one the most rural of all clusters in the region followed by Hlabisa and Hluhluwe clusters. These do not have major economic centres, but small service centres mainly as centres of for retail and government services. In these clusters, households must travel longer distances to the service centre, and as a result bearing higher transport costs. Having to travel to the service centre when the household has a shortage of food becomes a cumbersome exercise, and households then decide to find other means to find food locally through such as *ukunana* and *spaza* shops. The number of households using *ukunana* to achieve food security are indicated in table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Number of households using *ukunana* in Umkhanyakude region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	2
Hluhluwe	2
Jozini	1
Mtubatuba	2

Umhlabuyalingana	4

The respondents explained that *ukunana* was particularly used in the third and fourth weeks of the month as this is the period when they largely had food shortages. It is important to mention that u*kunana* was not used as a preferred food strategy. Households would first explore other strategies such as *omashonisa* and *ukukweleta* prior to using *ukunana*. *Ukunana* was often used as one of those last resort strategies. This was explained by respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm,* 8 May 2017) of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster, that asking for food made her feel that she was a burden to her neighbours. During the interviews, some of the households were reluctant to discuss a length the relationships and/or agreements they have with their neighbours. Some of the households would mention that they used *ukunana* but would not confirm that they regarded as a strategy. HHD 1 (*Pers. Comm*, 28 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster recorded that,

> As much as people are always willing to assist you, it is not right to make people feel that your problems are their problems. In *IsiZulu*, we say *ayikho Indlovu ehlulwa umboko wayo*, simply translating that, there is no elephant that fails to carry its trunk. The needs of my family are my responsibility, and I must always make means to provide for them, without having to rely on other people to support me.

The above explanation by respondents signals two (2) key fundamentals of *ukunana* as a food strategy. Firstly, it illustrates how, the strategy strengthens the relations of trust, co-operation, and reciprocity between the households in clusters of the region. The cooperation and reciprocity relationship between families goes beyond exchanges of food to support such as *ukukhalela*, an *IsiZulu* word translating to ‘cry for’. The mutual support and social capital that households have built amongst themselves has largely been discussed in the vulnerability and resiliency discourse. In a study by Endris *et al* (2017) for example, they point out how lack of adequate support from the government, or the market has led rural communities to build their own mutual support systems. Endris *et al* (2017: 2) argue that,

> Rural communities in Ethiopia have developed a system of mutual support founded on social capital for guarding and buffering against shocks. Indigenous mutual support practices based on cooperation and social support networks that respond to social need and promote household and community wellbeing to shocks have been institutionalized and widely practiced among rural households in Ethiopia for many centuries. These arrangements offer different services, such as mutual insurance, labour sharing, saving, and credit to rural households and

> fulfil many other sociocultural obligations. They are based on widely agreed norms of trust, moral obligation and reciprocities.

In another study, Rockenbauch and Sakdapolrak (2017: 1) observe that,

> Social networks have been shown to foster the capacity to buffer, adapt to, and shape change by providing resources needed to cope with external stresses and disturbances, and fostering humans' ability to initiate social innovations and act collectively.

For them, these social networks are prevalent in rural areas which they regard as "vulnerable social ecological systems (SES)" where they exist "lack of access to resources, knowledge, and functioning institutions" (*Ibid*). As a result, people living in these areas must find their own means to withstand internal and external stress from social, economic and political changes (Rockenbauch and Sakdapolrak, 2017, Hassan and Birungi, 2011 and Beekman *et al.*, 2009).

The social capital and relationships are largely embedded in social systems and structures governing life in communities. Endris *et al* (2017: 2) also arrive in a similar conclusion that the social safety nets and networks in Ethiopia are based on "traditional values and religious beliefs" underpin these practices, placing a strong cultural obligation and sanctions on community members to promote cooperation and collective action, build solidarity, and support vulnerable households to cope with shocks. The commonplace viewpoint on social networks begins to move away from the individualist observation of human actions and behaviour which are part of orthodox economics. This places an emphasis on the importance of sense of community which is fostered through relationships and social institutions embedded in society. It also acknowledges the means that people make in positive light, in that they are flexible and able to adapt to uncertainty and change which is crucial for prosperous development of communities (Beekman *et al.*, 2009). This marks a shift away from the narrative that observes these as being informal, unregulated, and not contributing to economic growth of countries. It is the moral economy which cushions households against uncertainties and food insecurity in the future.

Secondly, the above discussions signal negative sentiments in relation to *ukunana* as a food strategy. Households are mindful and avoid reliance on their relatives or neighbours to access food. Asking for food from other people is seen as household's inability of to sustain itself. The respondents explained how, particularly their relatives would at times refer to then as being 'problematic' or a 'burden'. These expressions have serious implications on the social status of households who often have food shortages and resorting to *ukunana*. It

illustrates how these households view themselves in relation to those that they ask for food and how the communities view them in return. Mood and Jonsson (2016: 634) for points out that,

> Being poor is about not being able to partake in society on equal terms with others, and therefore in the long run being excluded by fellow citizens or withdrawing from social and civic life because of a lack of economic resources, typically in combination with the concomitant shame of not being able to live a life like them." They further explain that "the inability of living a decent or ordinary social life may in this perspective erode social networks, social relations, and social participation, potentially setting off a downward spiral of misfortune (*Ibid*).

This strengthens the stigma and economic class in rural areas where those who are perceived as poor and/or are lower social status are considered less important and their views are often not given consideration. This was evident in clusters such as the Umhlabuyalingana, Hlabisa and Hluhluwe where some of the respondents chose not to participate in the study as they did not regard their views and opinions important. The respondents did not regard themselves as having what Amartya Sen (1981) refers to as basic capabilities to meaningfully participate in the study. Sen (1981) points out that this is the same perception that they have of themselves in society, where they remain in poverty because of failure to expand choices and capabilities to lead lives they desire.

This discussion of *ukunana ukudla* (asking for food and returning later) both at household and wider community level is important as it assists in unpack existing disproportionate food allocations that exist both at household and community levels (Oishi, 2014). For instance, in the region, individuals in woman-headed households received less quantities and nutritious food than in households where both parents were present and relatively small in household size. This is not only the case in the Umkhanyakude region but has also been discovered in other areas. In the study by Shankar *et al* (1998) on food consumption in Guatemala, they observed that in household, males, who are heads of households receive proportionally more food and dietary protein than other members of the households who receive less, poor quality food. Single women-headed households often face difficulties in having a stable household income coupled with household needs which are more than received household income. Similar observation is made by Felker-Kantor and Wood (2012: 3) in their study of female-headed households and food insecurity in Brazil, where they conclude that "the odds of moderate and severe food insecurity are, respectively, 32% and 16% higher among households headed by women compared to households headed by men."

The viewpoint of this study is that while this dynamic of high prevalence of food insecure continues to persist in rural areas, active involvement of women on activities to obtain food illustrates an important dimension of food security. From observation during the fieldwork, women illustrated high commitment towards achieving food security and betterment of status of their households than men. Unlike men, who would at times spend their money purchasing palm wine for their own self benefit, women used all their income in addressing household needs. Felker-Kantor and Wood (2012: 5) observe that women who head their households "spend a greater percentage of their earnings on household necessities such as food." This involvement of women in household activities increases their level of voice in decision making process. Their active involvement in the decision-making processes signals shifts in gendered power relations and the politics of the home. While they, women, in the most part continue to play a huge role in child raising, their involvement in food security activities demand that they also decide on what and how resources are used and shared within the household. These gendered dynamics of food security are further explored in chapter 8 of the study. Closely related to *ukunana* is the food strategy of *ukuthekela* food strategy.

Ukuthekela, which does not have a direct translation in English, involves sharing of seedlings and crops between households, individuals or *izigodi* (villages). It is observed in this study that this strategy is to a greater extent similar to ukunana as it involves sharing of seedlings or crops between households. The strategies only differ in the level of sharing, the types of items being shared and that *ukuthekela* can be done without one household asking for crops from the other household. Equally, *ukuthekela is* particularly about sharing of specific types of items, that is, seedlings or crops, while *ukunana* involves asking for different kinds of food types. *Ukuthekela* is largely seasonal, with households often using this food strategy in certain seasons such as winter (for planting of spinach and cabbages) and summer (for planning of green mealies). As a result, the strategy of *ukuthekela* is not as common and frequently used for obtaining food on immediate basis. Some of the respondents indicated that they did not even regard ukuthekela as food strategy as the crops could only be utilised after a certain period. This was explained by respondent 22 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who stated that,

> When you are hungry, you need food now, not tomorrow or a day after that. The crops that I get from my sister will only give me food in three (3) to four (4) months from now. Where would I be if I had to wait for that and not find other means?

Another respondent from the Hlabisa cluster explained how they do not always use *ukuthekela* food strategy as result of changing climatic conditions including hot weather and

drought conditions. Respondent 4 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> I share sweet potato leaves with my neighbours and my sister-in-law who stays in Ingwavuma. My sister-in-law sometimes share dry green mealies as she always plants these. This we do voluntarily, there is no expectation from either of us to always share these seedlings. I share with her sweet potato leaves as I know she loves sweet potato. It is however not something we all the time as we are not always planting. I did not plant any sweet potato last year because of lack of rain and hot weather. Even those who tried, they did not see any harvest as their crops dried up as the result of the hot weather. This place is gets very hot in summer, and nothing grows, and we all get tired of working for nothing.

Table 6.2: Number of households using *ukuthekela* in the Umkhanyakude Region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	1
Hluhluwe	-
Jozini	1
Mtubatuba	-
Umhlabuyalingana	2

As is illustrated in table 6.2 above, 2, 7% of the households explained that they use *ukuthekela* to have access to certain food types. The strategy still exists in Hlabisa, Jozini and the Umhlabuyalingana clusters. Common in the three (3) clusters is the existence of household food gardens. As a result, households would on occasional basis share seedlings or crops amongst each other. As explained above, the Hlabisa and Umhlabuyalingana clusters are the most rural clusters in the region where practices of food sharing are still prevalent. The commonly shared seedlings or crops are spinach, cabbages, cassava, sweet potato leaves, pumpkin, peanuts, and green mealies. The harvest from fields where households would have assisted each other to plough would be shared amongst households or communities. Importantly, households would share food types that others do not have. This sharing of seedlings is done without an expectation of financial gain. It is based solely on social trust and spirit of wanting to help others. This was explained by respondent 4 *(Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster when she stated that “this we do voluntarily, there is no expectation from either of us to always share these seedlings.” As it is explained in Chapter 2, this social trust is embedded in social beliefs of *Ubuntu* and emphasis of the collective rather than the individual abilities and behaviour.

Evident from the discussions with respondents involved in *ukuthekela* as a food strategy is the close relationship between this food strategy and food gardens. From observation, all

respondents who acknowledged that they shared seedlings or crops with their relatives or neighbours had food gardens in their homesteads. Other respondents explained how they had food gardens in community-shared ploughing fields where they planted various crops. The respondents distinguished between the food gardens in the homesteads and community-shared ploughing fields. The household food gardens are smaller in size, often plants one single crop type and are located within the homesteads. The community-shared ploughing fields larger in size, plants various crops and are located in arable areas with access to water. These were referred to by different names in different clusters. For example, in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster, respondents referred to these as *amadobo*, while in the Hlabisa Hluhluwe, Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters, these were referred to as *amasimu.* While these were distinguished by respondents, this study refers to them as food gardens, as they both serve common purpose, to increase food security of households.

In defining food gardens, the study borrows from work of Galhena *et al* (2013: 3) who observe that,

> Cultivation of a small portion of land which may be around the household or within walking distance from the family home. Home gardens can be described as a mixed cropping system that encompasses vegetables, fruits, plantation crops, spices, herbs, ornamental and medicinal plants as well as livestock that can serve as a supplementary source of food and income.

Often referred to as home gardens, these have for centuries been part of household farming and food systems. They are one food strategy that is practiced globally, and in countries of the developing world, these are often practiced with limited resources and are maintained by the household with the outputs mainly for family consumption (Ogundiran *et al.*, 2014 and Gautan *et al.*, 2004). The lack of adequate services such as water is one of the reasons that limits households having medium to large scale gardens. This is true in clusters of Umkhanyakude region where water infrastructure is limited to areas near towns and is non-existent in remote rural areas.

Table 6.3: Number of households with food gardens in the Umkhanyakude region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	2
Hluhluwe	3
Jozini	6
Mtubatuba	3
Umhlabuyalingana	3

Household food gardens are prevalent in all clusters of the region. As indicated by table 6.3, a total percentage of 11, 3% of the households explained that they had food gardens for

cultivation of crops for utilisation. Most households who mentioned that they had food gardens were in the Jozini cluster with six (6) respondents indicating that they used food gardens as a supplementary strategy to obtain food. The Jozini cluster is one of the areas in the region which has support infrastructure for commercial agricultural activities. There exist two (2) commercial farms in the cluster, namely, Makatini Flats and Mjindi farms. The other clusters with support infrastructure for commercial agricultural services is the Hluhluwe and the Mtubatuba cluster. The other clusters, namely Hlabisa and Umhlabuyalingana do not have adequate infrastructure to support commercial agriculture. Apart from for blue gum trees which are easily identifiable in these two (2) clusters, there exist no commercial farming.

Households interested in creating food gardens must make their own means to have access to water. The households must drill boreholes to access water for consumption and irrigation of household gardens. Drilling of a borehole costs between R10 000, 00 (US$696, 02) and R20 000, 00 (US$1392, 03). Households with no financial resources to drill boreholes purchase water for R1, 00 (US$0, 07) per 25 litres from their neighbours who have boreholes. These households cannot use this water for irrigation of their food gardens as it is expensive to do so. They only use this water for household consumption purposes. Respondent 14 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> How do you think I can have water to irrigate when I am struggling to have water to drink, cook and wash my clothes? *Isigubhu samanzi* (a 25-litre water container) costs R1, 00 (US$0, 07), and I must buy four (4) 25 litres every day. That is R4, 00 (US$0, 28) every day. Even if I wanted to have a food garden, there is no way I could as it would cost me lots of money. The rain has also not been good this year. As you can see, it is very dry. We cannot plant anything that needs lots of water. At least sweet potatoes and cassava do not need lots of water. I always plant these, but they take long to be ready for consumption. Also, you cannot just eat cassava and sweet potato. Children want meat, and you must give them what they want because you do not want to feel bad and as if you are failing your children.

The importance of food gardens and their contribution to household food security in rural areas has been studied in food security studies (Ogundiran *et al.*, 2014 and Márquez and Schwartz, 2008). Household food gardens have direct impact these have on household food security not only in terms of food access and availability, but also in terms of food utilisation, which is also an important dimension of food security (Ogundiran *et al.*, 2014). Dating back to the 100BC, food gardens were regarded as food strategies for rural environments (*Ibid*). Rural areas were seen as sources of food for both rural populations and urban environments.

Ogundiran *et al* (2014: 129) points out that food gardens were "intensified during the World War 1, following severe food insecurity and shortages" due to increasing food need in European and North American countries during the grand modernist reconstruction period. The increasing need for food in cities continued well into the late 1980s and 1990s as scores of people migrated into cities in search of economic and employment opportunities as well as better living conditions (Armar-Klemesu, 2015 and Márquez and Schwartz, 2008). As a result of exponentially increasing world population and rapidly urbanising towns and cities, perception of household food gardens as being rural food strategies shifted, and these were advocated for in urban areas (Armar-Klemesu, 2015 and Atkinson, 1994).

It is for this reason that in the late 1990s, urban food gardens began receiving attention to increase food security in urban areas (Taylor and Lovell, 2014, Crush and Frayne, 2011, Burger *et al.*, 2009 and Binns and Lynch, 1998). Central to these perspectives on urban food gardens or urban agriculture was that they,

> Allow the poor to reduce their reliance on cash income for food by growing their own food on plots inside or outside the city, thus increasing their access to much needed food (Armar-Klemesu, 2015: 99).

This illustrates how rural food practices are transferred to urban areas. The transfer of these food practices can be described through what is called rural-urban continuum which observes that relationships between rural and urban areas have increasingly become the same Tacoli *et al.*, 2015 and Tacoli, 1998). Unfortunately, rurality becomes an expression of informality in the urban. In turn, they are not regarded as activities to be actively supported and integrated into urban environments. They are seen as practices which must be controlled and, in some instances, eradicated. The eradication of slums and the restriction of informal trading activities are some of the examples indicating non-acceptance of rural activities in urban areas.

Mylott (2009: 1) emphasises this point by stating that the use of land in both urban and rural area is "no longer mutually exclusive", but rather exist on a continuum and interconnected. As a result, what is considered rural and/or urban can no longer be confined to spatial definition as boundaries between these are increasingly blurred and activities are transferred between rural and urban areas. Taking urban food gardens for instance, these are regarded as one key solution to improve food security particularly of urban poor households. In a study by Mwangi (1995: 104) in Nairobi for example, he points out that households that practiced urban farming are "are better off in terms of both energy and protein consumption" than those which did not. The same can be said of rural households which did not have food gardens

that, these relied heavily on cash income to access food. As a result, they are not able to satisfy other household needs such as clothing, schooling, medicine and transport cost.

In South Africa, the government continues to play an important role in promoting household gardens for households both in rural and urban areas (Ngema *et al.*, 2018). At a national level, several programmes to support households include Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), Mechanization Programme, Mushroom Programme, Rural Development Programme, Impact Partnership and Land Care Projects. The province of KwaZulu Natal has also developed its programme called One-Home-One Garden which is used for distribution of seeds and fertiliser packs to households (Ngema *et al.*, 2018). In its first year, the programme managed to distribute seeds to cultivate vegetables, maize, and beans to approximately 650,000 households. The programme also provided agricultural training and financial advice to cooperatives to ensure that these could sustain themselves beyond the programme (*Ibid*). While government has introduced these programmes to support households to sustain themselves through food gardens, planting of food gardens has largely declined in the recent past. Respondent 21 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> We just continue ploughing the fields as from young age we were told that we have to use our hands to live, but gardens are no longer helpful to be honest. There is no water. There is no rain. The soil is dry. People look down on you when you do not work and plough the field. In this area, if you depend on ploughing the fields, you are seen as being poor, and you are not given any respect in the society. What is important now is money. When you wake up in the morning, children want bread, and as a parent, you must provide for that. They do not want to eat *isitambu* (samp), sweet potato or cassava. So, money is important.

As a result, there are many of households who have abandoned their gardens underutilised, and in some instances not wholly utilised.

The desertion of ploughing fields by households who do not have access to water and are ridiculed in societies further plunge households into high levels of food insecurity as these are forced to use large portions of their household income on food. As formal employment opportunities are non-existent, majority of these households depend on government aided strategies, namely the social grants and pension grants. This also links to failure of government to manage migration to cities. Not only does migration to cities lead to high unemployment levels, but also inadequate infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, pollution, slum creation, crime, congestion and poverty (Babi *et al*., 2017). Worth noting is that food gardens are not only declining crucial food strategies in the Umkhanyakude region.

The same can also be said of *ukufaka isandla* which has declined sharply in the recent past due to changing lifestyles, tastes, and attitudes of people in rural areas.

Ukufaka isandla, is an *IsiZulu* word which directly translates to put a hand. In the Umkhanyakude region, *ukufaka isandla* means coming together of households within a given community to assist each other plough their fields. The assistance may vary from assisting with *ukubiya* (fencing), *ukuhlakula (*taking out weeds), *ukunisela* (irrigation) *ukumba isimbo* (digging a well) and *ukufutha inambuzane* (spraying pesticides against insects). *Ukufaka isandla* is closely related to *ilima* which Twala (2018: 186) observes that it could be traced to the period when the "black African people lived in agrarian societies, where the land was the main factor of production, and the growing of food crops for subsistence was a major social and economic activity. Each family had a piece of land on which they lived and could cultivate. During *ilima,* members of different families would move from one family's land to the next, collectively cultivating it." *Ilima* is determined largely by ploughing season and the best cultivar for a particular area. In the Umhlabuyalingana cluster for instance, *izigodi* (village) have different cultivars for plantation. The area of Mpophomeni is best for planting of cassava and sweet potato while KwaMnyayisa is best for plantation of peanuts. Respondent 5 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> When we were young, our parents used to help each other plough their fields. They would wake up in the early hours of the morning, sometimes before sunrise as some of the ploughing fields were far and they had to travel long distances. Together, they would plant the seedlings, do the weeding and harvest when it is time to do so. If I remember very well, it was our mothers who helped each other. Our fathers did not as they were either in the cities or had to look after cattle. After harvest, they would then share the food. This was good as those who had no pumpkins would share with those with green mealies, and *vice versa*. People today do not longer assist other. It is as if every person must focus only on themselves. People no longer care about others. We have moved away from our traditional ways of life, where there was *Ubuntu*, and we cared for each other. These days, everything is about money. Even here in the village, if I asked anyone to help me with cultivating this small garden, they would expect me to pay them to plough. Even with *ukuhlakula* (taking out weeds), I would have to pay them. Everything is about money these days. No one has *Ubuntu* these days, it is all about money.

It is for reason that only one (1) respondent explained that they still use *ukufaka isandla* as a strategy to ensure food security. *Ukufaka isandla* is not only practiced in Zulu rural

communities but is also common in other ethnic groups such as Batswana or Basotho, who refer to this practice as *letsema*. Through *letsema*, Batswana "come together with the sole purpose of performing a particular task." The households would assist each other without an expectation of a financial remuneration, but provision of food and African beer (Twala, 2018). *Letsema* strengthened the principle of mutual support and reciprocity in rural communities. In turn even the poor households can plough and have access to food as well as social networks and relationships to access other resources. For instance, Manci (2009: 340) observes that the mutual support extended over *letsema* to "erection of a new house, cattle kraal, fencing the homesteads" of the neediest.

The government has realised the importance of this food strategy for achieving household food security. The National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has developed a *Ilima-Letsema* Grant Framework with an aim to "assist vulnerable South African farming communities to achieve an increase in agricultural production and invest in infrastructure that unlocks agricultural production within strategically identified grain, livestock, horticulture and aquaculture production areas" (Government Gazette, 2019: 312). The conditions of the grant framework are very particular by specifying that funding must be allocated to "support food production (crop and livestock production) in support of the *Fetsa Tlala* initiatives, prioritising vulnerable households, communal areas and areas under traditional leadership, targeting subsistence and smallholder producers supported with inputs and mechanisation" (*Ibid*). In the year 2019, the government allocated a total amount of the R45 million (US$3 132 073, 27) towards the implementation of the *Ilima-Letsema* Programme in the country. It is worth noting however that while government continues to implement such programmes, their impact on communities remains to be felt. For instance, none of the respondents indicated that they were aware of this programme and/or had benefited or participated in the programme. Achieving wider reach of households particularly those in remote rural areas is critical for building labour skills and sustainable livelihoods and communities.

Over and above these agriculture-centric food strategies is culture embedded food strategy called *ukusisa*. *Ukusisa* (which does not have a direct translation in English) is a traditional practice where a cow or a goat is allocated to another member of a household, particular children as a form of investment for future use. The definition of *ukusisa* differs in various anthropological studies. McClendon (1997: 43) for example, observes that "*ukusisa* refers cattle given to another (who) gets milk and gets paid (when) the owner takes the cattle back." Mathenjwa (2006: 9) points out that,

> One could lend stock to someone for the cultivation of land and for milking; later, as a reward for doing this, the person being lent the animal would keep the animal's progeny. This meant that there were no destitute people simply because the haves lent to the have-nots.

This assertion is supported by Banda and Van der Merwe (2017: 253) who observe that "*ukusisa* is employed as an act of enabling poor families to establish their own kraal." These definitions do not overemphasise gender dynamics embedded in *ukusisa*. However, they illustrate how the strategy of *ukusisa* spanned goes beyond the kinship levels, to households within communities.

In the Umkhanyakude region, the respondents explained how they use *ukusisa* to invest in the future of their children. Respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> My father always believed that as a man, one must have cattle. Cattle was used for various purposes including being a bank, source of food, for *ilobolo*, *ukushweleza* (talking to the ancestors) and *ukusisa*. The first cow I owned was given to me by my late father. He gave it to me when I reached my adolescent stage. I remember how he mentioned that I was becoming a man, and then needed to have my own cattle to use it in times of need. He was specific however, that he wanted to see his cattle used for growth of this family. Even though it was my cattle, I could not use it as I please. For example, if at some point, I decided I wanted to sell it, I had to explain to him why I had taken such a decision. If it happened that he did not agree with my decision, I would therefore not be allowed to sell the cow. Thus, while it is my cattle, I did not have the whole decision-making powers. To make matters worse, all my cows were in his cattle pen, even after I moved from his homestead to my own.

Respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster gave a similar explanation *ukusisa* that,

> The cattle you see here was given to me by my father when he was still alive. From the age of the eight (8), he would ask me to look after the cattle on weekends and holidays. When I was 10 years old, he then gave me one cow and said *uyangisisela* (the process of *ukusisa*). Dissimilar to other families, my father believed that I had to work for the cow he gave to me. This he believed created a sense of responsibility as I would look after it with care and would not just sell it without giving any serious consideration. I continued to look after his cattle until I was 23 years old. That time, I had 12 cattle of my own. I do not think *ngizosisela* (process

> of *ukusisa*) my two (2) sons. Times have changed now. When I was young, we did not go to school, but look after cattle. My boys go to school, and do not seem to be interested in owning cattle. They want to have an office job in the city. Instead of *ukubasisela* (giving them a cow), I will use my cattle to raise money for their university tuition.

Table 6.4: Number of households using *ukusisa* in the Umkhanyakude region

Cluster name	**Number**
Hlabisa	1
Hluhluwe	-
Jozini	1
Mtubatuba	1
Umhlabuyalingana	2

Table 6.4 above indicates that *ukusisa* as a food strategy was mentioned in the four (4) clusters namely Hlabisa, Jozini, Mtubatuba and Umhlabuyalingana. During the fieldwork, the observation was that stock farming remains a normal practice in the four (4) clusters. Cattle could also be seen roaming around the major roads such as R22 and P522. The Hluhluwe cluster differed however as majority of land in the cluster are private farms. As a result, only a handful of households still practices cattle or livestock farming. In all the clusters where these were mentioned as a food strategy, the glaring observation was the bias against young women in terms of allocation of cattle. For instance, one of the respondents in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained how younger women are expected to leave their homes and get married into another surname. The later was explained by respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who explained that,

> My son will always have my surname. The girls will leave and marry into another surname. If I decide ukubasisela, who will then take the cattle when they get married? They cannot take it with them into another family, where they will not even be further expanding my surname.

This does not however suggest that women do not play a role in *ukusisa*. For instance, during *ilobolo* (bride price), the mother of the bride is allocated paid *umsulanyembezi*, which directly translates to wiping of tears. *Umsulanyembezi* is a cow allocated to the mother of the bride, as an acknowledgement and show of gratitude for raising a respectful young woman. Through *umsulanyembezi*, women can *sisela* (process of *ukusisa*) other family members cattle bred from *umsulanyembezi*. Oftentimes, this is missed in many communities as the commonplace assumption is that men are head of households, and as a result, own all the cattle. This view was prevalent in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region where some of the

respondents would often use phrases *'izinkomo zikababa'*, meaning, this is the cattle of my father, and thereby dismissing the underling ownership patterns.

It is worth noting that the strategy has evolved over time. Oosthuizen (1996: 111) for example, argues that,

> During the nineteenth century, the cattle culture among the Zulus was at its height and the reigning monarchs owned vast numbers of beasts, forays into neighbouring regions adding to the supply. These cattle, though owned by the king, were placed according to the custom of *ukusisa* - throughout the kingdom. Those that cared for them on his behalf were responsible for their safe-keeping and, in payment for caring for them and for supplying grazing, were allowed to use the milk." During these times, cattle played an important role as "economic units, providers of food and products useful and necessary to the members of the society, but, apart from this, they are intimately connected with the spiritual lives of the people as well (Oosthuizen, 1996: 93).

In the subsequent years, the strategy was used to assist poor families, particularly those that might have recently migrated into a particular community to settle in the new environment. Manci (2009: 3) argues that *ukusisa* was used to support,

> Destitute or estranged family who comes in from outside to seek refuge in a particular village, is assisted to establish itself with such things as utensils, pots, mats, blankets and so forth. If the poor person happens to have no children, a neighbouring family normally sends one of their children to go and stay with him/her; even cows are lent by neighbours to support the poor family with milk. It is these that after some time when the poor family had established itself ought to be returned to their original owners.

In the mid-1930s, *ukusisa* began to lose its initial meaning during the rise of the disease which killed substantive number of livestock. To avoid losing their livestock, subsistence farmers would split their livestock to their neighbours and/or their related family members. McClendon (1997: 49) points out that "a man seldom keeps all his cattle at his own kraal (umuzi; home- stead), but invariably places some in the care of some other kraal owner (*umnumzane*; homestead head)." During this period, the household which has been given cattle had to look after it ensures that they prevent the cattle from disease (Mottiar, 2015 and Manci, 2009). Depending on the agreement between the households, the hosting household could either be given cattle (*bayasiselwa*) or could benefit from the milk from the cattle. These agreements were made with the understanding that the household receiving the cattle will

keep them safe from disease. Giving them cattle (*ukubasisela*) or allowing them to milk the cows are a token of appreciation to the household looking after the cattle.

This practice of splitting cattle to avoid disease is still prevalent in the Umkhanyakude region today. In year 2016 when South Africa was gripped by drought, the subsistence farmers in the Umkhanyakude region suffered greatly from lack of water and grazing fields. Within the region, the most affected clusters were Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters. In both these clusters, grazing fields and water resources were depleted. Many cattle died because of this. One respondent in Jozini cluster explained how he lost over 17 cattle due to depletion of grazing fields and water. He explained that,

> One day I went looking for eight (8) oxen which had not come back home in the longest time. After looking in the bush for over four (4) hours, I then decided to go to the main pond where the cattle find water. When I got there, I find three (3) of them, with two (2) of them stuck in the mud and unable to come out as there was no water. It was such a painful thing to see as I have worked so much to have these cattle. When I returned three (3) days later, the two (2) oxen had died. It was during this time that I decided to take most of my cattle, the ones which still showed signs of life to my cousin in Mpophomeni. At least there, they could eat the leaves off trees as the area has lots of forests. This way, I managed to save lots of my cattle as only three (3) died after I moved them there. It also helped a lot that I did not take the cattle to a stranger as they would have expected me to pay them monthly for looking after my cattle. It is very costly to keep your cattle in another man's homestead. Some people say that they had to pay an amount of R1500, 00 (US$104, 40) on monthly basis. Failure to pay may put your cattle at risk of theft or death. It is for this reason I am forever grateful to my cousin as he did not expect any payment from me. It was only when I would have enough money that I send him some money to buy food as he also catered for the young man who looked after my cattle on daily basis. I would also give him money for buying medicine for treating the cattle against disease (Respondent 21, *Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017).

This illustrates the importance of *ukusisa* for purposes of maintaining resources of the most vulnerable households and safeguarding for food scarcity during increased threats and risks to people's livelihoods. The splitting of cattle from one cluster to another safeguarded minimised the risk of households losing all their cattle, and in turn ensuring a secure food status in future. The strategy also ensures that poor households have an opportunity to build wealth by safeguarding cattle of their neighbours, and in the process earning cattle of their own. This said, the viewpoint of this study is that as a food security strategy, *ukusisa* plays

an important role in the Umkhanyakude region in that, unlike the other food strategies such as *ukunana*, *ukushonisa*, *ukukweleta*, *ukusisa* is an investment for the future. It is not used to cater for the immediate household needs, but it is used for long term needs. Thus, *ukusisa* does not provide a temporary solution to food insecurity of households, while increasing their level of vulnerability in the future. While the strategy is no longer commonly practiced in rural areas, this study advocates that new ways of practicing *ukusisa* need to be explored as these will ensure that households with access to food and resources are able to share with those who are less fortunate. In turn, this will be crucial for bridging the persistent inequalities and strengthen sense of community and social relations.

As a food strategy, *ukusisa* has diminished significantly in the recent past with most households losing their livestock to drought and stock theft (Manci, 2009). In addition, different from the past when majority of rural people, particularly men stayed in their rural homesteads to look after their cattle and plough the fields, they now earn education and migrate to towns and cities in search of economic and employment opportunities and better living conditions. As a result, there are no people to look after the cattle, and in some instances, cattle die because of diseases and lack of proper care. This signals an uncertain future for ukusisa as a food strategy since households are resorting to other ways of saving resources for their children.

6.2. Conclusion

Evident in the discussions of culture-related food strategies is their embeddedness in the act of mutual support and the "moral dispositions and norms, and how those norms may be compromised, over-ridden or reinforced by economic pressures" (Jackson *et al.*, 2008: 12). The strategies are also largely shaped by a sense of reciprocity which is an implicit social norm that involving in-kind exchanges between households, as they respond to each other's needs and vulnerabilities (Molm, 2010 and Bowles and Gintis, 2000). This sense reciprocity is easily observable in the strategies of *ukunana, ukuthekela and ukufaka isandla.* The reciprocity and exchanges also increase trust, and thereby contributing to the development of long-term relationships between households, which is important part of achieving food security in the long-term (Molm, 2010). In a way, this gives households a sense of mutual insurance between households, which is the moral economy and good will cushioning households from food insecurity and other threats to their livelihoods in the future.

The discussions also illustrate the importance of cultural norms, values and beliefs in household security in the creation of networks. These norms and values influence what households and community members consider acceptable and not acceptable for utilisation. Equally, food "plays an "important social and cultural functions and is seen as essential to

keeping families together and to the maintenance of functioning communities" (Olum *et al.,* 2017: 427). Thus, food and culture are to a larger extent inseparable. As local poverty, inequalities and unemployment continue to persist in rural areas, households are forced to find other ways of survival. These means are often outside of what is considered the normal, and thus there are no institutional support systems to support these. Support for these need to focus what different cultural groups consider acceptable for their traditions.

It is also important to observe the underlying implications of these food strategies. For example, what implications does *ukunana* have on strengthening already existing gendered power struggles and oppressions, as it is seldom that men participate in *ukunana* but it is women and children who do? The same can be said of *ukufaka isandla* and *ukuthekela* where it is predominantly women using these food strategies but not men. Any effort to support these would have implications on power relations between men and women in households. For example, the creation of institutional framework supporting these strategies might lead to shifting gender power relations, and thereby creating cultural shock within households. For instance, supporting ukunana which is mostly practiced by women, this will give women more power in terms of negotiating access to food in the household. They will decide when and what type of food must be utilised. In addition, the support for these food strategies may inadvertently stifle the potential for households, who other than exploring other means to earn a livelihood; may continue relying on these strategies to access food. For instance, rather than exploring choices and capabilities amongst all the different members of the household, they prefer to continue using omashonisa and ukukweleta which further depletes their capability to achieve food security.

From a policy perspective, the existence of social capital in rural areas illustrates how rural development must not only be explained in strictly economic terms, but also social and cultural terms. By promoting social capital, policy will ensure that rural development acknowledges the multi-functionality, institutions and governance structures embedded in rural areas. The policies must facilitate the utilisation of local resources both in terms of natural and human resources via the creation of social networks, trust and mutual support. In turn, this will encourage cooperation and provide opportunities for learning and thus promote trust between individuals, households and local institutions. The policy frameworks on local economic development for municipalities and food security at municipal level must be developed with understanding of context specific background of rural areas as social capital also has its shortcomings including creating social exclusion of all those who may not be able or willing to adopt the local norms. Wiesinger (2007: 10) observes that creating a

“strong linkage within a closed community may bring about rejection of incomers, innovation and xenophobia.”

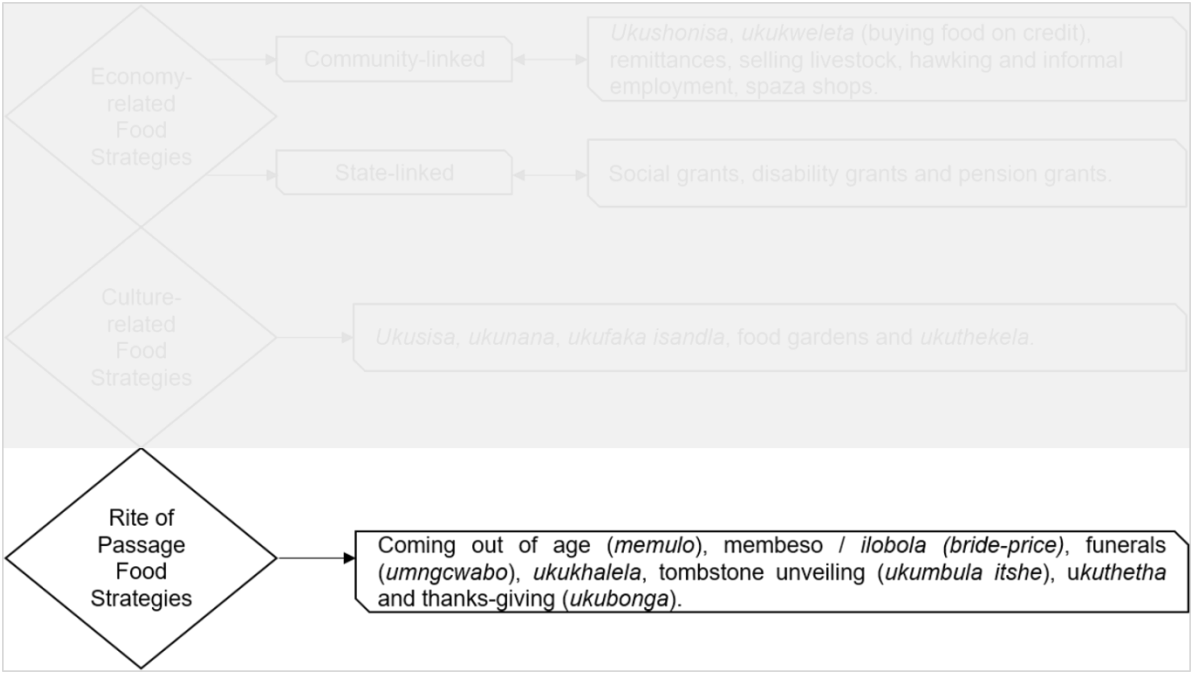
Chapter 7: Rite-of-Passage Food Security Strategies in the Umkhanyakude Region

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapters discussed economy-related and culture-related food security strategies. This chapter forms part of the third leg of household food security strategies in the clusters of Umkhanyakude region. As part of the categories of food strategies are rite-of-passage-related strategies. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss rite-of-passage-related food strategies by looking at: coming out of age (*memulo*), *ilobolo and membeso*, burial (*umcwabo*) *and ukukhalela*, tombstone unveiling (*ukumbula itshe*), *ukuthetha* and *ukubonga* (thanksgiving). The rite-of-passage-related food strategies differ slightly from economy-related and culture-related food strategies in that they are not used in the same manner as the other food strategies. These form part of different stages of life celebrated as part of growth and/or closing of a phase and beginning of a new phase of life of a person (Tzanelli, 2011). While not all stages of growth are commonly celebrated by all social groups, there are some that are common such as marriage, burial and remembrance. These are celebrated as events of symbol of appreciation of the gift of life, blessings as well as personal growth and development. As such, they are not food strategies which are used on the daily basis but are used on *adhoc* basis.

In terms of structure, the chapter firstly introduces and defines each strategy; secondly, it explains how it is used by households each cluster; thirdly, it presents and provides analysis of data gathered from the field including outlining similarities or disparities within the clusters; and, fourthly, it links findings and analyses into broader literature on each food strategy and explain whether the findings confirm or challenge the existing viewpoints and perspectives. In conclusion, the chapter argues that due to shortage of food, households resort to using these rituals beyond their sacred, culturally embedded use, to these being strategies for accessing food on temporary basis. The strategies, small as they are, give access and ensures that households have food available for that particular moment. The rite-of-passage-related food strategies are indicated in figure 7.1 below.

Fig 7.1: Rite-of-passage-related food security strategies in Umkhanyakude region



The definition of rite-of-passage was coined by the French anthropologist folklorist Arnold van Gennep in the book title *Les rites de passage* of 1909 which "explored the nature of ceremonies that mark personal or collective changes of identity (childbirth, puberty, marriage, motherhood, and death), as well as collective celebrations of seasonal change – Easter harvest" (Tzanelli, 2011: 3932). The work of Van Gennep influenced other anthropologists such as Victor Turner and Mary Douglas who also explored and developed discourse on rite of passage. In the book titled *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Turner (1966) explains the role of symbols religious, mythic, aesthetic, political, and even economic - in social and cultural processes, which largely define human behaviour, actions, and life as it is commonly known. Since then, the literature on rite-of-passage has been developed in other fields such as political sciences, philosophy, theatre, education, sociology of religion and theology. It is perhaps in the theology, more particularly Christianity where "rites-of-passage are rituals concerned with transferring individuals or groups between social statuses and marking their incorporation into a typically higher or more valued status" (Forth, 2018: 1). The same definition is applied in the framing of rite-of-passage strategies in the study in that, through celebration of a person's life, they are transferred from one social status to another.

The process of transfer from one social status to another comprises certain activities which are used to express and celebrate the transitions, thereby marking the end of the previous stage and the beginning of the new one (Forth, 2018, Bigger, 2010 and Clair and Koo, 1991). For example, during coming out of age (*umemulo*), families celebrate this by organising a group of young women, who would be at the same age as the young woman who would be

celebrated to be coming out of age. As part of the celebration, a cow is slaughtered for food and money as a sign of gratitude is pinned on the head of the young woman coming out of age as a sign of appreciation for good behaviour. The cow that is slaughtered provides access to food for the family, relatives, and neighbours during the day of celebration as well as after the celebration as these are given *isilawu* (a piece of meat given to relatives after ceremony) following the conclusion of the celebrations. Oftentimes, the neighbours would come back in the days following celebrations to eat *isigqoko* (the remaining meat, usually the lungs, head and trotters). This illustrates that the celebrations do not only increase access to food for the family undertaking the celebration, but it also assists relatives and neighbours.

It is worth noting however that there have been some criticisms against the concept arguing against its "inherent vagueness", and thereby inviting other theorists, such as social scientists and cultural theorists to "construct almost every transitional stage as a rite of passage" (Tzanelli, 2011: 3933). The other criticism is that not all rites of passage are given the same level of importance, for instance, Christians often regard baptism as a critical rite of incorporation into society than tombstone unveiling. In turn, one stage of life may be ritualistically exaggerated at the expense of others, and thereby causing confusion in the classification of these rites of passage (Tzanelli, 2011 and Turner, 1966). In the view of this, this study focuses solely on the transitional rites of passage which simply suggests transfer from one social status to another. These transitional rites of passage, culture-related and economy-related food security strategies are shaped by several key underlying factors which shape attitudes, behaviours, relationships as well life as it come to be understood in African societies. These factors are referred to in this study as an analytical framework for understanding food dynamics in the Umkhanyakude region and rural areas in general.

The respondents did not mention these as strategies that they largely rely on to access food. Respondent 4 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> It is not every day or every weekend that there is a celebration of coming out of age, *umemulo*, or you have a young man paying *ilobolo* to the family of the bride. Unlike in the last 20 years, these hardly take place these days. Young men of today do not want to follow appropriate ways that we followed to start our families. All they do these days is have children, but not start families.

Prior to discussing rite of passage strategies in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, it is worth observing that from immemorial, there exists some of the most priced assets for Zulu people such as cattle and land. Taking cattle for instance, Mnguni (2006: 20) argues that,

> Cattle are to Zulu people what money is to people from the western countries. Ritual slaughter of cattle, and other livestock,

is carried out for various reasons. The Zulu people, for instance, believe that the spirit of the ancestors constantly watches over the family and therefore the family should behave in a manner that would please the ancestors.

As a result, the majority of rite of passage food strategies discussed in this chapter are associated with rituals involving slaughtering of cattle, goats and chicken. The ritual practice of slaughtering animals is considered by Zulu people as a means of communicating with the ancestors, who then communicate with the *omkhulu wo mkhulu* (the Almighty God). The ritual of killing animals is carried out in following occasions namely: - *umemulo, ukulobola* and *umembeso*, funerals, thanksgiving, *ukubonga* and *ukuthetha*.

In terms of structure, the strategies are discussed in the following manner, firstly it discusses food strategies of *umemulo* (coming out of age), secondly, *membeso* / *ilobolo*, thirdly, burials / funerals, (including *ukukhalela*), fourthly, tombstone unveiling and lastly, *ukuthetha* and *ukubonga* (which translates to 'thanks'). These are discussed in this way to follow the chronological order of personal growth and development of a person. Worth noting is that is that not all stages are indicated, for example, birth (*imbeleko*) and puberty (*ukuthomba*). As much as birth of a newborn is celebrated by families through the ritual of *imbeleko*, this does not always translate to purchasing of food to be shared with the related family members and neighbouring households. It instances where it *imbeleko* is done, it involves the closest family members, particularly the older women of households from the bride and the groom (Mnguni 2006). This study discusses rite of passage food strategies which provides a fertile ground for sharing of food, either by the hosting household or the visiting neighbouring households and related family members. One of these food strategies is coming out of age (*umemulo*).

Umemulo is an *IsiZulu* word derived from *ukwemula*. While *ukwemula* cannot be easily be translated into English, this is a traditional practice of *ukwemulisa (coming out of age)* a young girl into womanhood (Jacobs, 2011 and Mnguni, 2006). It is a ritual that signifies *ukubonga* by the parents to their young daughter for her good behavior and signaling to her that she is coming out of age into womanhood, and the expectation is that she must act as such. Traditionally, the ceremony was performed when young girls reach the age of puberty. The ritual would be done together with the ritual of *umhlonyane* which involved protection of the young girl as enters the stage of *ukuthomba* (puberty) and "blossoming forth into womanhood" (Jacobs, 2011: 3). As a result of evolving cultural practices and the influence of western ideologies on African culture, umemulo is now done when young women reach the age of 21. In the thesis titled '*Ukuziphatha Nokuphathwa Kwabesifazane: Endulo Namanje'* Kubeka-Ngobese (2004: 7) observes that,

> *Abazali ukuze bakhombise ukubonga kumntwana wabo wentombazane uma eziphathe kahle ebuntombini bakhe bamenzela umemulo. Lokhu kusuke kuyindlela yokumkhombisa ukuthi usekhulile usengene kwelinye ibanga*.

This suggests that the parents of the young woman celebrate her good behavior by organizing *umemulo*. This celebration involves slaughtering a cow and dancing, a traditional dance called *ukusina nomkhonto* (dancing with a spear). The spear symbolizes an important role as a unifier of ancestors from the two families (young girl uncle's family and her father's family), as well as for the protection of their daughter. The place for collection of the spear is determined by the relationship status of the young woman. For instance, if she is still single and *akayona ingoduso* (does not have a fiancé), she (with other girls her age) collects the spear from her uncle homestead. However, if the young women are already in a committed relationship where the fiancé is well known to her family, she would then collect the spear from the family of the fiancé. In *IsiZulu*, once a woman has undergone process of being paid *ilobolo*, she then belongs and is protected by the ancestors of the family from which she is married. It is for this reason that rather than collecting the spear from her uncle, she collects it from her fiancé even if she is not traditionally wedded to that family (Mnguni, 2006 and Kubeka-Ngobese, 2004).

During the *umemulo* ritual, the uncle(s) play a crucial role in communicating with the ancestors from the mother's side of the young woman to protect her as she gets introduced into adulthood. Cele (*Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) explained that,

> It is the ancestors from your mother's side of the family that are stronger and protect and guide you. As a result, during *umemulo*, those from mother's family must communicate with their ancestors and request them to protect and guide their daughter as she enters adulthood. They then dress her in *umhlubulo (flank of a cow)* and *isiphandla* on her left hand for protection and guidance. This whole process is done by the uncle who knows how to communicate with the ancestors from the mother's side of the family. Over and above communication with the ancestors, the related members of the family share gifts such as money and clothes to enable their daughter to purchase whatever she needs as enters a new phase in her life.

Equally important during the *umemulo* ritual is the slaughtering process. The cow is slaughtered on the eve of the ritual, which is usually a Friday, as Saturday is usually the day of the *umemulo* ritual. There is a long-standing belief that the cow must be slaughtered a day before the actual *umemulo* ritual to allow for time to *ukukhuleka emadlozini* (informing the ancestors) and thanking them for being guardian angels to their granddaughter as she

passes to adulthood. Prior to the cow being slaughtered, all young women are asked to go and see it. It is during this time that the women will be ululating, and the young women will perform traditional dancing in celebration of the slaughtering of the cow (Mnguni, 2006). The following days is marked with young women going to the river every morning. Their journey to the river is marked by singing and dancing as part of celebration of life and introduction to a new phase of their peer. They would have their breakfast in the river, only returning home at midday. This socialisation process happens until the day of the *umemulo* ritual.

On the day of the ritual, the proceedings are guided by the marital status of the young woman being taken through the ritual. In an instance where the young woman is still a virgin, she is dressed in *umhlubulo* (cow flank) and *isiphandla* (an animal wristband) by either their father or uncle. The ritual then continues with the gifts and donations particularly in terms of money pinned in an umbrella. Once the process of gifts and donations are finalised, the young women therefore go to *esigcawini* (an open field for traditional dancing) where they dance, showing off their dancing skills especially to the young men who will be watching their dancing. Once the traditional dancing process is finalised, the procession then returns to the homestead and feast on the cow that has been slaughtered for them. In an instance whereby the young woman is an *ingoduso* (a fiancée), the ritual is performed differently. The family of the groom gets largely involved in the ritual. For an example, the young woman is not dressed in *umhlubulo* as this taken to the home of the groom. The groom's family then pays some money to the bride as a token of appreciation for good behaviour. Once all this is done, the bride goes into *esigcawini* where she dances with rest of the young women. Yet again, the ritual is concluded with the feasting of the meat and food cooked for the procession. It is this food strategy that increases access to food for households in rural areas.

During the interviews, two (2) respondents indicated that they sometimes had access to food because of convening of *umemulo* ritual. Respondent 29 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> There are still families which still believe in the importance of our cultural practices and need to thank ancestors for safeguarding them and their families. *Umemulo* is also good for setting an example to younger girls about the importance of good behaviour. During our times, it was a shame for a young girl to get pregnant without being paid ilobolo or *engaceliwe* (traditional way of proposing). However, this has changed today. Here in Mlamula, *siyazama simulise* (we try to practice *umemulo*) our young daughters. Last year alone, there are three (3) families who initiated their daughters through the *umemulo* ritual. All of these were done in the month of December, and there was a lot of meat and food to share between

> families and neighbours at the time. People were moving from one family to another looking for isigqoko (meat left from the ceremony).

The same was echoed by respondent 2 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa Cluster who explained that,

> Our traditional ceremonies such as *umemulo* used to afford lots of families with food, particularly meat which is not something we eat on the daily basis. When there was *umemulo*, you would know that as a neighbour you will have something to eat on that week of the ritual, particularly on the eve of the actual ritual ceremony. In some cases, the women gather and take wood to the family, and be given some goat meat which they will take back to their families. We were willing to share food, as they understood that one day, the other family would also have some sort of ceremony and would also share with them. Today, the food is only offered on the day and day following the ceremony. On the following day, we call this *ukulanda isigqoko*, as particularly men, we would know that there is some meat and traditional beer which would have been left from the day of the *umemulo* ceremony. The host family would also give some of the meat (*isilawu*) to their related family members and their neighbours. All this ensured that during those few days, people had access to something to eat. Also, it relieved people to use their money for other needs as they would have meat to utilise for a week or in some cases a month.

Observable from the above explanations by the respondents is how *umemulo* as a food strategy has diminished and is not commonplace in all clusters of the region. A number of factors can be attribute to this, firstly, westernisation process with the world becoming one global society, sharing of religious and political beliefs, information, technologies which have led to diffusion of cultures and introduction of a new, socially engineered society. The high levels of social ills such as teenage pregnancy because of high unemployment (among other things) in these areas has also largely led to diminishing practice of *umemulo*. As it was explained by respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster, that,

> It has become difficult to practice *umemulo* these days. These girls get pregnant before they even reach the age of 21. It is as if they do not care about their culture, but only want to get these child social grants given by the government. It is a shame what happens these days.

It is also worth noting that the clusters which have medium sized urban service centres namely, Mtubatuba and Jozini clusters did not have any respondents indicating that they

used *umemulo* as a food strategy. This illustrates how the perceptions and attitudes of life of people in rural areas has changed as a result introduction of western cultures and lifestyles. From observation, most respondents in clusters such as Jozini and Mtubatuba, lived their life like those in cities particularly in terms food purchases and utilisation. As a result of their proximity to large, international retail shops located in main urban centres, households in these areas prefer to purchase food for daily consumption rather than using other food security strategies. The land ownership patterns, and planning of land uses is also structured in these clusters, therefore making it cumbersome to practice food strategies such as household gardens.

Most households in these clusters have adopted a similar life and behavioural patterns to those in cities, and as a result, practice of traditional ways of doing things has diminished. In the broader context, this illustrates how *umemulo* ritual does not create fertile ground for sustainable access to food for households. There is also an untold story for the host households who, sometimes must use their strained financial resources for this ritual, and in turn, further increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity in the future. Initiating a young woman through *umemulo* does not always suggest a successful marriage afterwards as some of the young woman would get pregnant before being paid *ilobolo*. Respondent 29 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Marriage is hard to come by these days. If your daughter happens to find one, you thank your ancestors for that luck. All these young people do is get babies and continue as if nothing happened.

The ritual of *umemulo* has been explored particularly in anthropological studies. The studies have the focused largely on what and how these rituals are practiced and changed over a period. In a study by Kubeka-Ngobese (2004) for instance, it explores how embedded cultural practices such as *umemulo* were used to guide behaviour of young women by Zulu people. None of the studies have sought to explore how these have been used by people as means to access food. The discussions have revolved on their shape, form and use to guide human behaviour. The viewpoint of this study is that this not commonplace in societies today. The societal changes brought by westernisation process and sharing of religious and cultural knowledge has made some of these to lose their prevalence and meaning, with majority of young people finding it difficult to associate and involve themselves with these rituals. This point is made by Edward Said (1994) in Jacobs (2011: 3) that “all post-imperial cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated.” Bhabha (1994: 36) also argues that,

> Complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, are produced through processes of negotiation and translation. These borderline engagements of cultural difference, whether consensual or conflictual, may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress.

In turn, a large portion of the young South Africans "inhabit these contradictory in-between cultural spaces where they have to negotiate their identities in different ways" (Jacobs, 2011: 3). The high levels of poverty and unemployment in rural areas has also compounded the diminishing relevance of ritual of *umemulo*. The same debates have been levelled against *ilobolo* and *membeso* ritual.

Ilobolo, which translates to bride-wealth or bride-price, is one of the longstanding rituals for Nguni related tribes, that is, the Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele people (Hammond-Tooke, 1948). Often called differently by different in different languages, for example *ilobolo* in *IsiZulu*, *roora* in Shona and *bohali* in Sesotho, *ilobolo* involves the provisions of marriage payments in cattle or cash, from the family of the groom to that of the bride (Posel and Rudwick, 2011). The practice of *ilobolo* has gone through changes over a period. While information on how it was practiced in the pre-colonial period is scanty, Posel and Rudwick (2011) point out that what is referred to *ilobolo* today was formalised in the late eighteenth century by the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone, who signed into law the Natal Code of Zulu Law. Mr. Shepstone formalised that 10 cattle including one (1) beast for the mother must be paid for families falling in the category of commoners and 15 cattle be paid for hereditary chief siblings, and 20 or more cattle for the daughters of a chief. All the cattle had to be delivered to the family of the bride before and/or on the day of the marriage (*Ibid*). However, like majority of rituals, *ilobolo* is not static, and varies from one tribe, village, region and countries.

Closely linked to *ilobolo* is *umembeso*. *Umembeso* is an *IsiZulu* word derived from *ukumbesa* or *ukumbathisa*, which simply translates to cloth or to dress. It is part of the *ilobolo* negotiations where the groom presents gifts to the bride's parents and family before the wedding. Also referred to as *izibizo*, the groom family is expected to give gifts and cloth extended family members of the bride. *Izibizo* is an *IsiZulu* phrase derived from the word *ukubiza*, which directly translate to call. The word *ukubiza* can also be used to refer to a high or expensive cost of something. For instance, during the *ilobolo* negotiations, the family of the groom may feel that *liyabiza ilolobo* (bride price is costly). The families will therefore enter negotiations until they reach a consensus on bridewealth. It is common practice that *izibizo*

are not negotiated but are paid as per the request of the family of the bride. The list of all gifts and names of extended family members to be dressed is given to the family of groom on the day of the finalisation of *ilobolo* negotiations. Today, *ilobolo* ranges between R40 000, 00 (US$2784, 07) to R120 000, 00 (US$8352, 20).

In the Umkhanyakude region, the payment of *ilobolo* remains one of most important ritual practices. The importance of was explained by respondent 11 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 217) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster who explained that,

> Even though most of us do not have cattle or money as we do not work, we still have to pay *ilobolo*. It is necessary as you cannot start a family without paying *ilobolo*. The parents of your wife, well, which will not be your wife if you have not paid *ilobolo*, and the community will not have respect for you. You cannot call yourself a man when you have failed to honour and appreciate your in-laws for having raised a wife for you. Even your ancestors can never acknowledge whoever you call your wife but have not paid *ilobolo* and married them. It is for this reason that even without enough money, we still show our intention to respect this cultural practice by at-least paying any amount that you can afford, even if it means paying this through instalments. At the end of the day, *umfazi akaqedwa* (*ilobolo* does not have be paid in full all at once).

The explanation by respondent 11 of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster illustrates how to a large extent, *ilobolo* is a symbol of pride and respect, particularly for the groom, bride, the parents, and related members of both families. For the groom, being able to pay *ilobolo* illustrates the capability of the groom to be a provider and a marker of their Zulu manhood. For the bride and her parents, being paid *ilobolo* can be regarded as a reward for their good conduct and illustrating that they are capable of being a wife and starting their own family.

During the interviews, three (3) respondents in the Hlabisa and Umhlabuyalingana clusters indicated they still used the *ilobolo* and *umembeso* ceremonies to access food. Respondent 6 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> It has become a norm that during the festive season, most of the grooms would pay *amalobolo* as this is the time when most of the people in the village are back home to spend holidays with their families. On the day of *ilobolo*, a big bull or ox is slaughtered for meat to be eaten by the groom's family, their extended family and the neighbours who would have accompanied them on the day. Some families also slaughter a goat a day before the *ilobolo* ceremony to inform the ancestors and request them to guide and be part of the ceremonies. There is also plenty of food that is cooked including *isitambu*, *isijingi*, *amadombolo and*

> *uphuthu*. The traditional beer such as *umqombothi (traditional sorghum beer)* and *injemane (palm wine)*. We feast on these on the day of the ceremony and the following day when we go back to ask for *isigqoko*. I recall some time ago when we had four (4) *ilobolo* ceremonies within two (2) weeks. During the 2 weeks, there was a lot of meat and beer that we would carry 5-litre containers with us to fill with either *injemane* or *umqombothi* to drink on the following days. For many who come from families that struggle to put food on the table, *ilobolo* assists them have food for those few days. Some families do share their even share *amanqina* (cow trotters) with these families.

The differences between clusters in terms of use of *ilobolo* and *umembeso* as a food strategy can be explained from character perspective of all the clusters. The clusters such as Jozini and Mtubatuba which have largely changed because of the westernisation process, these have tended to lose and/or have transformed from the traditional cultural practices such as payment of *ilobolo* and *umembeso*. In instances where these take place, it is usually done through transfer of virtual money, an act which is different to rural areas, where cattle are still largely used of payment of *ilobolo*. The rise in the use of virtual money and technological advances has led to commercialisation of the practice. The study by Posel and Rudwick (2011: 4), observes that increases in *ilobolo* payments in recent decades has led to the practice acquiring a "more of an economic imperative" as majority of families have developed a tendency to use *ilobolo* for "material advancement." This in turn leads to what many have referred to as "exploitation" of young men who propose with genuine intentions only to be discouraged by excessive demands by family of the bride. Respondent 11 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Some of the *ilobolo* prices can be unreasonable. Some families ask for a high price of *ilobolo* quoting that they have taken their daughters to universities, and as a result want lots of money to be paid. This is very wrong as *ilobolo* is for creation of a relationship between families, not a financial transaction or selling of young women. This is one of the reasons why many young men do not marry these days because of the high price of *ilobolo*. Even those who managed to pay these high prices, they get so emotionally abused to the point whereby the whole marriage does not mean much to them. This usually ends up in a divorce, which by the way, is something new to us. In the past, there was no such thing as a divorce as the bride were taught that *bebagana umuzi* (they were married to the entire household) not just their husband. When there are disputes that cannot be resolved between the couple, the elders from both families would be involved to solve the dispute.

> These days, this does not happen anymore. We have moved away from our own ways of doing things.

The same is observed by Posel and Rudwick (2011) who explain that in rural areas the requirement of full payment before marriage has never really been commonly adopted. Often ratified by the phrase "*umfazi akaqedwa*", couples in rural areas have always proceeded to start their families without full payment of *ilobolo* is prevalent in rural areas. The practices such as *imvulamlomo*, which directly translates to mouth-opener, during the *ilobolo* negotiations are also crucial for bringing down the price of *ilobolo*. Families in rural areas are still willing to negotiate and hold the traditional process of negotiations during *ilobolo*. This they do as they believe that they are trying to build a healthy relationship with the family of the groom. This seems to differ slightly in towns and cities, where payment is often in cash and there is a greater expectation that *ilobolo* must be settled before marriage (*Ibid*). As a result, urban couples were "often forced to wait for a long time" while the man saved for *ilobolo* (Posel and Rudwick, 2011: 4).

Other reasons for reduction in *ilobolo* and marriages in rural areas have been noted in historical and anthropological studies. These include changing family structures because of apartheid policies which pulled men from the rural areas into mines, farms, and industrial employment in cities. As a result, these laws which fostered migrant labour system as explained in Chapter 2, "undermined "the ability of men and women to form long-term relationships" (Hunter 2006 in Posel and Rudwick, 2011: 3). Today, the rising levels of education and increasing opportunities for African women as well as changes in marriage preferences have led to reduction in *ilobolo* and marriages in rural as well as urban areas (Posel and Rudwick, 2011).

It is the view of this study that while *ilobolo* continues to, on temporary basis, provide access to food for rural families, the commercialisation of this ritual increases vulnerability levels, particularly of young men who are in a process of starting their own families. Respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster point out that,

> Unlike in the past where families would use gifts and pay whatever they could afford to create relations between families, *ilobolo* is very expensive today and some families use it to make money. In some cases, you would hear the father of the bride saying that their daughter went to university, has this qualification, and must be paid this exorbitant amount of money. It is not correct to look at ilobolo this way.

The increasing cost of *ilolobo* in an environment where there exist high levels of poverty and unemployment makes it difficult for this ritual to be kept as is. There is a need to rethink this

ritual to ensure that it is not used as a tool to quick financial gains, but as means to build relations between families.

The other ritual which has in the recent years grown in its popularity as a food strategy in the recent years is *umngcwabo* (a burial). While different cultures have their own customs and beliefs surrounding burial, in the *Zulu* culture, a burial has to do with disposing of the dead as part of separating from the living and sending them to *amathongo,* the ancestors (Case *et al.*, 2013). In the past and depending on the person that is being buried, certain rituals are performed as part of send-off to the ancestors. For instance, if it is a husband that has died, the body is prepared by the chief mourner with the support of other women, preferably those who have lost their men, the widows. The body was buried as soon as possible to avoid decomposing as at the time, there were no mortuaries to store to deceased body while burial preparations are being finalised. A bull or an ox would be slaughtered to be used for two (2) key purposes, firstly, use of the skin for wrapping up the deceased body, and secondly for meat for food at the burial or funeral. These rituals have somehow changed due to the introduction of new religious beliefs and technological advances such as mortuaries, burial procedures, particularly in urban areas where there are dedicated burial places and spaces. Today, burials have become practices which to a larger extent, are celebratory in nature. This was explained by Respondent 27 (*Pers. Comm*, 11 May 2017) of the Jozini cluster that,

> Things have changed these days. All burials are now done through church, even for people who did not go to any church. Three (3) months ago, there was a funeral of one of young man who was disrespectful to everyone in this village. He would even hit his parents demanding that they give him their pension money. To my surprise, on the day of the funeral, there was a pastor with his church congregants singing church songs, which even his friends, who knew him better could not sing, as they did not know them. Some among the congregants would sing very loud as a symbol of celebration of life of the deceased. I have an issue with that. I was not raised that way. When we were young, burials were respected and dignified. Young children would not even be allowed at the funeral. Only adults were allowed as they know how to conduct and behave themselves during the burial. Today, you find that there are children at funerals who will be laughing during the time of grieve. Funerals of today are not dignified.

Case *et al* (2013: 2) observe that funerals have today, evolved to “mark the social status of the deceased and his household, they knit social fabric for extended families and communities, and they redistribute some of the deceased’s resources.” This elevation of social status is the same that is as achieved through weddings whereby individuals get

married to bolster their social status. In a paper by Bloch *et al* (2004) in Case *et al* (2013: 3) for example, they point out how “in holding lavish weddings, poor Indian families increase their status in the community by signalling the status of the groom.” More than any other single rite of passage, for example birth, graduation, marriage, and funerals provide a focal point for family and community life. They strengthen ties with neighbours and extended family, who may travel long distances to attend a funeral, as they seek to find grieve, find closure, and provide support to the bereaved family. Similar trends emerged in some clusters of the Umkhanyakude region where funerals are used for purposes beyond the separation of the dead from the living. This is what this study conceptualises as emotional economy as the support given to the family of the bereaved creates a fertile ground for transfer of resources, be it financial or emotional from extended family members, neighbours and community at large. In the clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, the support given to the bereaved family is commonly referred to as *ukukhalela*. The number of respondents using funerals as a food strategy are indicated in table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Number of respondents using funerals as a food strategy

Cluster Name	**Number**
Hlabisa	-
Hluhluwe	1
Jozini	3
Mtubatuba	2
Umhlabuyalingana	1

A total of the seven (7) respondents explained that they used funerals as a strategy to access food. Respondent 29 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster further explained that,

> The funerals of today are very expensive as most families now prefer to have high standard funerals. Some families even go as far as getting professional catering services to cook and serve food at these funerals. If you did not know, you would confuse some of these funerals for a wedding. Not everyone can afford these types of funerals. You must have a funeral insurance to the able to afford a professional caterer or a big fancy gazebo. Most of us do not work here and cannot afford to pay a funeral insurance on monthly basis. It is for this reason that families and neighbours always come together and support each other during time of grief. This is important as it hides the humiliation that the family would suffer if they were left to fend for themselves. In any case, it is our culture that we support those in need. This support does not even have to be in the form of money but can be through cleaning the yard of the family, building a temporary kitchen, *isihonqo*, where cooking of food for people attending the funeral will take place,

> erection of the tent as well as digging of the grave. In instances where a family decides to slaughter a cow, the men would ensure that the skinning and preparation of meat is done as part of supporting the family. We call this *ukukhalela*, which is providing emotional support to the family of bereaved.

From the researcher observation and based on population demographics of each cluster, this study argues that funerals are commonly used as a food strategy in Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters as these are the two (2) largely populated clusters. Reports on the HIV/Aids in KwaZulu Natal points out the Umkhanyakude region as one of the regions with high prevalence of the HIV/Aids epidemic. The study by Reniers *et al* (2017) for example, observes that, by 2011 the population was characterized by high HIV/Aids prevalence with approximately 29% among adults aged 15 – 49 reported to have the disease. This percentage has worsened in 2019 as the report by the Umkhanyakude Department of Health District Office - UDHDO (2019: 13) indicates that "the district antenatal HIV prevalence is 44, 1%." The prevalence of HIV/Aids combined with other social ills such as poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, malnutrition, and illiteracy contributes to short life expectancy with majority of the population ranging between 49 – 60 years (Ngqulunga, 2013). As a result of combination of all these social factors, mortality rates are higher in the Jozini and Mtubatuba clusters. Equally, these are clusters where people can find some economic and employment opportunities, and in turn are able to have funeral insurance and participate in burial *stokvels* such as *udondolo* and *ubumbano*.

The role of funerals both as a food strategy and as support system in the Umkhanyakude region and South Africa cannot be overlooked. In a study by Lee (2017) for example, she observes how funerals have been institutionalised to create what she refers to as funeral economy. She points out that the development of both,

> Informal and formal burial insurance schemes have ensured a ready, if uneven, supply of capital enabling even the poorest to participate in the funeral industry; and the range of products and services available - from personalized memorabilia of the deceased to portable green 'grass' and tents which frame the burial site, as well as increasingly sophisticated photographic and video recording services has created a funeral economy with thriving emerging black entrepreneurs (Lee, 2017: 226).

This funeral economy is also prevalent in urban townships where 'death is expensive' and added that for Africans "life in town is dull and a funeral provides as good a form of entertainment as anything" (*Ibid*). In recent years, use of funerals as a form of entertainment is illustrated by the growing trend of the so-called after tears. This is popular particularly in

urban black townships in South Africa, after tears is a practice with involves a “party held immediately after the burial of a loved one. They are commonly known as *wie sien ons*, which is an Afrikaans expression and when directly translated it means, who is seeing us” (Setsiba, 2012: 5). While this practice has been largely criticised by some (for example Dr Mndende who is an African traditional religion theologian) stating the immorality and mimicking of the western cultural beliefs, this study observes that this illustrates the changing nature of funerals to platforms to access to food, alcohol and financial resources. It points out the commercialisation of funeral sector, and thereby increasing the cost of funerals to a point where there is what Lee (2011) refers to funeral economy.

The viewpoint of this study is inclined to that of Lee (2011: 226) who observes that,

> While providing a potential gold mine for some entrepreneurs, this emergent funeral economy has necessitated on the part of mourners a precarious balancing act between spiralling costs and the social pressures of providing for a dignified funeral.

The same was explained by respondent 29 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) of the Mtubatuba cluster that,

> These expensive things like food and big tents and music can be afforded by people who work. I cannot afford that. All I can do is just ensure that my family member is buried in a respectful, dignified manner, and this does not involve huge sums of money, but respect for beliefs, religion and ancestors.

The practice of burial rituals for Zulu people who believe in traditional value systems does not end at the funeral, but are continues to the *ukumbula itshe*, simply translating to tombstone unveiling. Tombstone unveiling involves placing a marker on a gravesite. The marker is made of some permanent material, which in most times is a stone, and contains the details of the deceased such as their name and surname, date of birth and death, a quote biblical quote (particularly in a Christian family) and some very brief description of the deceased (Kadden, 2020 and Togarasei and Chitando, 2005). While this is commonplace in different cultures and belief systems, it is practiced differently across these cultures. In Jewish communities for example, it is common that the unveiling ceremony takes place 11 months after burial of the deceased. There are instances where some of the families do not wait that long to convene unveiling, with some of the Jewish families, particularly in Israel doing unveiling within the first 30 days of mourning (Kadden, 2020). This differs from unveiling ceremonies in African believe systems where unveiling is convened exactly 12 months after the burial of the deceased. In Zimbabwe for example, Togarasei and Chitando (2005: 166) observe that “the timing of this rite has often corresponded to the ceremony

designed to transform the spirit of the deceased into an ancestral spirit." It is worth noting however that this ritual has not been practiced without any ambiguities, particularly following the introduction and entrenchment of Christian religious beliefs. For instance, respondent 17 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> The practice of tombstone unveiling is very important for us Zulu people. This is the time when you remember your family member and cleanse them so that they can join the rest of the ancestors and become a good ancestor to watch over those who are still in the land of the living. My father, when he was still alive taught me about how this is done in this family. We involve no church or pastor, but the family, extended family members and the close neighbours who would come and celebrate with us. Not all families follow the same process though, as most of the families here are Christians. They then believe in involving their pastors and the church congregants in leading the ritual of tombstone unveiling. Oftentimes, these are families who do not believe in the existence and importance of ancestors. They are the born-again Christians who believe that everything must be done according to bible, which surprisingly is quoting people who have long left this planet earth.

The ritual is also important beyond the purposes of remembrance. For example, Zwana (2008: 40) points out that the traditional Shona people believe that,

> When a person dies it is believed that their spirit goes through a dark period when it cannot interact with other spirits, and neither can it visit its family or home in any form. It is even deemed to be dangerous and may harm its own family. The home of the deceased is also regarded as 'dark' and in a state of chaos during this liminal phase. He continues to explain that they then perform a ritual of *kurova guva* as ritual cleansing whose purpose extends to include the normalisation and reintegration the spirit of the deceased into the world of the living, as well as that of the ancestors. It suggests reconciliation as well as fellowship in the realms of the ancestral world (*Ibid*). As a life cycle ritual, *Kurova guva*, is performed six (6) or more months after the death of a family member.

A similar belief is held by the Zulu traditionalists in the Umkhanyakude region that, the deceased must be cleansed and incorporated with the all the ancestors of the family. Respondent 17 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster further explained that,

> Your ancestors do not just become a good ancestor who will watch over your family and give you luck and open opportunities. You must cleanse them by slaughtering a goat or a cow, and sometimes get a *sangoma* to perform a ritual of *ukungenisa idlozi ekhaya* (bringing ancestors home). You must also build a thatched roof roundavel, *indumba*, a house where all the ancestors are

> accommodated. It is in this house where the head of the household or the most senior member of the household would communicate with the ancestors. This communication could either be *ukuphahla* (reporting a particular matter) *ukuthetha* (to shout), *ukubonga* (thanking the ancestors).

In the Umkhanyakude region, only one (1) respondent explained that they used tombstone unveiling to access food. Three (3) reasons can be attributed to this. Firstly, the practice of the ritual of tombstone unveiling has diminished in the recent past due to the high cost associated with the ritual. Secondly, some of the households have resorted to performing the ritual on the same day of the funeral to reduce costs of the two (2) rituals, and as a result most respondents could not separate between funerals and tombstone unveiling as distinct food strategies. Thirdly, the rise of the Christian religion and other western beliefs has led to most of the population being conflicted between practising the Christianity beliefs which oftentimes are in contradiction to the traditional Zulu norms and belief system. This contradiction is observed by Zwana (2008: 38) who argues that,

> Questions have been raised and suspicions expressed regarding the nature of the rituals and whether they are doctrinally acceptable within Christian churches. Among the main contentions is the suspicion from some Christians, that tombstone unveiling services are a disguised form of the Shona traditional ritual of *kurova guva*. The suspicions are based on the belief that African Traditional rituals are surreptitiously performed earlier or parallel to the Christian ritual.

The ritual *ukuthetha,* which directly translates to ‘shout’, is common practice in the Zulu culture. This direct translation does not however give the proper definition and conception of ritual of *ukuthetha*. In the Zulu culture, *ukuthetha* denotes communication with the ancestors to inform and/or make a specific request for important household matters such as good health, wealth, peace, business growth, cattle and other related matters (Makhanya, 1997). The ritual of *ukuthetha* is differentiated into two (2) types. The first type is *ukuthetha ngolaka*. This is when the communication with the ancestors is on particularly on matters such as ill-health, misfortunes such as pregnancy miscarriages, car accidents as well as death of livestock, particularly goats and cattle. When any of these happen particularly on constant basis, the head of the household would then communicate with ancestors, asking them whether there is anything that they are not happy about, and requesting that they indicate what they want to be done so that they protect the family. Respondent 20 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> Bad things do not just happen. When they do, it is because the ancestors are not happy about a certain thing that might have happened in their homestead.

> Remember, as much as all that you see in this yard, the houses, the cars, the cattle, were made possible by me, this home remains that of my ancestors. It is for this reason that whenever bad things happen; I must refer to them as guardians of this family. *Ngiyathetha kubona, ngikhuze umhlola, ngibacele ukuthi behlise ulaka bangikhombise indlela nokuthi bafuna ukwenzelwani*." This simply translates that; the respondent communicates with the ancestors and rebuke them and request that they lower their anger and show the way and what they want done for them.

The second type is *ukuthetha ngesihle* or *ukubonga*. *Ukuthetha ngesihle* is when the communication with the ancestors is done to appreciate the good that has happened in the family. Often referred to as thanksgiving in western cultures, *ukuthetha ngesihle* includes celebration of material abundance, good health and other related family growth and success through feasting (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991). Respondent 20 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) further explained that,

> When things go well and you see growth and success however small, you must thank your ancestors for that. People have different understanding of what is growth, and as a result, *bathetha ngesihle ngedlela ehlukene* (they communicate with the ancestors in different ways). For instance, two (2) years ago I had a ceremony of *ukuthetha ngesihle* after I realised that five (5) years had passed on without any death of any of my children. In December, when they were all here at home, I then decided to slaughter a goat and cow to thank the ancestors for safeguarding my children, as it had become common that almost every year there will be death in this family. Even today, there has not been any death, and this is a sign that the ceremony went well. My ancestors are happy.

During the interviews, the ritual of *ukuthetha* was mentioned by one (1) respondent as a food security strategy. While this may be interpreted to suggest that the ritual is not prevalent in clusters of the region, it is worth noting that when asked about the ritual, a noticeable number of respondents did indicate that they do practice the ritual, but not as a food security strategy. One of the respondents in the Hlabisa cluster explained that,

> *Ukuthetha* is not a ritual that anyone openly talk about. It is something that people do in private for wellness and growth of their families. Some families chose not to talk about this as they are known believers of Jesus Christ and cannot be seen also praising ancestors. Occasionally, I do practice the ritual of *ukuthetha,* particularly *ukuthetha ngesihle.* I do this because I believe that my health, my possessions, and life is guarded and guided by my ancestors and God. During

> the ritual, I also ask for more blessings and good health (Respondent 6, *Pers. Comm,* 12 May 2017).

While some of the respondents indicated they did not use the ritual of *ukuthetha* as a food strategy, the respondent 20 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster pointed out how the meat from the goat and/or the cow that are slaughtered provides food for the family, relatives of family members and neighbours. The respondent explained that,

> Some families would slaughter five (5) or six (6) cattle for their *ukuthetha ngesihle* ceremony. All this meat is not finished on the day of the ritual. Neighbours will then come back and get *isigqoko* (the leftover meat). Some of the meat is given to families that are known to be poor in the village. As a result, the *ukuthetha* ritual can provide food on temporary basis for households hosting the ritual, related members of the household and the neighbours.

While the respondent illustrated the importance of this ritual for growth and protection of households, it is a viewpoint of this study that the ritual can lead to increased vulnerability of households. For instance, Lombo (2017: 33) observes some of the rituals that are performed during *ukuthetha* especially during the slaughtering of the cow. He argues that,

> Contrary to the animal activists who complain about the treatment they regard as brutal when a ritual slaughter takes place, there was much attention paid to the idea of lessening pain for the animal about to be sacrificed. The animal was patted and rubbed on its back and shoulders, as the place of the *amathongo*; the butcher was summoned and handed the spear; an old woman (an honorary man in Zulu society), with wattle branch in hand, ran into the enclosure and strutted around the beast joyfully crying "Ii! Ii! Ii!" The officiant again called on the ancestors but, when the butcher sank the spear into the animal's neck, there was the holy silence; as the cow fell, the host cried, *Khala, nkomo yamadlozi! Khala*!"

In an instance that the cow does not cry, this is a signal that the ancestors are not happy and/or do not acknowledge the ritual. This then suggests that another ritual may have to be done to rectify the mistake. Respondent 20 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> *Ukuthetha ngolaka* does not always bring solutions. Sometimes you can do the ritual and later find that the ancestors did not acknowledge it or were further angered by the ceremony. It is always important to understand what they, the ancestors want, and how they would prefer the ritual to be done. This means you also must consult with a traditional healer, who will then guide you on what is necessary. This consultation with the traditional healer also suggests further use

of financial resources of the household, thereby increasing food insecurity status of the family.

7.2. Conclusion

A myriad of strategies is used by households to access to food. These strategies are largely shaped by several factors including structural economic factors, political as well as culturally embedded factors. The rite of the passage food security strategies presents an interesting dimension of food security analysis in that, these have not been conceptually framed as strategies or analysed as important factors determining or contributing to food security of households in rural areas. Reading through the various studies and research reports, the discussions on these are centred on practices of these rituals and their importance for guiding personal development of people in specific contexts. The discussions have always been centred within the realm of anthropological studies. The exploration of rite-of-passage as food security strategies presents an interesting dynamic in terms of the use of these rituals beyond their sacred, culturally embedded use, to these being strategies for accessing food on temporary basis. As food strategies, these provide access to food for both hosting household (family performing the ritual) and neighbours who benefit from noble practices such as *ukulanda isigqoko* (collecting meat left from day of the ritual), *amantshontsho* (the meat taken by men who slaughter, skin, and prepare meat for cooking) as well as giving *isilawu* (the meat given to extended family members and neighbours) as part of community building. All these practices, small as they are, give access and ensures that households have food available for that period. During the interviews, respondents explained that meat is one of the most expensive food types, and as a result, they seldom buy it. These rite of passage strategies make available this expensive food type, and in turn, giving households a leeway to use their financial resources to purchase other food types.

It is worth noting however that while rite-of-passage food strategies increase access to food for poor households, these also increase vulnerability of households to food insecurity in future. One of the oppressive rituals is *ukuzila* (period of mourning) after the passing of one parent in the household. The expectation and period of practice differs between men and women. For men, they are not expected to wear *inzilo* (a mourning garment) and do not mourn for a period of 12 months. Women on the other hand, are expected to wear *inzilo* for 12 months and must not work or remarry during the mourning period. A study conducted by Manyedi *et al* (2003) in Setsiba (2012: 14) observe that,

> The widowhood experiences and beliefs about the mourning process of the Batswana people. The findings indicated that among the Batswana people

> widowhood is complicated by the cultural beliefs and customs which may be a stressful experience for the widows.

The same findings are made by Rosenblatt and Nkosi (2007) that the mourning rituals stretched over a year in some ways estranged widows from the entire society as these are seen as being dirty and needing cleansing through the ritual of *ukugeza* (to bath) or *ukukhumula* (to undress). They observe that,

> While practicing *ukuzila*, a widow must not go to weddings. She might be suspected of practicing witchcraft, which makes many people avoid her or be very careful around her. For the widow in *inzilo*, a danger is that if something happens to someone in the community, for example, if a child dies, she might be blamed (Rosenblatt and Nkosi, 2007: 49).

Even though members of the extended family and neighbours are expected to provide support to the widow during the mourning process, this does not improve household food security in many instances. In families where the head of the household was a sole provider of food, food insecurity is felt immediately after his passing. Responding 7 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) in Umhlabuyalingana cluster pointed out that,

> The way of life has changed today. Things are expensive. People are barely managing to feed their families. It is therefore difficult for them to support others. Once your husband has passed away, you are on your own.

These are socially and culturally embedded hazards that need to be analysed to understand gendered dynamics of food. Such analyses are important for unpacking gendered power relations and oppressions that exist in societies notwithstanding the shifting food practices in rural as well as in urban areas. Chapter 8 of this study discusses the gendered dimension and unequal power relations and oppressions of household food security in the Umkhanyakude region.

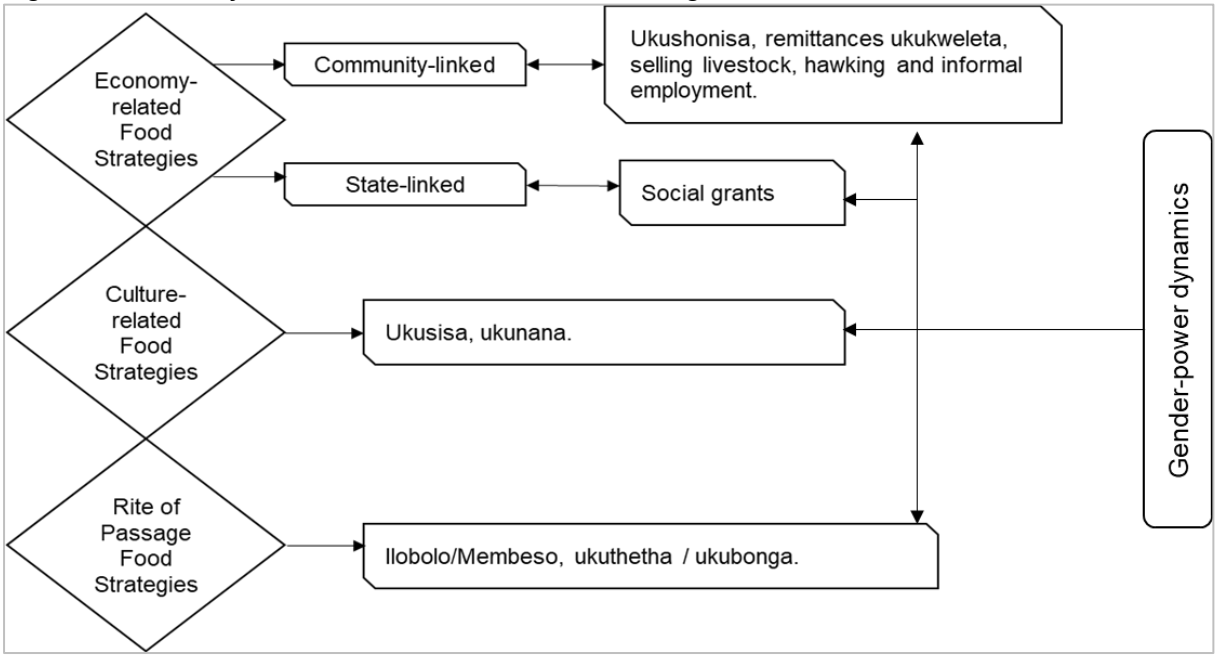
Chapter 8: Gender and Food: The Role of Men and Women in Household Food Security in Clusters of Umkhanyakude Region

8.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the gender dimension of household food security. The chapter discusses gender roles and relationships in food strategies used by households in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The chapter does not aim to discuss all categories of household food strategies, but those that were presented by respondents as having a strong sense of gender dynamic in terms of roles and power dynamics, as gender is understood in this study as a form of power exercised between two (2) different sexes. The issue of gender and food security has come out strongly during the interviews with respondents in different clusters of the region. The household food security strategies discussed in this chapter are as follows: - economy-related food strategies (informal employment - hawking, *ukushonisa*, remittances, *ukukweleta*, selling of livestock and social grants), culture-related food strategies (*ukunana and ukusisa*) and rite of passage food strategies (*ilobolo / membeso*, *ukuthetha and ukubonga*). The chapter is structured into two (2) main parts. The first part discusses categories of food security strategies in relation to roles and responsibilities of both men and women, and the second party discusses the implications of gendered power relations for policy and legal framework in South Africa as well as the global community.

The strategies highlighted in figure 8.1 below are those discussed in relation to gendered dynamics of food.

Fig 8.1: Gender dynamics and household food strategies



The study discusses how these strategies are shaped and/or relate to other dimensions of food such as gender and power dynamics that exist in households and the society at large. Such analyses are important as all actions and non-actions of households are embedded in the social systems, which are made up of various underlying elements including embedded

cultural practices and beliefs, global, regional, and national legal and policy frameworks as well as structural economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and food prices. While these are factors are critical for analysing gender dynamics of household food security, it is observed in this chapter that cultural beliefs and norms in rural Zulu communities play a fundamental role in determining who does what, with what resources in the household. In the discussion of household food strategies, it emerged in several instances that there exist different gender roles played by both men, women and children in obtaining food. There are instances where some of the roles seem to have shifted from the traditionally accepted roles of both man and a woman in a household. These shifts present new gendered roles and power relations (and struggles) between men and women, and what may have been considered the norm and commonplace before is questioned, and in some cases, not practiced.

8.2. Gendered Food Dynamics and Policy Shifts

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed and adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a "universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030" (UNDP, 2020: 1). Commonly referred to as Global Goals, SDG 5 of the 17 SDGs calls for ending of discrimination against women and girls. The UNDP acknowledges that many countries particularly those referred to as the developing countries, have larger number of women who continue to be discriminated against as a result of their sex. The UNDP (2020: 1) points out that in these countries, women continue to be,

> Systematically denied the same work rights as men. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office all remain huge barriers. Climate change and disasters continue to have a disproportionate effect on women and children, as do conflict and migration. It is vital to give women equal rights land and property, sexual and reproductive health, and to technology and the internet. Today there are more women in public office than ever before but encouraging more women leaders will help achieve greater gender equality.

The UNDP explains that ending discrimination is not only for achieving basic human rights of women, however it is important for achieving "sustainable future" as it is "proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development" (UNDP, 2020: 1). The progress made towards achieving this goal and other SDGs is evaluated regularly on annual basis and reports looking into the progress that has been achieved by each member state for that particular year are produced. For instance, these progress reports investigate

how a country has fared in terms of increasing number young girls in primary schooling or number women judges in the judiciary system. This, for the United Nations is important as part of many efforts towards ensuring gender equality in societies which continue to be unequal because of various factors including cultural practices, gender roles, myths and stereotypes, policies and laws and the socialisation process.

It is worth noting that unlike the UNDP approach to gender equality and awareness, this study does not adopt the popular scholarship on gender which largely equates gender analyses to the empowerment of women (Bayeh, 2016, O'Neil *et al.*, 2014 and Sharp *et al.*, 2003). The study borrows from the definition of gender by Nyalunga (2007: 1) that "gender is a social construct. It refers to the relationship between men and women, girls and boys." Borrowing from the work of Hannan (2000) in Nyalunga (2007: 1) further argues that,

> Gender relates to the attributes and opportunities associated with being a male and female, and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men, and girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. They are passed from one generation to another.

The popular scholarship on gender relations between men and women has tended to largely focus on oppressions by one sex, the men, to other, the women, and therefore making gender discussion to be more about genitals rather than the form of power that is exercised to oppress each other (Abdou, 2018, Salinas and Bagni, 2017, Helman and Ratele, 2016 and Nyalunga, 2007). Taking the essays by Monique Witting for instance, who observes that the "the ideology of sexual difference functions as censorship in our culture by masking, on the ground of nature, the social opposition between men and women. Masculine or feminine, male, or female are the categories which serve to conceal the fact that social differences always belong to an economic, political, ideological order. Every system of domination establishes divisions at the material and economic level" (Khan, 2019: 1).

She further argues that the belief in natural differences as the ideology of sexual difference operates to justify the exploitation and oppression of women. The similar sentiments are echoed by John (2006: 28) who observes that,

> The head of the household is the Zulu man. He is always the authoritative figure, everything in the *umuzi* or household belongs to him, and decisions are tendered illegitimate without his consent. A woman is rarely consulted and defers only to her husband.

This view is supported by Langa (2012: 1) who observes that in the Zulu culture, "a husband and a wife do not have equal status." This kind of scholarship is points out that these socially

engineered gendered inequalities are further exacerbated by practices such as gendered language. Taking the ritual of *membeso* which have been referred to in this study as a food strategy, once this is finalised, the woman who is about to marry is referred to as *uyagana*, while the man is *uyaganwa* (which even though cannot be directly translated into English, suggests that it is the woman who gets married to the man, thereby somehow giving the man a degree of power and ownership in the marriage). In this context *ukugana*, the woman is seen as coming to the marriage rather than both genders taking a decision to enter the marriage. This illustrates one of many ways in which inequality between men and women is promoted, including through gendered language (Langa, 2012 and Posel and Rudwick, 2011). This study does not however conclude that such gendered language leads to man having more power over women as there exists negotiations, contestations and sacrifices made between a man and a woman within a household unit. Stern *et al* (2017) argue that,

> Men and women 'do' gender through symbolic signalling and an array of daily interactions. (West and Zimmerman 2002). They may also 'undo' gender through acts of conscious resistance or by adopting new behaviours that respond to changing realities.

This illustrates how a lot has changed in gender scholarship including gendered rights, roles and responsibilities. In South Africa for example, the country has adopted a legislation which enshrines rights equal rights of all citizens. Section 9 of the Constitution stipulates that "everyone is equal before the law" and that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds "including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (The Presidency, 1996: 5). The realisation of this right is further strengthened by numerous programmes aimed at achieving gender equality such as gender equality in education, MenCare Parenting Program, Gender Equality Program by Lawyers for Human Rights and the national programme on 16 Days of Activism against Women and Child Abuse. In year 2000, the country developed a National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality which provides broad guidelines prescribing minimum standards for the institutional framework, key indicators as well as national goals towards achieving women empowerment and gender equality (Department of Women, 2000). As illustrated in the introduction, gender equality has also found expression at an international level with the organisations such as the United Nations spearheading policies, legislation, and programmes towards promotion of gender equality and women empowerment at all levels of society.

The study points out in Chapter 4 how through the concept of embeddedness, the Zulu communities and other communities in general have several meanings associated with gender roles, responsibilities, behaviour, and attitudes, therefore creating fertile ground for gender bias, stereotypes and inequalities. During the interviews with the respondents in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region for example, a number of these explained how they always understood their 'father' as the head of the household and their 'mother' as the support system to the head of the household. Respondent 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> All of us, including you, knows that there is difference between a man and woman. I am the man of this household, and everything that happens here must be passed through me. My wives are here to support me. As a man, I must provide for them and ensure that all that they need is well taken care of. This is what I was taught by my late father. His father also taught him the same, and I am doing the same with my sons. It is always the responsibility of the man to ensure that his family has good health, food, clothes, and children are going to school." The same was explained by respondent 24 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster that "when you decide to get someone pregnant, this means you have decided to be a man, and as a result, you must act like a man and take care of both the baby and the mother. It is not appropriate what happens these days that you can just impregnate a young girl and only pay damages. Some of these young boys do not even pay the damages and do not look after their children and their mothers. All they do is drink alcohol and make more children.

The explanations given by both respondent 3 and 24 of Umhlabuyalingana and Mtubatuba clusters respectively illustrates emotions and complexities associated with gender roles and relationships particularly in societies embedded in cultural norms and beliefs. Compounding these complexities is that what is permissible to be done by either a man or a woman in one culture or religion may not be permissible in another culture or religion.

8.3. Gendered Household Food Strategies

During the interviews, it was observable that both men and women played roles, however significant and/or insignificant it may seem, towards ensuring food access and availability in their households. The role of these differed from strategy to another. For example, there are strategies where women were more active and had much more decision-making powers and others where men contributed used commonly and had more voice in terms of decision making. Again, it is explained in this study that as much as the issue of decision making is discussed, this is to larger extent hypothetical as household decisions are negotiated

between parties involved, and majority of these are made in private spaces. These negotiations were evident during the interviews as some of the respondents would often seek the approval by the head of the household prior to their participation in the study. This section of the chapter discusses these roles in relation to various economy-related, culture-related and rite of passage food security strategies.

8.3.1. Economy-related Food Strategies and Gender Roles

The economy-related food strategies can be categorised into those that increase access to income to households and those that depletes household financial resources. The former includes strategies such as informal employment (hawking), selling of livestock, *stokvels*, remittances and social grants, and the latter includes *ukushonisa (informal micro lending) and ukukweleta (buying food on credit).* In clusters such as Umhlabuyalingana, Jozini and Mtubatuba, the evidence suggests that some of these food strategies have tended to increase access to one gender type over another. For instance, the selling of livestock gives financial resources to men than women. This stems back from the ownership patterns where cattle are owned by a man as a head of a household. During the interviews, the phrases such as *izinkomo zobabamkhulu lezi* (these are my father's cattle) served to validate traditional ownership patterns of cattle in rural Zulu households. This does not of-course negate instances where women in single-headed households own cattle. Even in these households, women would not solely decide on selling the cattle without consulting with either the children or elderly members of the household in instances where these are still present. Other food strategies such as *stokvels* and remittances appeared to give financial resources to women than men. Taking *remittances* for instance, all respondents who explained that they received money from family members who worked in towns and cities were women. In households where it was the man who worked in a city, the money was also transferred to woman as the person responsible for decision making on food to be purchased on daily basis. This was explained by respondent 30 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster that,

> As you can see, both my husband and I do not have any formal employment. It is only my eldest son who works in Richardsbay as a driver in Transnet who supports this family. On monthly basis, he transfers money to me through a public taxi or deposits it at Spar or Shoprite Checkers stores. There is also my daughter who sells chicken gizzards and cooked mealies in town. She also supports us when in serious need of food or money for other family needs. I however do not make it a habit of asking her to support us as I know she does not make lots of money and has to look after her own two (2) children. I also sell my own cooked green mealies, cakes and sweets. In addition to this, I also earn social grants for

> my three (3) grandchildren who I look after as here at home. All this money is however not enough to sustain all of us, and it is for this reason that my son who supports us a lot and is directly involved in everything that happens in this family. Without him, some of the things will not happen. Even though he does not live with us most of the time, we ensure that we consult with him before doing anything. After all, he is my eldest son, and has a voice in what happens here.

The same can be said about social grants, which even though are meant for the well-being of children, it has largely increased access to financial resources for women as they are the ones who collect the grant and decide how money is used. There are instances where men do also have a say on what the social grant is used for, particularly in instances when they are in urgent need of money. The importance of social grants was illustrated by HHD 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 3 September 2017) of the Jozini cluster who recorded that,

> We really thank the government for giving us the grant. Although the money is not as much as we would want it, it assists many families here to put food on the table. Many women now do not have to depend on their men for money as the little money they get selling mats, baskets, mealies, or bananas combined with the grant from government helps them have food and some money for other family needs. We are far better off today than we were before this government of the people.

The explanation by both respondents illustrates the importance of access to financial resources and how this contributes to changing social relations between men, women, and children in households in relation to food security. The study by Granlund and Hochfeld (2020) for example, observes that the access to financial resources particularly by women leads to positive outcomes for women's financial independence and active participation in the decision processes. Granlund and Hochfeld (2020: 1233) argue that by "gaining access to an independent income, offers the potential to challenge a subordinate role with less economic and social power within the family and community, and therefore potentially rebalance unequal power relations." The same is echoed by Patel and Hochfeld (2011) in their study of effects of Child Social Grant (CSG) transfers in Soweto that these have played an important role in breaking the male breadwinner model' in South Africa. Patel and Hochfeld (2011: 231) observe that "questions about how decisions are made in CSG households have revealed that the women receiving the grant are the primary decision-makers in the home." They further point out that the grant transfers "supports women's ability to control and allocate resources, and that tis has a positive impact household food security" (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011: 229). At a much wider community level, Granlund and Hochfeld

(2020: 1232) observe that this increased active participation of women in the decision making in households has,

> Some positive effects regarding feelings of dignity and increased participation in social life, and some positive, although limited, effects on general 'psychosocial' health and wellbeing, all contributing to increased social 'recognition'. Recognition here means participation as a full partner in social life and perceived by society as worthy of respect.

While there are these social benefits particularly for women, it is worth noting that there are also negative effects of grants at household and community levels. For instance, respondent 8 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> The government needs to do something about these grants. Today, all young people, especially those from poor families just want to have children to so they can get these grants. It is very sad. Can you imagine a young woman who is 20 years old already having more than three (3) children of her own? While she might be receiving this grant money, it ends up not being enough. These grants are creating many social ills including high levels of teenage pregnancy, spreading of HIV/Aids and women-headed households. While for many it is a way to have money today, it is destroying future of many children.

These negative effects of social grants are not an exception in clusters of Umkhanyakude region as Granlund and Hochfeld (2020) also note similar patterns in their study of this subject matter. They (2020: 1233) point out that social grant transfers have,

> More ambiguous effects on gender relations. It has been argued that 'reversed dependencies' now exist in rural South Africa where men rely on women's income due to the massive decline in wage labour in male-dominated fields such as mining. Male identities remain powerfully intertwined with labour as an expected norm in South Africa, which could potentially lead to feelings of shame of not fulfilling one's role.

They further observe that in some instances the women receiving social grants jokingly refer to the "government as their new husband", somehow suggesting that they do not need their unemployed husbands, which even though is said light-heartedly, may affect social relations in the household (*Ibid*). This commonplace held belief is not unique to South Africa. Globally, those who often criticize social welfare explain that "cash transfers in the form of social grants are a drain on public resources and create dependency and a sense of entitlement among beneficiaries (Murray, 1984 in Ngubane and Maharaj, 2018: 2). In addition, the view is that social grants discourage beneficiaries from actively trying to look for employment and "may

even lead some to refuse jobs for fear of losing their welfare payments" (Ibid). While this is a wildly held view, Mpike *et al.,* (2016: 56) point out that,

> The belief that teenagers become pregnant to access the CSG oversimplifies sexual decision-making and teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is not the result of a single factor, but rather the outcome of a complex interplay of risk and protective factors. Challenges are compounded by gender-based violence where girls are coerced into having sex or are unable to negotiate safe sex, while judgemental staff and a lack of confidentiality also compromise young people's access to reproductive health services.

This viewpoint is further observed by Ngubane and Maharaj (2018: 6) in their study in Mtubatuba where "young women made it clear that the CSG was not enough to support themselves and their children; therefore, they did not have children because they wanted to access the grant." This illustrate how rather than seeing child social grants in a negative light, these must be seen as providing "support and opportunities for development for those in need. In conjunction with other essential investments like quality education and health care services, the CSG is an investment in positive developmental outcomes for children, with the potential to benefit national development in the longer term" (Mpike *et al.*, 2016: 56).

It is perhaps the food strategies of *ukushonisa* and *ukukweleta* which present an interesting dynamic in terms of the decision making on the use of the strategies. Unlike the above-mentioned food strategies, the evidence points out that both men and women are involved in deciding on the use of these strategies. While the strategy immediately provided access to financial resources, it also increased food vulnerability levels of households in the future. In the Jozini and Umhlabuyalingana clusters for example, there were *omashonisa* who demanded between 40% and 50% of return on their loans. This suggested that households needed to think profoundly prior to deciding to borrow money for food. Respondent 13 (*Pers. Comm,* 10 May 2017) in Jozini cluster explained that,

> If you do not work, you cannot just decide to borrow money from *umashonisa*. How would you pay it back? Even omashonisa will be hesitant to lend you the money you need as they know that they will struggle to get it back. I always talk to my son before borrowing money so that he is aware and can pay them without asking too many questions on why I borrowed money.

Another respondent 17 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in Jozini cluster explained that,

> I cannot just decide to borrow money without firstly taking to my husband as a head of this family, but also as someone who pays for most of the things here at home. He needs to know and decide whether he agrees, because if I do not tell him, he

> will decide not to pay back on my behalf. You know how these men are. He would ask so many questions about what the money for was and why he was not told as he would have made other means. It is therefore always better that he knows.

Ukukweleta, just as *ukushonisa*, provided access to food immediate basis. As was explained by respondent 5 (*Pers. Comm*, 12 May 2017) in the Hlabisa cluster that the local *spaza* shop owners have developed social trust with the communities and are willing to *ukubakweletela* (sell them food on credit). Often used as a last resort, it is women who are particularly involved in initiating discussions on when to use *ukukweleta* food strategy. This was explained by respondent 13 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) in the Jozini cluster that,

> I am the one who on the daily basis cook in this family. I know when we have enough food and when we do not. I also know when my husband has enough money to buy us food, when he does not.

Although it is the woman who initiates the discussion, she however does not make final decisions as *ukukweleta* suggests commitment of future household income, and thereby exposing the household to future food insecurity as the debt must be paid. The debt becomes a household debt and may be paid by any member of the household who has means to pay. This sense of shared responsibility was explained by respondent 5 (*Pers. Comm*, 10 May 2017) Jozini cluster that,

> I am not the only one who eats in this family. Even though *imina obhalwa edolweni*, both my children who work in Jozini town must also contribute towards payment of the debt. They also have their own children who are fed by the same food I get through *ukukweleta*. We all need to contribute.

It is for this reason that the decision on using *ukukweleta* and *ukushonisa* as food strategies to access food involves both men and women, and sometimes children who contribute to the household income either through formal or informal employment (hawking). This suggests that the decision making is not solely based on gender and age, but also employment status of individual members of the household.

The changing social relations as a result increasing access to financial resources and decision-making processes at home has serious implications for commonplace gender myths and power relations in households. Firstly, the increasing active involvement of women in decision making in traditional Zulu households dispels the myth of existing culture-related oppressions where women are denied rights to participate in decision of the household. While it was noted in some households that the man, as a head of the household, still possessed some level of power, which they commonly emphasise through phrases such as '*kukwami la ekhaya'* (this is my home) or '*imina indoda yalomuzi'* (I am the man of this home), it is true

that the increasing access to financial resources by women and children has changed the gender social relations in households in the region. Secondly, access to finance has also largely allowed women to be involved in activities beyond home, for example, the *udondolo* and *ubumbano* burial *stokvels*. Some of the women, the Treasurer and Secretary of *ubumbano stokvel* are no longer referred to by their names, but their positions in the *stokvel*. These positions are so powerful in such a way that it has now become a norm that at funerals, a slot is allocated for either the Treasury or Secretary to speak on behalf of the *stokvel*. The respondents which are part of these *stokvels*, explained how they do not think they would have managed to successfully bury their loved ones without the support of the *ubumbano stokvel*. The emphasis on active participation of women in household decisions and community activities is done deliberately in this study to highlight that the socio-cultural roles that are generally assigned to men and women and determined by society through the socialisation process are constantly changing. In is therefore important that in discussing issues such as gender equality, that this is not just another way of advocating or promotion of women issues, but must focus on both men and women, girls and boys.

8.3.2. Culture-related Food Strategies and Gender Roles

The culture-related food strategies introduce an interesting dynamic between the role of men and women on household food security. Embedded in cultural beliefs and practices, these food strategies enforced traditional Zulu gender stereotypes, where the man is the head of the household and final decision maker. For instance, in accessing food through *ukunana*, it was women or younger children who went to their neighbours and/or relatives *ukuyonana ukudla* (asking for food). The seven (7) percent of the households which indicated that they used *ukunana* to obtain food were all women, with no men indicated that they used this strategy. Several reasons can be attributed to this, firstly that, in traditional Zulu households, it is women who undertake cooking in households, and as a result, are always aware of the food types that have been finished and need to be procured and/or obtain through *ukunana*. Secondly, there is a perceptual myth that, men as a head of the household, cannot be seen going around his neighbours asking for food. For men, *ukunana* is sometimes equated to begging, and it is a degrading to the social status of the head of the household. This was articulated by Respondent 22 (*Pers. Comm*, 14 May 2017) of the Mtubatuba cluster that,

> The respect that is given to you by your family, your neighbours and the entire community depends on how the husband and wife carry themselves. If a man decides to go out there and not act like a man as we expect to do, he is not degrading his status in the community, but also that of his family. As a man, you must work and provide for the family. Our culture demands so, even *isihlabelelo* says that men must love, protect their wives and children, and provide for them.

> You can therefore not be seen as a man begging for food. It would be a disgrace. Men must eat the sweat of their efforts. That is how it has always been and must be even today.

These cultural stereotypes to a greater extent limited men to participate in the ukunana food strategy openly and actively. While this is the case, this however does not suggest that men do not have an influence in how the strategy is used. For instance, as a head of household, men play a central role in the decision-making processes. As much as they may not always decide or be consulted on what food must be cooked on daily basis, there are times when they will dictate on what food will be eaten on the day. They would often explain 'I am tired of eating rice today; can we eat something different?' While this is often said in a good-humoured manner, it contributes to decision making on food that is cooked as if the man is not listen to, he may decide not to eat what is eventually cooked if it is different from what he had suggested, particularly if there is no compelling reason for aberration. The same can be said with *ukunana,* as much as men are visibly active in the strategy, they are involved in negotiation and deciding the type of food that must be requested from the neighbour. These negotiations are commonplace in all food strategies particularly in *ukushonisa*, *ukukweleta* and *ukusisa*.

The strategy of *ukusisa* presents an interesting dynamic in terms of gendered roles and responsibilities as well as decision making on the applicability of the strategy. On the face value, in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, it appeared that the men, who were often referred to as head of households, owned household cattle, and would be the ones allocating cattle to other members of the household. However, as explained in Chapter 7, ownership patterns of cattle are often complicated by that women also own these through *umsulanyembezi* (directly translating to wiping of tears). The *umsulanyembezi* cow may breed more cattle, which women can give or allocate to other members of the household. While the husband is the head of the household, and may be regarded to a greater extent, having power in terms of decision making in the household, he cannot allocate any of the cows bred by *umsulanyembezi* without the consultation and agreement of the wife (Sihlongonyane, *Pers. Comm*, 18 February 2017). It is widely considered a taboo for the husband to *ukusisela* or sell *umsulanyembezi* or cattle bred by it. This illustrates the underlying gendered power dynamics in terms of ownership of cattle, which in traditional Zulu households, symbolises economic power and social status of households.

The women-headed households present different dynamics from households where man and woman are present. Depending on whether the elderly, either the mother-in-law or the father-in-law are present, the wife performs the same role as the man in the traditional nuclear

households. In households where the elderly people are still present, it is them who communicates with the ancestors. However, this they do after consultation with the wife who is now the decision maker in the family. In clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, it was observed that even though the wife may be the decision maker on day-to-day basis, she is however not is not allowed to communicate to the ancestors as in terms of seniority, she is still under the guardianship of her in-laws. Cele (*Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) explained that "it is the elderly that know all the ancestors and how to communicate with them. The wife must then discuss with the elderly and request them to communicate with the ancestors". In a household where the in-laws are not present, the wife must take all decisions and communicate with the ancestors. Cele (*Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) further explained that,

> During the communication process, the wife will start by calling his husband who brought her to the household, as she will know her deceased husband better than the other ancestors, and as a result, her request is most likely to be heard immediately by him. After calling her deceased husband, the wife must call her deceased children, if there have been any that are deceased). After calling these, she must then communicate with the rest of the ancestors, calling them by name and requesting that for those that she does not know or might have forgotten, her husband or mother or father-in-law communicate with the rest of the ancestors.

It is also worth noting that not every member of the household is *sisa'd* a cow. For instance, it is common that it is young boys not girls who are *sisa'd* a cow. This emanates from the belief and the tradition that the male child will continue to build and further the last name of the family, while the female child, will one day leave and get married to a different family. The phrases '*umuzi ofayo uwubona ngabafana abangaganwa'*, simply translating the sign of regress of a household are young men who are not getting married, are some of the commonplace stereotypes which to a larger extent places the importance of the male child in Zulu households. Respondent 19 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> When I was young, I often thought that my father loved my sisters more than he loved me. He was always harsh on me and wanted me to do everything at home, and if I failed, he would seriously shout at me and sometimes would get a stick and whip me. At as child I never understood this. It was only when I got older that I realised he did not do this out of lack of love for me, but because he wanted to mould me to a man I am today. He knew that I would one day have my own family and needed to be strong to be able to take care of the family. Even though I cannot

> whip my children today, I do however instil the idea of them having to work hard as it will be them to continue this surname after I have gone to my ancestors.

8.3.3. Rite-of-Passage-Related Food Strategies and Gender Roles

Just as the culture-related food strategies, the rite-of-passage food strategies are largely embedded and influenced by social and cultural beliefs and practices. For instance, as it is explained in the case of *ukugana* by women and *ukuganwa* by men, that this illustrates the obsession about women doing secondary role in household matters. In the public, it is often commented that in marriages, particularly Zulu marriages, the husband is the head, and the wife is the neck that holds and support that head (Langa, 2012). Respondent 3 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> When a young woman leaves her home *eyogana* (gets married), she does this to build the home of her husband. She must do everything in her abilities to ensure that, firstly, she grows the surname of where she is married and secondly, support her husband for the benefit of the entire family.

In this instance, both the husband and wife have specific roles to play in ensuring the well-being of the household. However, because of the gendered language which turn to emphasis the role of the woman coming into the marriage, the attention then tends to be more on the support role to be played by her, rather than the lead role of the husband as the head of the household. The importance of the language and the construction and reproduction of gender roles and expectations is explored by Eisenchlas (2013) who explains that there exist embedded generalisations about women and men which are made popular through various means including the media. She argues for example that, “the notions that through language women exhibit same-sex solidarity and support whereas men harass and control or that women talk to foment or enhance relationships, while men talk to solve problems” are some of the views that have been discussed in recent language and gender literature (Eisenchlas, 2013: 3). These views, however, have been challenged by various researchers such as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), Bierback (1997) and Macaulay (2001), who observe that gendered linguistic practices are,

> Highly context-specific, and that the context of the interaction may be more important than gender *per se* in determining linguistic behaviour. Thus, rather than looking for binary categorizations of gendered behaviours, current scholarship focuses on localized instances, and on how gender is socially performed, co-constructed, and negotiated in interactions (*Ibid*).

It is also important to note that in Zulu households, gender dynamics of food goes beyond the issue of different sexes to include ageism, economic class and spirituality. For instance, in the Umhlabuyalingana, Hlabisa and Hluhluwe clusters, there were households which explained that while the man was the head of the household, there were instances where they could not take without consultation of the elderly. Respondent 15 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained that,

> My mother is still alive. The thatched roof roundavel you see over there is hers. My mother is the important member of this family as I constantly consult and seek her advice particularly when I need to make an important decision such as slaughtering a goat or a cow for thanksgiving or remembrance of my departed family members. She also sometimes consults the ancestors particularly *masithetha namadlozi* (the process of *ukuthetha*) when there is illness or bereavement in the family.

Another respondent 26 (*Pers. Comm*, 13 May 2017) in the Mtubatuba cluster explained that,

> There are decisions you cannot take without firstly consulting and seeking advice and consent of your elders. In this family, I am the man, and whatever needs to be done whether it is building a house, paying school fees, and buying food, all that is my responsibility as the head of this house. However, I cannot just decision to do the tombstone unveiling of my father without consultation of my parents or my uncle. I always must seek guidance when taking such decisions as I need their guidance, prayers and blessings.

This illustrates the importance of age as a social structure in decision making in rural Zulu households. The importance of age is also common during the rite of passage food security strategies such as *ilobolo* and *membeso* where the elderly plays a crucial role in the negotiation process with the family of the bride. While the *ilobolo* will be paid by the groom, it is the elderly (which may be the parents and uncles of the groom) that have a final decision on *ilobolo* negotiations. In instances where the elderly people are not satisfied with price being requested by the family of the bride and/or feel that the bride is not suited for their son, they may decide to lay off the negotiations even if the groom wants to continue with the process. Archaya *et al* (2010) observe that age and family structure are the strongest determinants of authority in decision making. Older women and men in nuclear households are more likely than other women to participate in family decisions. In these instances, while the men, the father, would be a 'head of a household' carrying the responsibility to provide for the family, he however would not always unilaterally take decisions without the consultation of the elder(s). In these instances, the elderly people are often used as reference

points, be it for advice when critical decisions are taken in household more particularly those relating to ritual ceremonies, burial, taking another wife, migration to the city in search of employment opportunity. For example, when asked about who makes decisions in the household, over 25% of the households in the Umkhanyakude region indicated that was not made by only the head of the household but was through consultation with elders and their children who contributed to household income (economic class).

The economic class and decision making in households introduces an interesting dynamic in that it negates the authority of decision making to age. For instance, several respondents explained how their children who worked in cities contributed to their food security status and decision making in households. As was explained by Respondent 26 of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster in who used remittances as an economy-related food strategy in Chapter 5, that her son *uphathisa* (sends money) through the public taxi to buy food and satisfy other household needs. Respondent 26 (*Pers. Comm*, 9 May 2017) further explained that,

> My son plays an important role in this family. The house you see was built by him. However, as he is not here at home regularly, he them sends money and tells me what to do for him.

In this instance, the decisions in the household are not made in terms of gender type or age, but they are influenced by the economic class. The son, who has access to financial resources determines the authority to decision making in the household. In this instance, the son contributing to the household income is not the eldest son, which introduces an interesting dynamic in that, it is common practice in the Zulu culture that the oldest child (either a son or daughter) has authority in the decision-making process. The commonly used phrases such as '*inkosana*' (the heir or the oldest son) or '*indlalifa*' (who accepts something in a mortgage or fund, beneficiary, the heir, or the oldest son) and '*inkosazane*' (oldest daughter, usually of the chief or from the royal family or unmarried woman) signifies the importance and authority of the eldest son or daughter in the decision making of the household. This authority is however rivalled, and may at times lead to conflicts, when the younger member of the household is the one contributing to the household income and/or is contributing to household food security. The same conflict also occurs when the man, as a head of the household, does not contribute to the household income. The authority and the feeling of being the head of the household is unsettled, and sometimes leading to the man not actively participating in activities of the household. This illustrates how households are not just a single organism, but a space where there is constant power conflicts, oppressions, support and collusion for access and exploitation of resources.

While it is commonplace that in the traditional nuclear family it is the man that communicates with the ancestors, there are instances where the woman may communicate with ancestors without consultation or agency of a man. In the Jozini and Umhlabuyalingana clusters for example, some of the respondents were *izangoma* (traditional healer) and women. In Jozini cluster, two (2) households where there were men present as head of households and wives as traditional healers. In these households, it was interesting to note how the women *izangoma* who were not head of households communicated directly with ancestors as result of their spiritual calling. They did this without consultation with their husbands as they considered themselves more spiritually connected with ancestors. Even their husbands would consult with them in instances where they needed advice with regards to their spiritual needs. In these cases, while the man is the head of the household, he however, does not have all the authority to decision making as is expected in the traditional Zulu household. This indicates how gendered power relations and headship has changed in households and communities. Within households, the headship is no longer determined along the traditional lines, but through structural conditions and events such as large economic dislocations or social movements, community mobilisation programmes and group-based strategies designed to build skills and foster critical reflection of commonplace gender stereotypes (Stern *et al*., 2017 and Horn, 2014). In communities, gendered power relations play itself in the fight for resources to earn a livelihood. In the Umkhanyakude region, gendered power relations, negotiations and contestations can be described in the context of palm trees where there is contestation for this resource between producers of palm wine (mostly men) and basket weavers (mostly women).

Fig 8.2: Palm wine production in Mpophomeni, Umhlabuyalingana cluster



As illustrated in figures 8.2 and 8.3, palm trees are used for two (2) main purposes, namely, production of palm wine (which is referred to as i*njemane* or *ubusulu* by local people) and manufacturing of baskets. The palm wine is mostly consumed locally within the Umkhanyakude region, but also transported to other areas such as Nongoma, Ulundi, Ntshongwe and Paul Pietersburg. Palm wine manufactures who in most if not all cases are men, produce palm wine not only for personal consumption, have established a working relationship with local people who own *bakkies* to transport their wine for selling in other areas. The way this relationship works is that for each 25 litre of palm wine sold by the wine producer, another 25-litre is given to the *bakkie* owner. The *bakkie* owners would collect, for instance, a total number of thirty (30) *izigubhu* (containers) of 25-litres of palm wine to sell in other areas where this is not produced. All profit raised (with 25-litres sold at R180.00 – US$12, 53) is returned to the palm producer. For the next collection, the palm producer must manufacture the same quantities of palm wine which and give this to the *bakkie* owner as payment of transportation cost of the previous load. It is for the *bakkie* owner to decide how to sell their palm wine. This arrangement is seen as fair as none of the parties in this agreement must use their own money to pay for either the palm wine or transportation cost. Worth mentioning is that the production of the wine also includes burning of the palm tree and cutting-off palm leaves.

Fig 8.3: Prepared palm tree leaves for manufacturing Mnqobokazi, Hluhluwe cluster



The palm trees are also used for creation of baskets by weavers who are predominantly women. Dissimilar to palm wine producers, basket weavers do not own palm trees. The allocation of palm trees is administered by the local Chief who allocates to men, as head of households. The local chief allocates *isitanza* (size) of palm trees to men who are palm wine producers. While ownership patterns are not formally documented, the boundaries of *isitanza* are well known amongst the wine producers. The ownership rights are transferred from one generation to another.

The example of palm trees and their use as a community organised food security strategy signals three main implications, that, there exist adversarial relationships between communities and local institutions (Isimangaliso Wetland Park and local tribal office, *isigungu*), underlying gendered power relations as well as that food strategies are territorial in nature. These are discussed further below.

The local communities which are adjacent to the Isimangaliso Wetland Park such as Mbazwana, Mseleni, Mabibi, Kwadapha, Mahlakwe and Kwasonto areas are unable to access palm trees in areas which are conserved or protected areas under the ownership of the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. As a result, a conflicting relationship has ensued between the Isimangaliso Wetland Park and local communities over control of the palm trees.

The local people have resorted to entering the Isimangaliso Wetland Park without attaining permission from the park owners. This strains the relationship between the local communities and the institution. From observation, the park treats palm producers and palm basket weavers differently. While security (electric fencing and employment of security guards or field rangers), basket weavers are still able to access palm trees in areas around the fence and closure to their homesteads.

Added to the conflict between local communities and Isimangaliso Wetland Park as a local institution is the contestation for this resource between the palm wine producers (who in most instances are men) and basket weavers, who are predominantly women. This contestation is as a result of the power given to men as owners of *isitanza* of palm trees. Having ownership of their own palm trees allows me to actively plan and decide on when they will produce palm wine over a period. The same cannot be said of basket weavers who must ensure that they cut as much palm tree leaves as possible before these are burned by the wine producers or in some cases are stopped by owners of the palm trees from cutting the leaves.

The allocation of palm trees assists in addressing conflicts that may arise from the competition to produce more wine to make more profits. In addition, the relationship between

the local chief and palm wine producers relates to the argument by Ribot and Peluso (2003: 155) that,

> Some people and institutions control resource access while others must maintain their access through those who have control. Attention to this difference in relations to access is one way access can be seen as a dynamic analytic.

While the allocation of palm trees addresses eminent conflict among palm wine producers, it does not address the contestation and resource access conflict between the palm wine producers and basket weavers.

The study observes that the contestation between these two (2) groups emanates from, firstly, their use of the resource and secondly, the level of access to this resource. In terms of the resource use, basket weavers use palm trees for their leaves for creation of baskets. On the one hand, palm wine producers burn these leaves in preparation of the palm tree for wine production. On the other hand, basket weavers however, cannot cut palm trees without being granted permission by wine producers.

In turn, these women (basket weaves) are often forced to travel long distances in search of the palm tree leaves that are not burned and, in some instances, are not owned by wine producers. It is worth mentioning that that there were instances where respondents indicated that some of the palm wine producers would assist them by alerting them of the dates they will be preparing (burning) palm trees and by doing preparation in phases to allow basket weavers to cut the leaves before preparation. This happened in instances where the existed a long relationship between the two parties or when a basket weaver and palm wine producer were relatives.

One of the questions raised during interviews with both groups was whether it would not be appropriate for basket weavers to be allocated palm trees (*isitanza*) the same way that palm wine producers are allocated palm trees by the local chief. As a response, palm wine producers stated that this was not necessary as basket weavers only use the leaves, their work is not as important as theirs.

This illustrates the existing gendered power relations which Ribot and Peluso (2003: 155) point out that "constitute the material, cultural and political-economic strands within the bundles and webs of powers that configure resource access." The level of power that people have, be it because of their gender, relationship with the local chief and headmen (as a traditional institution), local councillor and/or their status in the community, this is crucial for determining access to resources. This is true in the case of palm wine producers where their gender status is used in determining ownership of palm trees. These are unequal power

relations which exist at community level. It is crucial to note that these gendered power dynamics also play themselves within households where those who have access to resources, through for example, their gender status and age are allowed to make household decisions. The contestation for the ownership of palm trees between basket weavers and palm wine producers is one example that illustrates gendered power relations in the Umhlabuyalingana and Hlabisa clusters. These gendered power relations are analysed through the concept of intersectionality.

Emanating from the Black feminist thinking and discourse to understand inequalities, dominance, and oppressions, and how these are produced and reproduced in societies, the concept has in the recent past began gaining prominence in other disciplines such as social sciences and anthropological studies. Intersectionality unpacks ways in which different identities interact and shape people's experiences and power positions (Ristinmaa, 2012, Burkner, 2012, Christensen, 2009 and Gopaldas and Fischer, 2011). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991: 1244) points out that the main proponents of the theory of intersectionality are "the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences." It essentially asserts that social inequalities need to be looked at considering other identities than gender alone (Shields, 2008, Gopaldas and Fischer, 2011 and Ortbals and Rincker, 2009). These analyses have in the main, been crucial in analysing factors underlying inequalities and oppressions, as well as the way in which social identities converge to implicitly and/or explicitly breed these inequalities (Reyes, 2017).

This is critical for understanding the subtle power dynamics which exists within households. As is illustrated in the discussion of various food strategies, power relations between people are influenced by various factors including access to resources, employment status, level of education, age, social relations as well as level of societal status. All these elements are important to understand for purposes of addressing inequalities that exist in households and communities. The ownership inequalities that exist in the palm trees businesses includes both issues of gender, social relations and level status in society (*Izinduna*). The *Izinduna* use their level of status in the community and the social relations to decide on the ownership patterns of palm trees. The people who have close relations to the local chief (be it through family relations, personal or working relations), they are easily allocated palm trees for palm wine production. It is important to understand these elements which shape power relations in societies as it allows for development of policies and programmatic interventions that go beyond the popular understanding of gender power relations to be about the different sex types, but varied factors as defined by the concept of intersectionality.

8.4. International Policies and Household Food Practices: Conflicting Rationalities

The international discourse on gender equality by organisations such as the United Nations Women Programme continues to adopt the popular scholarship on gender with inclination on women issues than men (UN Women, 2020 and Patel and Hochfeld, 2011). Worth mentioning is that as much as there needs to be a balance in dealing with gender issues, there are many instances where gender equality is equated to women empowerment through programmes dealing with gender-based violence, poverty, and HIV/Aids (Helman and Ratele, 2016 and Rizzi, 2011). Although these might be necessary in a country such as South Africa where there exists high levels of poverty and high rates of gender-based violence, this also create conflicts between gender equality (often regarded as women empowerment) policies and programmes and traditionally accepted norms and values in Zulu households. For instance, this study has explained how in the traditional Zulu households, where ancestors play an interceding role to God, it is common that the man is regarded as the sole communicator with the ancestral forefathers, except for cases such where women are traditional healers. In the traditional Zulu communities, most factors determining roles and responsibilities between men and women are embedded in cultural practices which continue to guide behaviours, perceptions and to a larger extent decision making process.

In advocating for gender equality against these, it is important that ensure that such efforts do not in turn, further exacerbates gendered oppressions and inequalities, as some of these socio-cultural practices are commonly accepted in traditional Zulu households. During the interviews, the husbands would not allow their wives to participate in the interview without their consent, even though in three (3) specific interviews, they directed the researcher that he continues the interview with the wife as she had 'better answers' than him. Interestingly however, the wives in these households opted to consult and obtain approval from their husband prior to their participation in the interviews. For an outsider, this may appear as a 'gendered oppression' which needs to be addressed, while for women in the Umkhanyakude region, this is an acceptable practice where all the final decisions pertaining the household are taken by a man, as a head of the household. Equally, it is culturally unacceptable to enter a household and begin talking to the wife without firstly seeking consent of the man of the household. This was explained by the respondent 3 (*Pers. Comm,* 8 May 2017) in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster that,

> When you enter someone's homestead, do you sing the clan names of the woman or the man of the house? So, why would you then speak to someone's wife without the approval of the man as a head of the household?

The importance of not always assuming gendered oppression of women is emphasised by Chant (2008) in Patel and Hochfeld (2011: 232) who observes that “there is abundant evidence that targeting women, or 'feminising' anti-poverty programmes, can some- times result in increasing a woman's burdens via an intensification of her roles and responsibilities within and outside the household. This means that frequently 'women's unpaid labour is exploited to subsidise state failures.” Patel and Hochfeld (2011: 232) further observe that,

> The discourse of the 'feminisation of poverty' that is pervasive across international development literature should be re-thought in order for it to be more relevant to women's real lives, particularly due to the mounting responsibilities and obligations that women face in coping with the burden of poverty.

As a result, the policy and legal frameworks on gender equality and gender awareness need to be cognisant of these household dynamics and ensure that they do not maintain and/or further exacerbate existing gender inequalities.

The policy and legal environment in South Africa present an interesting dynamic in that the country has adopted its policies in line with the global discourse on gender issues, which equates gender equality to women empowerment. The enactment of Section 9 of the Constitution, the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment (NPFWE) and Gender Equality as well of annual programmes such as the 16 Days of Activism against Women and Child Abuse signal the country’s drive towards ensuring gender equality and awareness both at policy and implementation levels. For instance, in the workplace, the government has enacted the Employment Equity Act of 1998, which stipulates that in efforts by the state to address the persisting effects of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices in relation to employment, occupation and income, there is a need to promote the constitutional right of equality, eliminate unfair discrimination as well as achieve a diverse workforce representative of the broader demographic profile of the country (The Presidency, 1998). Section 2(a) of the same act requires that all organisations must have an employment equity plan which must state employment equity objects to be achieved on annual basis and the remedial actions to be implemented in instances where organisations including private and state institutions have identified underrepresentation of people from the designated groups (The Presidency, 1998). While the Act advocates for designated groups in general, it also specifically promotes employment of women in senior positions to ensure fair and equitable working environments, equating employment equity to promotion of women. The quest for promotion of women to senior positions is monitored on annual basis through the equity plans which must specify progress made and remedial plans to achieve employment equity targets where necessary.

Interestingly, enforcing the same compliance for achieving gender equality or promotion of women in the private sector remains a challenge with numerous reports indicating that the sector remains largely untransformed (Magubane, 2019). Writing in the weekly newsletter titled “from the desk of the President” in November 2019, President Ramaphosa explained how the state has made significant progress in ensuring economic transformation within the public sector which “had not been matched by the private sector, which he said remained untransformed” (Magubane, 2019: 1). The President further explained that “upper echelons of management in private companies were still dominated by white men despite them making up only 5% of the economically active population” (*Ibid*). Lastly, the President pleaded with the private sector that in line with objectives of the Employment Equity Act (EEA), both the public and private sector needed to ensure that,

> Advancing black and female employees must be a cornerstone of any company’s operations. This must move beyond merely ensuring compliance, and towards succession planning, mentoring, training, and skills transfer, and towards giving employees a meaningful stake in the companies they work for (Magubane, 2019: 1).

The appeal by the President illustrates that while the country has developed sound, responsive legal and policy frameworks, these have not translated to the achievement of gender equality (Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Framework – GRPBF, 2018 and Nyalunga, 2007). Several factors can be attributed this failure including lack of wider understanding of constitutional directives with regards to gender equality, lack of proper institutional framework and capacity to support implementation of gender mainstreaming programmes, lack of implementable gender sensitive indicators and allocation of dedicated financial resources for gender mainstreaming programmes (GRPBF, 2018). While this is the case, it is worth noting that the country continues to use the concept of “gender equality as a strategic vehicle to eradicate the ills of the past. Furthermore, the principles of equality are being used at all spheres of government to inform and guide policy development, service delivery and political representation” (Nyalunga, 2007: 2). The push towards achieving gender equality culminated in the development of GRPBF in 2018.

At the centre of the GRPBF as a budgeting framework is the need to “ensure gender responsive planning and budgeting that provides standard approach towards strengthening the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in policy, planning and budgeting processes by contributing to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth and girls” (GRPBF, 2018: 4). The GRPBF (2018: 9) outlines four (4) areas which must be addressed to achieve these objectives namely: putting in place clear gender responsive

indicators that strengthen institutional capacity towards implementing effective planning and budgeting processes; strengthening existing outputs an outcomes of gender frameworks with equity as an explicit gender indicator of performance; integrating gender perspectives that improve on the existing meaning of a developmental socio-economic state, by improving resource allocation towards efficiently and effectively empowering all forms of gender; and, providing a disaggregated, standardised format for gender responsive planning and budgeting for all government departments, state-owned enterprises, and municipalities to align their work and to report on."

The gender planning and budgeting framework is aligned to the work done internationally by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which in the last few years, has advocated for mainstreaming gender budgeting in fiscal policies of countries (Stotsky *et al.*, 2016). It the survey done by the same institution in 2016, it points out that,

> A large number of sub-Saharan African countries have adopted gender budgeting. Our review of gender budgeting in sub-Saharan African found that Rwanda, Uganda, and South Africa have achieved some successes with gender budgeting, chiefly through changes in fiscal policies or budget-making procedures (Stotsky *et al.,* 2016: 2).

For IMF, efforts by these countries to mainstream gender budgeting is important for purposes of addressing "addressing gender inequality and women needs" as well as ensuring economic growth that is centred on women as key drivers of social change and achievement of equality (Stotsky *et al.*, 2016: 8).

This again, illustrates how institutions such as the IMF continue to equate gender equality to promotion of issues of one gender (women) over another (men). This view shifts from what constitutes gender to what Hennessy and Ingraham (1997: 1) refer to as materialist feminism, which suggest an,

> Engagement with Marxism emphasizes a perspective on social life that refuses to separate the materiality of meaning, identity, the body, state, or nation from the requisite division of labour that undergirds the scramble for profits in capitalism's global system.

This discourse is based on the belief that "women perform most of the world's socially necessary labour, and yet they are far more vulnerable to poverty than men" and must be promoted in gender and gender equality discourse and programmes. As a result, gender equality is strictly confined to women and girls. The bias on gender awareness was explained by Cele (*Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) that,

> The month of July is said to be a men's month in this country. However, rather than having programmes on how men, particularly young men, must be supported to access opportunities and be better men for their families and the country, we get told that we must stop violence against women. No one wants to openly talk about the abuse that men also go through in their families. When you raise that, you get told that reports show that it is women who are killed more than men. The question then is whether this is about numbers or lives of the people. Even with the rallies, there is usually none during men's month, but in August, when it is women's month, there is a string of big rallies which are even broadcasted on radios and television. At the end, you can see that all that the government wants to do is show that, you as a man, you are violator, and must not say anything against this. What is worse is that all this I have just said to you, I cannot say openly in a public space as I will already be labelled as promoting violence. We really need to have an open, honest discussion about how these things are being done, or else we will continue to have these reports of violence.

8.5. Conclusion

The relationship between men and women, girls, and boys are constantly changing as part of the socialisation and socio-cultural habitus. What was once understood as socially and culturally accepted as the norm, continues to change as people find new meaning, as they develop new knowledge, technologies, and ideas. This constant change makes the relationship between different genders more complex and intractable. This complexity is compounded by that while some of the new ideas are developed, and the world continuously becoming one, connected global village where different cultures, religions and technologies are practices are infused, some of the culturally embedded practices are maintained. In turn, this leads to conflicts and cultural shocks. For instance, in advocating for women rights and freedom, does this suggests questioning of cultural practices by traditional Zulu men who believe that they are the voices of their wives who they have paid *ilobolo*? If the government passes the law that suggests that parents must not beat their children in line with the international rights of children, does this mean that parents who continue to do so with the understanding that 'this is how we were raised by our parents, and it made us better' are in the wrong? The explanation given by Cele (*Pers. Comm*, 31 October 2020) in section 8.4 illustrates how the adoption of international standards continues to give way to culture and behavioral conflicts in communities.

These conflicts constitute what Moufakkir (2013: 323) and Winkelman (1994) refer to as cultural shock or cultural confusion, a "situation when a group of people entering a different

culture encounter a feeling of confusion and experience disorientation." He further explains that the "exposure to an unfamiliar culture can be beneficial but also stressful and potentially harmful to sojourners or tourists. Unfamiliar environments may contribute to anxiety, confusion and depression in groups. Consequently, exposure to a novel and unfamiliar cultural environment, people experience psychological distress, friction and hostility" (*Ibid: 323*). This state of confusion can either have negative and/or positive impact depending on how people adopt and adapt to the new reality. For instance, the introduction of new parenting skills for Zulu parents in the Umkhanyakude region may present an opportunity for cultural learning and development of new identities. The negative effect of this would be resistance and hostility, leading to negative social ills such as violence, abuse of alcohol to mention a few.

To elude this cultural confusion, this study suggests that programmes aimed at promoting gender equality must acknowledge that gender equality is not strictly confined to women. It is not about only promoting women issues but must engage men and women issues alike (Nyalunga, 2007). Equally, these programmes must take into consideration context specific gender roles, social relations, and stereotypes rather than making binary categorisations of gendered behaviours. This will ensure that even in the construction and reproduction of new gender roles and relationships, these are based and informed by local, specific cultures, myths, stereotypes, norms and beliefs.

In addition, while instances of violence have been reported to largely affect women, it however remains important both men and women are prioritised in programmes promoting gender equality. The explanation such as that of feminist Monique Wittig, which goes as far as saying that we,

> Need to do away with the concept of gender in order to end the oppression of women as the goal of women's liberation is achieved through the annihilation of gender as a social construct, the social construct that perpetuates the economic freedom and social behaviour by controlling the way women function in society" needs to be rethought (Khan, 2019: 1).

Langa (2012: 4) argues that,

> Gender is a social or cultural category influenced by stereotypes about female and male behaviour that exists in our attitudes and beliefs. Such beliefs are often said to be culturally produced or constructed."

Gender equality suggests that both men and women have equal rights for contributing to and benefitting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. In food security discourse, gender equality suggests that both men and women must utilise their capabilities

and resources to ensure food security of their households. This does not suggest equal contribution in simple terms, but active contribution by men and women on household food security. The roles and responsibilities between men and women must be constantly negotiated and agreed to suit material conditions of the household at any given time. In instances where a man is able to go beyond traditionally gendered accepted roles, this must be allowed and not disregarded as shameful. The same must be done by women. This will ensure that food strategies such as *ukunana* are not only seen as strategies to be only carried by women and not men. This will ensure that food security achieving food security is an equal responsibility of both men and women, and is understood beyond gendered power relations, roles and responsibilities.

Chapter 9: Beyond the Orthodox Economics of Household Food Security

9.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and provide concluding remarks on emerging viewpoints and perspectives in the study. It gives an account of how the study has sought to contribute to new knowledge and makes suggestions on areas that still needs further research. In terms of structure, the chapter firstly explains the premise of the study; secondly, it discusses the theoretical and conceptual analytical framework for food security; thirdly, the methodological approach which includes key lessons from fieldwork; fourthly, it discusses the findings from fieldwork and analyses as contribution to new knowledge and fifthly, it looks at the implications of emerging perspectives of food security for existing policy frameworks in South Africa and makes recommendations for policy development. The last section of the chapter discusses areas for further research including implications of embodied cultural beliefs and practices on utilisation of food, influence of the environment on household food security as well as the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) in 2019.

This study is motivated by a story of an elderly woman who is a widow with five (5) children. At the time of our conversation on the 22nd of May 2012, it was 12 years since the passing of her husband, was the sole provider of food and other household needs. Following the death of her husband, she had to find means to ensure that her five (5) children had access to food, clothes, medicine and education. When asked how she managed to raise her children even though she did not have access to income as she did not formal employment, she only responded that '*God never fails'*. The study emanated from this underlying question on how this elderly woman, or other people in a situation as hers managed to earn a living. The study focused on specific subject, food, as this is an everyday need for individuals and households. The study raised a main question regarding the mechanisms and strategies used by households at grassroots levels in rural areas of the developing world to mitigate food insecurity, with the specific focus in the northern region of the Umkhanyakude. The main research question was underlined by several sub-research questions which sought to unpack matters related to household food security.

9.2. Theoretical and Conceptual Analytical Framework for Food Security

To answer this question, the study set out a theoretical and conceptual analytical framework through which to understand the household food security. Initially, the theoretical perspectives were inclined towards orthodox theories such as modernist approaches of food dynamics. However, following the process of collection of data from the field, several food strategies were identified and characterised as 'beyond the economic', therefore necessitating the development of a specific analytical framework to understand dynamics of food in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. The analytical framework is developed based

on the notion that societies have complex, and often conflicting systems and structures which influence actions and non-actions of individual households and communities. The social structures include age, class, gender, race and ethnicity, while the social systems include institutions which continuously influence cultural norms, beliefs and practices (Walby, 2007 and Valle, 2000). The study points out that orthodox, classical economic theories and models can be used to understand household food security in environments with high levels of economic activities and employment opportunities. In rural areas such as Umkhanyakude region, household food security goes beyond the economics of food security to include the social and cultural dynamics of food security. It is for this reason that this study advocates for the application of new institutional economics perspectives in the food security discourse. New institutional economics eschews the holism of the orthodox, classical economic theories and models, and advocates for institutions as governance structures in local communities.

Within the food security discourse, the theory of new institutional economics suggests that food security studies must be interdisciplinary in nature, and look at various facets of food insecurity beyond the orthodox, classical dimensions. These disciplines must include social, political, cultural as well as physical dimensions of food. Beyond these, are institutions, both in terms of formal and informal rules, laws, norms, and physical institutions such as the tribal authorities that govern functioning of communities. In this way, household food security is not only understood from the commonplace viewpoint that, seek employment first to achieve household food security. Rather, it acknowledges that there are number of factors social, political, and cultural factors influencing decisions people take in relation to food security. This is particularly the case in rural areas where people's actions and non-actions are largely embedded, embodied, and imbued by socio-cultural factors which determine their food security status. The specific focus on orthodox, classical economic factors provides a partial, incomplete picture of lived experiences of households in relation to how they access food and ensure availability at all times.

The new institutional economics has taken the study into the exploration of social, economic and political institutions and systems that govern everyday life. These institutions and systems determine human behaviour, actions and non-actions of people. The study has also shown how issues of rural geography, social anthropology and the political economy converge in the production of household strategies. The study has also demonstrated how gender, power and authority are intricately interwoven particularly in spaces where people complete for access to resources. The contestation for palm trees by both palm wine producers and basket weavers is one example illustrating convergence of gender, power and authority. Over and above these, are social networks deeply embedded in societies. These

networks are established based on reciprocal relationships which are used for absorbing future food insecurities, threats and shocks. To better understand these food dynamics in clusters of Umkhanyakude region, the following methodological approach was used for collection and analyses of data in the study.

9.3. Methodological Approach in the Study

The study developed a methodological technique for the collection and analysing of data. Central to the research methodology was the cluster approach, which led to the creation of five (5) different clusters in which a total of 150 interviews were conducted. To avoid bias towards economy-related food strategies, a 20-kilometre radius was delineated from the main towns and/or service centres. The 20-kilometre radius was delineated as households surrounding major towns are approximately within 10 – 15 kilometres from the centre of the town. Outside of this radius were households that in remote areas that are at times without proper access roads and public transport. As a result, these households are not able to travel to town on daily or weekly basis to buy food. It was for this reason that households falling outside of the radius formed part of the respondents participating in the study. The research tools such as the semi-structured questionnaire and household diaries were used for collection of data, and Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analyses. Using these methods, the study gathered and made several findings as discussed below.

9.4. Findings and Contribution to New Knowledge

Firstly, the review of literature in the study discovered how the region of Umkhanyakude is largely shaped by impact of early tribal conflicts and colonisation as a capitalist system. Following the tribal wars between the Ndwandwe and Ngwane led to the latter settling in the upper Ingwavuma area, today called Pongola. In addition to these conflicts was the colonial system which introduced various laws leading to substantial migration of people, men in particular, to cities in search for work opportunities. The migration patterns led to Umkhanyakude region being regarded a labour reservoir for cities. The region continues to largely act as a labour reservoir supplying labour to towns and cities such as Mpangeni, Durban and Johannesburg. This study conceptualises this as a core-periphery relationship existing between Umkhanyakude region and cities. As a result of this core-periphery relationship, substantial numbers of people continue to migrate into these towns in search for work opportunities and better living conditions. As it is explained in chapter 2 on the early origins of the region, the migration to cities in search for these opportunities has impacted Umkhanyakude in two (2) ways, namely, gender-imbalance and age-gap. Both these have had serious ramifications for households in the Umkhanyakude region disrupting some of the

culturally accepted norms, values and practices. For instance, migration of men to mines and farms in the 1940 and 1960s led to wives having to look after the homesteads. The women had to assume all household responsibilities including building houses (*ukufoloma itini*, making clay-bricks), *ukuthetha* (communicating with ancestors), rearing children and looking after cattle.

With the advent of democratisation in 1994, this allowed for middle-aged male and female to migrate to cities. This migration to cities led to age-gap as only children and aged were left in rural areas. The age-gap in rural areas led to fall in farming acreage, as older people could not plough sizable pieces of land. The following years, in early 2000s was characterised by migration of younger people to cities. This led to total abandonment of farming as households relied heavily on commercial activities such as remittances, informal trade and informal employment. The large tracks of land lying dormant are visible in many rural areas today. The migration of young people also led to cultural dissipation. In rural areas such as Umkhanyakude region, the family structure, particularly elderly persons, are important in the process of maintaining cultural continuity as it them who teach the younger generation of traditional values, norms, beliefs and practices. This is particularly the case in food security as older people share agricultural practices for subsistence purposes. The use of old cow dung as fertiliser and knowledge of seasons on when to plant specific crops, are some of the traditional agricultural practices which are taught and transferred from one generation to another.

These are inter-generational practices which in most instances are transferred from between different generations through oral means and through the embodiment process, as is explained in Chapter 2 and 4 of the study through embodiment, people learn from a young age socially accepted norms, values and behaviours, and they live and practice these throughout their entire lives. In the modern world, these imbibed or embodied behaviours, feelings or characters are also influenced by new technologies, internet, religion, radio and television. For instance, the cultural practice of greeting as a sign of respect is not done in towns and cities, where people are “always in a rush and mind their own businesses” (Mthembu, *Pers. Comm*, 28 December 2020). The same can be said of different categories of food security strategies in clusters of Umkhanyakude region. As a result of new technologies, government policies and changing behaviours and attitudes, some of household food strategies particularly culture-related strategies (*ukusisa* and *ukuthekela*) and rite of passage strategies (*ilobolo, ukuthetha, ukukhalela*) seem to be gradually diminishing in their importance and use by households for food obtaining purposes. It is worth noting that the shift or decline in use of some of these strategies is more prevalent for some

than others. For instance, *ukunana* remains prevalent in remote, rural clusters such Umhlabuyalingana and Hlabisa where perhaps the culture motivated 'structures of thought' or epistemes that unite to give meaning to how people understand and address food insecurity (Olssen, 2014, O'Leary and Chia, 2007 and Stempel, 1981). The economy-related food strategies on the other hand are increasingly becoming important and the most used strategies in rural areas. The economy-related strategies such as social grants, informal employment, *ukushonisa* and *ukukweleta* are the most prevalent household food strategies in rural areas.

Secondly, the study established that household food security must be understood through an analytical framework (see figure 4.1) underpinned by concepts of embeddedness, socialisation, and embodiment. These concepts move beyond the orthodox, structural analyses of food to include concepts of socio-cultural habitus and new institutional economics. As indicated in section 9.2, these concepts explore social, economic and political institutions and systems that govern everyday life. These institutions and systems determine human behaviour, actions and non-actions of people. Through the analytical framework, the study established that mechanisms and strategies to obtain food can be categorised into three (3) types, namely: - economy-related, culture-related and rite-of-passage-relate- food security strategies.

Although the strategies are categorised into three (3), it emerged during the analyses that households do not separate these but use them in a complementary manner. For instance, *ukukweleta* (buying food on credit), which is categorised as an economy-related strategy may be used to supplement the strategy of *ukunana*. In this instance, households may decide to *ukukweleta* maize meal, and *banane* (process of *ukunana*) *imana* soya mince from their neighbours. By not buying *imana* soya mince on credit, they would have reduced susceptibility to food insecurity in the future as they would not have to pay back debt which would have been incurred through *ukukweleta*. Beyond the complementary use of strategies, are agreements, networks, and relationships between households in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. It is through these networks and relationships that households share food without an expectation that the same food is returned. This practice of sharing food without an expectation builds a sense of reciprocity, which is embedded in the belief that '*umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu'* (a person is a person, through other people). The same belief is also used as part of process of social cohesion and nation building in South Africa, by fostering social relations between different social groups with cultures, religions and languages. In a country that is rooted in diverse social groups, it is crucial that an effort is made to create a sense of national identity through supporting and promoting different

cultures, cooperation, respect and tolerance amongst people (Department of Arts and Culture, 2015).

Worth noting is that, while food is shared without expectation of financial reward or it being returned, there are implicit obligations and cooperation that exist between families. This is what Banerjee *et al* (2005) and Gu *et al* (2008) refer to as peer-peer reciprocity which people use to share resources without expectation of having to pay back those resources. In this study, this sense of reciprocity and mutual support between households is referred to as emotional economy.

In clusters of the region, 'emotional economy' (which involves people and their relationships), is entrenched through food strategies such as *ukukhalela* (an *IsiZulu* word translating to crying or feeling sorrow for someone) during bereavement. As it was explained by respondent 19 of the Umhlabuyalingana cluster that, mutual support does not always have to come through in the form of financial resources. In an area such as the Umkhanyakude region where larger portion of households do not work, it becomes difficult for people to support each other financially. The people therefore use *ukukhalela* to support those in need. The emotional economy creates mutual insurance for households as the support that is given today will be reciprocated in future. In turn, this cushions households against vulnerabilities and risks to their livelihood.

The study also establishes that these food strategies, particularly the culture-related and rite of passage strategies, are embodied and embedded in the societal social systems. In terms of embeddedness, the study has illustrated how, for example, culture-related food strategies such as the *ukunana* and *ukusisa* are motivated by the notion of cultural and social embeddedness, social capital, mutual support and reciprocity. These notions form part of social systems which define and guide day-to-day life in rural areas. It also determines what is good and bad, right and wrong as well valuable and invaluable. This in turn, shapes human behaviour, attitudes, actions and non-actions as well as decision making by households. Taking *ukunana* for example, this food strategy fosters social relationships between people which cannot be understood from a macro level, but at a micro, individual or household level. Moody and White (2003: 105) acknowledge this as the "multidimensional construct relating generally to the importance of social networks" which can only be understood through what Polanyi (1977b) describes as social embeddedness. These social networks, which in the most part are informal networks in that they are not properly constituted and recorded, cannot be explained and/or guided by a national policy with specific focus on structural economic dimension of food security.

It must be noted that these social networks also exist in urban areas (Adjaye-Gbewonyo *et al.*, 2019, Rockenbauch and Sakdapolrak, 2017 and Amato, 1993). While they may not be similar in terms of shape and form, urban households, particularly those living in areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment do develop networks to access money, information as well as employment opportunities. Unlike in rural areas where social networks are based on the family or kinship relations, social networks in urban areas are based on similar values, interests, and lifestyles. Amato (1993: 250) observes that urban households are,

> Less likely than rural dwellers to base their personal networks on traditional sources (such as family) and are more likely to include voluntary sources such as friends, co-workers, and club members.

It is perhaps for this reason that unlike in rural areas where for instance, neighbours *bayanana* without any expectation of return of the food being given, exchanges such as lending of money to a friend or a relative is done with a clear expectation of it being returned in future. As a result, urban households lack strong reciprocal and mutual support that exist in rural areas as they can also "draw on a greater variety of formal organizational sources of support than can rural dwellers" such as "professional helpers, service agencies, self- help groups" (Amato, 1993: 250). The viewpoint of this study is that social networks in urban areas are therefore not as entrenched and embedded in everyday life of people but are used largely for as an when they are needed. These social relations are what Sen (1981) refers to as various entitlements used by households to access resources and achieve food security. This understanding of household food dynamics is important as it focusses on the coping mechanisms of households facing food shortages. This is important as it places at the centre, the capabilities of people in dealing with food insecurity.

Over and above social embeddedness, is territorial embeddedness. The existence of certain resources, institutions in some clusters and not others influence food access and availability for households. The palm trees which are used for production of palm wine and traditional baskets and *stokvels* found in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster and well-functioning water schemes and farms such as the Makatini, Umjindi and Ndumo Farm in Jozini cluster, are some of the resources making food strategies territorial in nature. Central to location of resources is the issue of access. As it is illustrated in the study that, access to these was determined by several factors including gender, proximity to the local chief and was intergenerational. This study explained how in terms of gender dynamics, the existing power relations of access to resources influences who gets what, how and when. This was the case in the allocation of *isitanza* (size) of palm trees in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster. Administered by local headmen, these were allocated to wine producers, who are men. Worth noting however is that the allocation of *isitanza* to only men did not discourage women

to negotiate and develop relationships with the wine producers to allow them to utilise leaves of the palm trees. The fact that some of the palm wine producers would at times, inform basket weavers to cut the leaves before they burn the palm trees is the indication of negotiations and relationships between wine producers and basket weavers.

These negotiations were also evident between men and women within households, where men continue to be regard as head of households, all different gender types contribute to the decision-making on utilisation of food strategies. The increase of access to financial resources by women through *stokvels*, social grants and *ukushonisa* has shifted gender power dynamics as women are increasingly getting involved in food obtaining activities. Taking social grants for example, these have largely increased access to financial resources by women in all clusters of Umkhanyakude region. In Umkhanyakude, women have monopolised social grants often referring to them as '*imali yami yeqolo*', (directly translating my waist money), suggesting that it is them who carried the child during pregnancy for a period of nine (9) months, they are therefore entitled to the grant. Granlund and Hochfeld (2020: 1233) point out that some of the women receiving social grants sometimes jokingly refer to the "government as their new husband", somehow suggesting that they do not need their unemployed husbands, which even though is said light-heartedly, does affect social relations in the household. The shifting of power relations between men and women forms part of the socialisation process, in which embedded cultural beliefs and are inherently evolving, as it is shaped and reshaped by the social, political, economic, and the environment and in turn (re)shapes this environment (Alonso *et al.*, 2017 and Karpov, 2016).

These findings on household food strategies in the Umkhanyakude region have contributed to new knowledge in the following ways:

Firstly, by using a household as a unit of analysis, the study has sought to unpack micro, nuanced complexities of food security in a specific case study of the Umkhanyakude region. Situating food security at the household level has put emphasis on the notion of the *'locale'* and ensures that vulnerabilities, institutions, and gendered power relations that exist at these micro levels are explored and understood.

Secondly, drawing from the sociological, anthropological, and geographical conditions, the study has unpacked capabilities (entitlements as is defined by Amartya Sen) that people use to achieve food security. In rural areas, these entitlements move beyond the orthodox, economic dimension to include social and cultural food strategies which are maintained and embedded through processes of embodiment and socialisation.

Thirdly, the study has explored the intricacies of these food strategies through the understanding of the *IsiZulu* language. In the study, the *IsiZulu* language is used as a window of interpretation of embedded systems and practices of food security in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. In clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, *IsiZulu* is an institution used in the socialisation of cultural norms, values, practices and systems. Through *IsiZulu*, households are able to pass information from one generation to another, and thus ensuring that cultural value system and way life is maintained in societies. This is important for social engineering of communities and ensuring that people are socialised on common values, beliefs, vision and acceptable behaviours. In turn, *IsiZulu* is important as an institution that shapes people's behaviours, actions, beliefs, decisions and actions.

Fourthly, a series of quotations were drawn from various respondents from the case study as is illustrated in Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8. The use of quotations has ensured that rooted, lived realities of households are explored. The emerging trends have been used to both support and challenge existing viewpoints and perspectives on food security discourse.

Fifthly, the study has contributed to the debates about policy development as far as being informed by local dynamics embedded in local cultural dynamics rather than global international trends. These policy implications are further discussed in section 9.5 below.

9.5. Food Security and Policy Implications

In the review of literature in Chapter 4, the study explains that to be responsive to household food insecurity in rural areas, there is a need for policy review and development of these at local, municipal level. While it is important to continue having an image of how food security is constituted at a regional and national levels, food security is a local, household matter, and as such must be administered at a local level. The municipalities must develop food security plans (MFSP) identifying areas for agricultural development, interventions to support subsistence farming, areas of investments in terms of irrigation schemes, storage, and distribution of food within municipalities and institutional framework for achieving sustainable food systems. The food security plan must also be dovetailed with local economic development plans (LED) which must prioritise informal trading activities particularly those of linked to agricultural products such as selling of green mealies and *inyama yenhloko* (cooked flesh of cow head). This will ensure that support for food systems considers both subsistence farming and the economic activities created through subsistence farming. This will strengthen the informal employment food strategy which is one of the prevalent food strategies in rural areas, and in turn acknowledging these informal household food strategies in the positive light, as sign as resiliency by households rather out-of- the-norm food strategies.

In developing the MFSP, the municipalities must borrow from the work that is done in Sweden through the Formas, the Swedish Research Council for sustainable development focusing on developing sustainable and resilient food systems. The Formas has prioritised funding for research and development as food security is dynamic and influenced by various factors which are changing. As a result, the research needs to be interdisciplinary in nature with an aim to increase "focus on product development, innovation, dissemination and commercialisation of research results, as well as raising knowledge levels over the entire food supply chain" (Kuylenstierna *et al.*, 2019: 29). As part of innovation, the municipalities must develop e-governance system as an infrastructure for households to exchange (selling and buying) products ranging from the handcraft, vegetables, and cooked traditional food. The e-governance system must also map out *spaza* shops and small-scale farmers such as that in Mboza, Ndumo and Zama-Zama areas to increase access to food for households while also supporting local businesses trade their products. This would involve creation of WhatsApp community trading groups for marketing and selling of goods amongst communities. This will ensure increase to access to food between small farmers to potential buyers. The other spheres of government, national and provincial governments, must support municipalities build capacity through researcher and development to improve the functioning of e-governance system and developing new knowledge on adaptation of lessons at provincial and national levels.

The MFSP must also explicitly determine roles and responsibilities of key different players in food security environment. These include subsistence and commercial farmers, *izinduna* (local chief), local councillors, ward committees, local *stokvels*, churches, local businesses, and organised community groups. The involvement of these different stakeholders is important for soliciting viewpoints on how to best improve food security in areas in which they live. For example, in terms of role of men and women on household food security, it is important to develop the MFSP which understands gender not in economic sense of who gets what resources over another gender type, but how men and women contribute to food access and availability activities as and when it is required, and they have means and resources to do so. The MFSP must shift away from the push to empower one gender type over the other, but acknowledge that, gender is exercise of power of one gender over the other. It must acknowledge and address the opportunities and oppressions associated with being a male and female, the socio-cultural relationships between women, and girls and boys. The programmatic interventions by the MFSP must seek to strengthen capabilities of both men and women to achieve household food security. The MFSP must not fall into the commonplace narrative that equates gender equality to women empowerment.

9.6. Areas for Further Research

Whereas this study has sought to explain ways in which households obtain food in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region, it has not sought to paint a whole picture of food dynamics in the region. Firstly, household diaries sought to gather data on how and what type of food the household buys through their income. The household expenditure patterns are important as they indicate the food that households utilize on daily basis. Food utilisation forms important part of household food security, as the nutrient intake determines the health status of individuals. The Food Agriculture Organisation - FAO (2020: 1) for example, observes that for people to maintain healthy bodies, mind and lives they require a "diet providing sufficient energy and essential nutrients." Food security is concerned with how food is produced, and this includes safety and quality and quantities of food. This study did not seek to explore at length, the expenditure patterns of households in clusters of the Umkhanyakude region. As a result, the study has not been able to determine which food types are purchased by households, in what quantities do they buy this food, and whether they must make choices on what they purchase and utilize? It is important for future studies to investigate household expenditure patterns.

During fieldwork, respondent 9 in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster explained how it is a commonly accepted norm that some food types are served to specific members of the household. Respondent 9 (*Pers. Comm*, 8 May 2017) explained that,

> You know, when we were young, the wings and drumsticks of chicken were only served to man as head of the household. As children, we were only given other parts of the chicken, but not wings or drumsticks. This practice was never explained but was accepted by everyone in the family. This signals the importance of cultural beliefs, norms and institutions on food security.

Alonso *et al* (2017: 1) observe that,

> Food is intimately related to human culture. Improving our understanding of the cultural dimension of food security is therefore increasingly recognized as an essential part of moving towards sustainable healthier diets for all. Yet, in spite of this growing recognition, culture has too often remained on the fringes of discussions on the fight against malnutrition among policymakers and researchers.

It is important for future studies to investigate impact of embedded and embodied cultural beliefs, systems and institutions on household food security in rural areas. The studies must investigate ways and extent to which culture impacts household food security.

Secondly, although the study has explained economic, social, and cultural factors of food security, it has not at length explained the influence of the environment on household food security. The environment includes not only the physical environment, but also the social, economic and the cultural environment and its influence on food security. For instance, the discussion on palm trees illustrated the relationship between physical access to resources and household food security. The physical infrastructure (as part of the physical environment) and how it connects different areas, be it rural, semi-urban and cities is important to understand as it has impact on access and flows of people, food, and resources from one point to another. It also supports the economic base of areas and regions, and thereby contributing to employment opportunities which are central in household food security. The social dimension of food investigates the family relations, networks and systems which create a fertile ground for households to achieve food security. It is important to understand how all these factors, converge and influence how households access food.

Thirdly, in 2015 when this study commenced, the Umkhanyakude region and South Africa was gripped by extreme drought and is concluded during the period when the region is again, gripped by a serious pandemic, Coronavirus, commonly referred to as COVID-19. As it has been illustrated by a number of reports by the NIDS-CRAM, COVID-19 has had (and continues to) serious impact on food access and availability for households, particularly COVID-19 which is still new. The outburst of COVID-19 pandemic signals how rural areas are vulnerable to risks have exacerbated food insecurity of households in these areas. However, given the frequency at which these disasters and threats, the magnitude of both these combined, particularly to rural households remains unknown. This also illustrates the fluidity of food security as it gets influenced by various factors. The fluidity of food security has implications for policy frameworks as these must be flexible and adapt to these forever changing conditions.

In conclusion, this study has sought to explain food security from a new institutional economic perspective, emphasising the importance of culture, class, gender, age, and power in food security discourse. This is done to provide a holistic approach to understanding food security that it, it is not only about the price, income, or employment status, but equally, it is about how people relate to others, the beliefs and meanings they embody, their embedded cultural beliefs as well as how they learn new ideas and identities through the socialisation process. It is also about understanding the institutions (the institutional organisations and the rules and laws) which guide how people live, their decisions as well as behaviour. In rural areas, it is these institutions which act as a foundation for social networks which are crucial for household food security. These social networks also extend into urban areas through

remittances, information, infrastructure and transferring of goods and services, and thereby entrenching the rural-urban continuum which continue to change the commonplace definition of what constitutes ‘rural’ or ‘urban’. This shift presents a new dynamic in terms of household food security, as it can no longer be confined to being a rural or urban challenge, but an issue that cuts across both these areas. This new dynamic signifies implications for policy in that it can no longer elevate structural, economic facets of food security over social, cultural, and political factors, which are not measured through the Global Food Security Index (GFSI). As a result, policy framework on food security must be multi-pronged in its approach, and be framed at a local, municipal level to allow for direct engagement with the micro, household dynamics of food.

10. Explanatory Notes

Access – refers to access to adequate resources be it economic, political, legal, and social resources, for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

Amadlozi / *amathongo* – means ancestors.

***Amantshontsho* –** refers to the meat taken by men who slaughter, skin, and prepare meat for cooking.

Amasimu or amadobo – refers to the ploughing field.

Clusters – refers to areas outside of the 20-kilometre radius of the main towns of Manguzi, Jozini, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe and Mtubatuba.

Community-organisationally-linked (COL) food strategies – refers to food strategies that are embedded in community social systems and values and organised by individuals or social groups with a common vision and objectives. These are the main economy-related strategies which people commonly use to earn a livelihood. These include *ukushonisa* (micro-lending), *stokvels*, remittances *ukukweleta* (buying food on credit), selling of livestock, hawking and informal trading and informal employment.

Culture – while this is an elusive concept and is intrinsically difficult to define, culture means process of socialisation where norms, values and ideologies are taught, learned, and internalised for purposes of attaining social and cultural continuity. It also refers to a web of institutions that govern how individuals and households respond to perception of costs and benefit in exchanges and invest in or divest themselves of ties.

Embeddedness – refers to a multidimensional construct relating generally to the importance of social networks for collective action.

Esigcawini – refers to an open field which is used for traditional dancing. It is often used by young men and women to show off their dancing skills.

Food security – refers to a state where all people, always, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Food insecurity – refers to a state where a household cannot on sustainable basis access adequate quantities of food and required nutrients intake.

Food strategy - refers to the means and mechanisms used by households in clusters of Umkhanyakude region to access food. It involves actions and non-actions of households in their pursuit of food security status are flexible, adaptable, and influenced by a range of social, economic, and physical context specific and broader factors.

Funeral economy – refers to the commercialisation of funeral sector, and thereby increasing the cost of funerals and making them platforms to access to food, alcohol and financial resources.

Gender - refers to the relationship between men and women, girls and boys. It relates to the attributes and opportunities associated with being a male and female, and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men, and girls and boys. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. They are passed from one generation to another.

Homelands – also known as Bantustans – refers to areas established by the apartheid government to locate majority of the black population to prevent them from living in the urban areas.

Household food diary - refers to a diary filled by study respondents on the type of food eaten, strategy used to acquire food as well as the frequency of the food strategy.

Household refers to a single family with members sharing one homestead and eating from one pot.

Ibutho – refers to regiments.

Ikhompi - means light skin tone.

Ilobolo - which simply translates to bride-wealth or sometimes called bride-price, is one of the longstanding rituals for Nguni related tribes. It involves the provisions of marriage payments in cattle or cash, from the family of the groom to that of the bride.

Imali yami yeqolo - directly translating my waist money), refers to the child support grant.

Imbeleko – directly refers to the act of giving birth or to carry on your back. It is a ceremony that is conducted on the 10th day after the baby is born, or later. This is an act of detaching the umbilical connection from the mother and introducing the child to the ancestors.

Imbizo – refers to a gathering or a meeting often chaired by the local chief or his assistant.
Imvulamlomo - which directly translates to mouth-opener, during the *ilobolo* negotiations are also crucial for bringing down the price of *ilobolo*.

Induna – refers to the local chief.

Induna yesigodi – means local chief.

Ingoduso – is an *IsiZulu* phrase derived from the *goduka*, meaning going away. Following finalisation of payment of Ilobolo negotiations, the bride is expected to the leave her home to the new family. *Ingoduso* refers to a fiancée.

Inkosana or ***Indlalifa***– refers to the heir or the oldest son.

Inkosazane – refers to the oldest daughter, usually of the chief or from the royal family or unmarried woman.

Inqolobane **–** refers to traditional food repository or storage.

Inzilo **–** refers to a mourning garment.

Iphoyisa lenduna – Iphoyisa directly translates to police. Iphoyisa lenduna refers to an advisor to the local chief who also performs duties of liaising with *isigungu*.

Isangoma – means a traditional healer.

Isibaya – refers to a cattle pen.

Isigodi – refers to a ward, village or an area.

Isigqiki – refers to a traditional seat made of trunk of a tree and is used by man as head of the household or given to visitors (also males). The women are never allowed to sit in *isigqiki*.

Isigungu – refers to the advisers of the local chief which normally convenes to discuss matters of the community and inform the chief before the sitting of the *imbizo*.

Isihonqo – refers to a temporary kitchen structure built to prepare food during the burial period or when families have traditional ceremony.

Isilawu – refers to the meat given to extended family members and neighbours.

Isiphandla - refers an animal wristband that is worn to connect with the ancestors. I*siphandla* cannot be taken off without informing the ancestors.

Isitanza **–** *refers to the* size or extent of palm trees allocated or owned by an individual.

IsiZulu – refers to the language spoken by the Zulu people. It is one of the eleven officially spoken languages in South Africa.

***Izibizo* -** is an *IsiZulu* phrase derived from the word *ukubiza*, which directly translate to call. The word *ukubiza* can also be used to refer to a high or expensive cost of something. For instance, during the *ilobolo* negotiations, the family of the groom may feel that *liyabiza ilolobo* (bride price is costly). *Izibizo* are gifts given to the bride on the day of the day of the finalisation of *ilobolo* negotiations.

Izinkomo zobabamkhulu **–** *directly translate to* ‘my father’s cattle’. In the Zulu culture, man’s possessions are referred to as his father’s or grandfather’s possessions. This is from the belief that the possessions are a gift from the ancestors.

Labour reservoir – refers to rural (homelands) or township areas housing the unemployed and releasing them when their labour was needed in white South Africa.

Omashonisa – refers to individuals or entities that provide credit to consumers who cannot get credit from the formal credit market, because of their negative credit profiles or lack of collaterals.

Region - refers to the Umkhanyakude District Municipality, which comprises municipalities of Big 5 False Bay, Hlabisa, Jozini, Mtubatuba and Umhlabuyalingana.
Remittances – refers to cross-border, person-to person payments of relatively low value but constitute a critical lifeline for millions of individual households, helping families raise their living standards above subsistence and vulnerability levels.

Siyakhuleka – process of greeting before entering a homestead.

Social grants – refers to the money paid to people who are vulnerable to poverty and in need of state support. These generally include older people, people with disabilities, and people with young children.

Social networks - refers to relationships that are based on the family or kinship relations, social networks in urban areas are based on similar values, interests, and lifestyles.

Socialisation – refers to a process where the norms, values and ideologies are taught, learned and internalised for purposes of attaining social and cultural continuity.

Spaza **shop** – also commonly referred to as tuck shop, *spaza* shop is an informal convenience shop business which is often operated from home.

State-organisationally-linked (SOL) food strategies - refers to government interventions aimed at assisting the poor households to have access to financial resources for basic household needs.

Stokvel - refers to a variety of mutual benefit or savings societies. It is a credit organisation in which a group of people by voluntary mutual agreement, regularly contribute money to a common pool and circulate the pool among the group.

Ubumbano – *an* IsiZulu word which simply translates to 'holding each other' and is a revolving credit facility made up of 16 women members in the Umhlabuyalingana cluster.
Udondolo – simply translating to a 'stick' used to support elderly with movement, and is a revolving facility made up of 37 women members in the Jozini cluster.

Ukubhala edolweni - this simply translates to writing on the knee. It is a process of buying food on credit from a *spaza* shop.

Ukucwebezela – directly translates to 'shine', refers to an individual with a light, shining skin tone.

Ukufaka isandla - *ukufaka* directly translates *'to put'* and *isandla* means *'a hand'. Ukufaka isandla* means assisting another person. In the study, ukufaka isandla involved assisting with fencing, ploughing, taking out weeds, irrigation as well as spraying pesticides against insects.

Ukugana - means getting married. For women, when they get married, it referred to as *ukugana*, while men *bayaganwa*.

Ukugeza* or *ukukhumula – ***Ukugeza*** directly translate to 'bath', while Ukukhumula means to 'undress'. This refers to a process of cleansing particularly for the widow after lapsing of the mourning period.
Ukukhalela – is an IsiZulu word directly translating to crying or feeling sorrow for someone during bereavement. It involves providing support, particularly emotional support, to the family of the bereaved.

Ukukhuleka - which directly translates to 'pray', is a process of greeting before entering through the gate of the homestead. *Ukukhuleka* is the highest form of respect for *umnumzane*, the head of household.

Ukukweleta - is an *IsiZulu* word which simply translates to buying food from a local *spaza* shop on credit. It involves buying essential food items on credit on mutual agreement with *spaza* shop or food market owners on payment of debt. It is also commonly referred to as *ukubhala edolweni*.

Ukulanda isigqoko – refers to the act of the collecting meat left from day of the ritual.

Ukumbula itshe – means tombstone unveiling. Tombstone unveiling involves placing a marker on a gravesite. The marker is made of some permanent material, which in most times is a stone, and contains the details of the deceased such as their name and surname, date of birth and death, a quote biblical quote (particularly in a Christian family) and some very brief description of the deceased.

Ukuphathisa – refers to a process of sending money, food, or clothes with a friend, relative, acquaintance or public taxi.

Ukushonisa – is an *IsiZulu phrase derived from* word *ukushona, which means death. Ukushonisa* simply translates to killing or burying another person. It is a process of lending of money by informal micro lenders. Most people who are often involved in this fail to repay the high interest rates, and as a result further plunged into debt and level of vulnerability.

Ukushweleza – refers to the process of communicating with the ancestors to appease them during the difficult times. Ukushweleza is often done as part of *ukuthetha ngolaka*.

Ukusisa – which does not have a direct translation in English, is a traditional practice where a cow or a goat is allocated to another member of a household, particular children as a form of investment for future use.

Ukuthetha ngesihle* or *ukubonga – refers to the process of communicating with the ancestors to appreciate the good that has happened in the family. It includes celebration of material abundance, good health and other related family growth and success through feasting.

Ukuthetha ngolaka – refers to the process of communicating with the ancestors particularly on matters such as ill-health, misfortunes such as pregnancy miscarriages, car accidents as well as death of livestock, particularly goats and cattle. The head of the household communicates with ancestors, asking them whether there is anything that they are not happy about, and requesting that they indicate what they want done for protection of the family.

Ukuthomba – refers to the period during which adolescents reach sexual maturity and become capable of reproduction (puberty).

Ukuzila – refers to a period of mourning. It can also be used to mean fasting.

Umcwabo – means a funeral.

Umembeso - is an *IsiZulu* word derived from *ukumbesa* or *ukumbathisa*, which simply translates to cloth or to dress. It is part of the *ilobolo* negotiations where the groom presents gifts to the bride's parents and family before the wedding.

Umemulo - is an *IsiZulu* word derived from *ukwemula*. While *ukwemula* cannot be easily be translated into English, this is a traditional practice of *ukwemulisa (coming out of age)* a young girl into womanhood.

Umhlonyane – refers to a ritual performed as part of protection of the young girl as she enters the stage of *ukuthomba* (puberty) and blossoming forth into womanhood.

Umhlubulo – refers to a cow flank.

Umnumzane – refers to a man as the head of the household.

Umshumayeli – is an *IsiZulu* phrase derived from *ukushumayela*, meaning to 'preach'. *Umshumayeli* means preacher.

Umsulanyembezi - directly translating to 'wiping of tears', refers to a cow given to the mother of the bride, as an acknowledgement and show of gratitude for raising a respectful young woman.

Umuzi - refers to a homestead.

Utilisation – refers to how food is used, access to clean water, sanitation, and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met.

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Jozini Cluster

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Umhlabuyalingana Cluster

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Household Diaries

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12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet - Interviews

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet – Household Diary

Appendix 3: Respondent Consent to the Interview

Appendix 4: Household Consent to Filling of Diaries

Appendix 5: Semi-Structured Household Questionnaire

Appendix 6: Structured Questionnaire for Dieticians

Appendix 7: Household Diary

Appendix 8: Coding of Interviews in the Study

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet – Interviews

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
School of Architecture and Planning

Participant Information Sheet

Good day Sir/Madam,

I, Mduduzi Nhlozi, hereby request that you assist me in completing this questionnaire. I am a Doctoral student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, currently undertaking a study on the state of food security in rural areas of northern region of KwaZulu Natal. The study aims to analyse micro, household food security issues and livelihood mechanisms and strategies used by households in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal to ensure secure access to food at all times. I am kindly inviting you to become part of the study by assisting in providing answers and your insight to the questions I am about to ask. You are selected in this study as your home falls outside of the 20km radius from the town and live in the rural part of the area.

The questionnaire will at most take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and during this time, you may withdraw or not answer without any negative consequences. The collated information will be analysed for the purpose of partial fulfilment of the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy in Town and Regional Planning at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am kindly requesting that some of the direct quotes from this structured questionnaire session be used in the final report. The information will also be presented at seminars, conferences and in academic papers. In all these, the information will be treated with confidentiality.

You may after this questionnaire is completed contact me to ask for and/or add any additional information pertaining to the study. Equally, when the study is completed, I am willing to avail an abridged version of the report for your perusal.

Please note that once this this questionnaire has been analysed, it will be scanned and stored as a zip file in a password secured computer and the hard copy will be kept in a safe, locked box in the reach of only the researcher.

Your participation in this survey is highly appreciated.

The questionnaire is administered by: Mr. Mduduzi Nhlozi
: University of the Witwatersrand
: School of Architecture and Planning
: Email: 0618070h@students.wits.ac.za
: Cell: +27 (83) 246 2039

Supervisor: Prof. F. Sihlongonyane
: University of the Witwatersrand
: School of Architecture and Planning
: Email: Mfaniseni.Sihlongonyane@wits.ac.za
: Tel: 011 717 7706

Appendix 2: Participant information Sheet – Household Diaries

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
School of Architecture and Planning

Participant Information Sheet

Good day Sir/Madam,

I, Mduduzi Nhlozi, hereby request that you assist me in completing this diary. I am a Doctoral student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, currently undertaking a study on the state of food security in rural areas of northern region of KwaZulu Natal. The study aims to analyse micro, household food security issues and livelihood mechanisms and strategies used by households in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal to ensure secure access to food at all times. I am kindly inviting you to become part of the study by assisting in providing answers and your insight to the questions I am about to ask. You selection in the study has been informed by the fact that your home falls outside of the 20km radius from the town, you live in the rural part of the area and most importantly were indicated by your neighbour(s) as one of the needy households in the area.

The diaries shall be filled for 3 weeks between months of May and September 2017. These weeks are 8 – 14 May 2017, 5 – 11 June 2017 and 4 – 10 September 2017. Starting from Monday (of the 3 weeks), kindly record the food your household consumes for breakfast, lunch and supper. Also indicate how the family accessed the type of food, and the strategy used to access food in that week. In filling the diaries, a tick in a form of an 'x' or '√' must be used in the appropriate box. A commentary section is also provided for the household to provide more information where necessary.

During the weeks when diaries need to be filled, contact will be made with you to remind you to complete your diary. Your participation in the completion of diary is voluntary, you may any point during this time, withdraw or not answer without any negative consequences.

The information collected through the diaries will be analysed for the purpose of partial fulfilment of the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy in Town and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am kindly requesting that some of the direct quotes from the diary filling sessions be used in the final report. Also, the information will also be presented at seminars, conferences and in academic papers. In all these, the information will be treated with confidentiality.

You may after the diaries have been completed contact me to ask for and/or add any additional information pertaining to the study. Equally, when the study is completed, I am willing to avail an abridged version of the report for your perusal.

Please note that once this this diary has been analysed, it will be scanned and stored as a zip file in a password secured computer and the hard copy will be kept in a safe, locked box in the reach of only the researcher.

Your participation in this study is highly appreciated.

The diaries are administered by:
Mr. Mduduzi Nhlozi
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Appendix 3: Respondent Consent to the Interview

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
School of Architecture and Planning

Consent Form

I, _____ hereby wish to state that my involvement this structured interview is voluntary. The aims and objectives of the study, which are to analyse micro, household food security issues and livelihood mechanisms and strategies used by households in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal to ensure secure access to food at all times, have been clearly explained to me. I fully understand what the study aims to achieve.

It has been explained to me that the study is by no means for financial gain, but for educational purposes. My participation in the study will be through answering questions from a structured questionnaire, which will take no longer than 20 minutes. I am aware that at any point during this time, I can withdraw or not answer without any negative consequences.

I have agreed that some of the direct quotes from this interview be used in the final report, and also that where necessary, be audio recorded during the session. I have also been made aware that once this questionnaire has been analysed, it will be scanned and stored as a zip file in a password secured computer and the hard copy will kept in a safe, locked box in the reach of only the researcher. The information I will provide will presented at seminars, conferences and in academic papers.

I am aware that the information I give will be treated with confidentiality.

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 2017.

_____

Participant Signature

The questionnaire is administered by: Mr. Mduduzi Nhlozi
: University of the Witwatersrand
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: Email: mdunhlozi@gmail.com
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Appendix 4: Household Consent to Filling of Diaries



University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
School of Architecture and Planning

Consent Form

I, _____ hereby wish to state that my involvement in the filling of diaries is voluntary. The aims and objectives of the study, which are to analyse micro, household food security issues and livelihood mechanisms and strategies used by households in the northern region of KwaZulu Natal to ensure secure access to food at all times, have been clearly explained to me. I fully understand what the study aims to achieve.

It has been explained to me that the study is by no means for financial gain, but for educational purposes. My participation in the study will be through completion of diaries for a period of 3 weeks between May and September 2017. I am aware that at any point during this time, I can withdraw or complete the diary without any negative consequences.

I approve that some of the direct quotes from this diary be used in the final report, and also that where necessary, be audio recorded during the diary session. I have also been made aware that once this diary has been analysed, it will be scanned and stored as a zip file in a password secured computer and the hard copy will kept in a safe, locked box in the reach of only the researcher. The information I will provide will presented at seminars, conferences and in academic papers.

I am aware that the information I will give will be treated with confidentiality.

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 2017.

_____

Participant Signature

The questionnaire is administered by: Mr. Mduduzi Nhlozi
: University of the Witwatersrand
: School of Architecture and Planning
: Email: mdunhlozi@gmail.com
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Appendix 5: Semi-structured Household Questionnaire

Generic Questions: Household Composition

Statement
a) Household Name

b) How many members do you have in the household?	
1 member	1
2 members	2
3 members	3
4 members	4
5 members	5
> 5 members	6

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
c) Do you have children in the household?	1	2

d) How many *children do you have in the household?*	
1 child	1
2 children	2
3 children	3
4 children	4
5 children	5
> 5 children	6

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
e) Do you have both father and mother in the household?	1	2

i) If no, which parent is still alive?	
Mother	1
father	2

f) Who makes the decisions in the household?	
Father	1
Mother	2
Grand mother	4

Grand father	5
Uncle	6
Aunt	7
Cousin(s)	8
Nephew(s)	9
Niece(s)	10
Other (please specify)	11

g) How are decisions made in the household?	
Unilaterally by the breadwinner/household head	1
By mother and father	2
By elders	4
Through household meetings	5
No particular process	6
Other means (please specify)	7

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
h) Are there other members you consider part of the household?	1	2

i) If yes, who are these members?	
Grand mother	1
Grand father	2
Uncle	4
Aunt	5
Cousin(s)	6
Nephew(s)	7
Niece(s)	8
Other (please specify)	9

Food access, availability and utilisation (for Household Breadwinner)

In the past six months…

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
a) Did you worry that your household would not have enough food?	1	2

i) If yes, how often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	5

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
b) Does your family have preferred food types	1	2

i) If yes, what are these preferred food types?	
Pap/Phuthu	1
Rice	2
Samp	3
Beef	4
Chicken	5
Fish	6
Lamb	7
Mutton	8
Vegetables	9
fruits	
Other (please specify)	10

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
c) Were you or any household member not able to eat the kinds of foods you preferred because of shortage of money or resources?	1	2

i) If yes, how often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	5

Statement	Yes	No
ii) *Did you do anything to get the kind of food you prefer?*	1	2

iii) If yes, what did you do get the kinds of food you prefer?	
Got additional employment for extra income to buy preferred food	1
Borrowed money from extended family to buy preferred food	2
Sold livestock for additional income to buy preferred food	3
Got food on debit from local spaza shop	4
Created a vegetable garden to plant all preferred food	5
Other (please specify)	6

Statement	Yes	No
d) Did you or any household member have to eat a limited variety of foods due to shortage of money or resources?	1	2

i) If yes, which food types did you have shortage of?	
Pap/Phuthu	1
Rice	2
Samp	3
Beef	4
Chicken	5
Fish	6
Lamb	7
Mutton	8
Vegetables	9
Fruits	
Other (please specify)	10

ii) How often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	5

Statement	Yes	No
e) Did you or any household member have to eat fewer meals in a day because there was not enough food?	1	2

i) If yes, which meals did you not eat?	
Breakfast	1
Lunch	2
Supper	3

ii) How often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	

Statement	Yes	No
f) Was there ever no food to eat of any kind in your household because of shortage of money or resources?	1	2

i) How often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2
Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	5

Statement	Yes	No
g) Did you or any household member go to sleep at night hungry because there was not enough food?	1	2

i) How often did this happen?	
Daily	1
Weekly	2

Bi-weekly	3
Monthly	4
Do not remember	5

h) How would you describe your household food security status?	
Secure	1
Slightly insecure	2
Insecure	3
Greatly insecure	4

Statement
i) What else would you like to tell me about the status of food security in your household? _____

Household Adaptation Strategies

a) How many breadwinner(s) are in the household?	
1 breadwinner	1
2 breadwinners	2
3 breadwinners	3
4 breadwinners	4
> 4 breadwinners	5

b) Who is the bread winner in the household?	
Father	1
Mother	2
Grand mother	3
Grand father	4
Uncle	5
Aunt	6
Son	7
Daughter	8
Cousin(s)	9
Nephew(s)	10
Niece(s)	11
Other (please specify)	12

c) What is the highest level of education of the breadwinner?

No schooling	1
Primary schooling	2
Secondary schooling	3
Senior/Matric schooling	4
Diploma	5
Degree	6
Honours/B-Tech	7
Masters Degree	8
PhD	9

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
d) Does the breadwinner have formal employment?	1	2

i) If not, what is the source of income?	
Informal business	1
Work in an informal business	2
Social grant	3
Pension	4
Other (please specify)	5

e) Who buys food in the household?	
Father	1
Mother	2
Grand mother	3
Grand father	4
Uncle	5
Aunt	6
Son	7
Daughter	8
Cousin(s)	9
Nephew(s)	10
Niece(s)	11
Other (please specify)	12

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
f) Are there other ways you use to access food?	1	2

i) If yes, what are these ways?	
Food garden	1
Buy food on debit from local spaza shop	2
Sold livestock to get extra income	3
Ask for food from extended family	4
Ask for food from neighbours	5
Got food by the local NGO/CBO	6
Got food from the local church	7
Other (please specify)	8

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
g) Do you get any food assistance from government?	1	2

i) If yes, how often has this happened in the last six months?	
Often (weekly)	1
Moderately (bi-weekly)	2
Rarely (monthly)	3
Do not remember	4

ii) What kind of assistance was this?	
Food parcels	1
Food coupons/vouchers	2
Support of community gardens	3
Other (please specify)	4

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
h) Do you think government can play a role in assisting your household with accessing food?	1	2

i) If yes, what do you think the government can do to improve your household food security status?	
Food parcels	1
Support household gardens	2
Support community gardens	3
Provide more employment opportunities	4
Ensure education of children	5
Prioritise legal framework on food security	6
Other (please specify)	7

Statement	**Yes**	**No**
j) Are there other people or organisations that you think can assist?	1	2

i) If yes, who else do you think can assist?	
Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)	1
Faith-based Organisations	2
Local chief	3
Local businesses	4
Individuals	5
Other (please specify)	6

Statement
k) What else would you like to tell me about the ways in which your household access food? _____

Appendix 6: Structured Questionnaire for Dieticians

1. What measures do you use to determine nutritional deficiency from patients?

   _____

2. How often do you record cases related to nutritional deficiency?

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	
Yearly	

3. Which gender is highly affected by nutritional deficiency?

Male	
Female	

4. Which age group is mostly affected by nutritional deficiency?

0 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 35	
36 – 55	
56 – 75	
76+	

5. In the last 6 months, how many cases of malnutrition have you recorded?

0 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 30	
31 – 40	
41 – 50	
51+	

6. Which season(s) or times of the year do you record high numbers of the nutritional deficiency from the patients?

Dec – Feb	
Mar – May	
June – Aug	
Sept – Nov	

7. Which of the dietary foods do most patients lack?

   _____

8. Which nutrients do the patients lack most?

Carbohydrates	
Fibre	
Fats	
Protein	
Vitamins	

Minerals	
Water	
Other	

9. What are the most prevalent nutritional deficiency illness cases have you recorded in the last 6 months?

Chills	
Backache	
Dizziness	
Fever	
Muscle pain	
Fainting	
Breathing problem	
Headaches	
Constipation	
Sleepiness	
Fatigue	
Weakness	
Poor concentration	
Other	

10. Do you offer any programmes or relief to the patients?

Yes	
No	

11. If yes, what kind of programmes or relief do you offer?

_____

12. What impact has the programmes had on the patients?

_____

13. How is the impact measured?

_____

14. What do you think needs to be done by government to improve food security status in this area and the surrounding areas?

_____

Appendix 7: Household Diary

Day	7Time of the Day	Food Type		√	Comments		Food Access Strategy		√		Frequency of Use per week	√
Monday	**Breakfast**	1	Soft maize porridge				1	Purchased		0	Never	
		2	Tea/coffee				2	From family garden		1	Once	
		3	Tea/coffee and bread				3	From extended family		2	Twice	
		4	Cereal				4	From acquaintances		3	Three	
		5	Pap				5	From friends		4	Four	
		6	Food left from the previous night				6	From neighbour		5	Five	
		7	Other				7	Other		6	Six	
										7	Every day	
										8	Do not remember	
	Lunch	1	Pap/Phuthu and beef stew				1	Purchased		0	Never	
		2	Pap/Phuthu and chicken stew				2	From family garden		1	Once	
		3	Rice and beef stew				3	From extended family		2	Twice	
		4	Rice and chicken stew				4	From acquaintances		3	Three	
		5	Samp and beef stew				5	From friends		4	Four	
		6	Samp and chicken stew				6	From neighbour		5	Five	
		7	Pap/Phuthu and vegetable curry				7	Other		6	Six	
		8	Rice and vegetable curry							7	Every day	

		9	Samp and vegetable curry						8	Do not remember	
		10	Salad								
		11	Other								
	Supper	1	Pap/Phuthu and beef stew			1	Purchased		0	Never	
		2	Pap/Phuthu and chicken stew			2	From family garden		1	Once	
		3	Rice and beef stew			3	From extended family		2	Twice	
		4	Rice and chicken stew			4	From acquaintances		3	Three	
		5	Samp and beef stew			5	From friends		4	Four	
		6	Samp and chicken stew			6	From neighbour		5	Five	
		7	Pap/Phuthu and vegetable curry			7	Other		6	Six	
		8	Rice and vegetable curry						7	Every day	
		9	Samp and vegetable curry						8	Do not remember	
		10	Salad								
		11	Tea/coffee								
		12	Tea/coffee and bread								
		13	Other								

Appendix 8: Coding of Interviews in the Study

VARIABLE	MHLABUYALINGANA	
	Yes	No
Households with over 5 members		
Households with over 5 children		
Households with both parents		
Women-headed households		
Households Worrying about not having enough food		
Households who sometimes go to sleep without having food to eat		
Households who sometimes have limited types of food to eat		
Households who are greatly food insecure		
Households with more than one bread winner		
Households with breadwinners with atleast Matric /somesecondary		
Households with some primary schooling		
Households with breadwinners with no schooling		
Households with breadwinners with post-matric schooling		
Households which get food support from government		
Households which would require assistance in terms of food parcels		
Households which would require assistance in terms of support with household or community gardens		
Households which would require assistance in terms of employment opportunities		
Households which would require assistance in terms of policy framework		
Formal employment		
Child headed households		

Experiences

* Some households, not having both parents in the family. Child headed households.
* Majority of the households has no formal employment. Social grant; some couple have pensions money.
* Many households would indicate how they on weekly/ bi-weekly basis, worry about not having enough food, but never ended always how chaotic of their food security, they would often rate how it is not greatly in terms, how rather insecure / slightly insecure
* Breadwinner was often confused for the head of the family. There were instances where household the father would not be working for bringing any money, but only the wife would be head would, yet the father would still be regarded as the breadwinner as he is the breadwinner hired in the household.
* There are people who are always worrying about not having food, and would on daily basis not know where their next meal will come from, would go to sleep without having anything to eat, as people in the area are poor of the fact that their family struggles with food, and are willing to help them.

Household Checks (15 households)

VARIABLE	CLUSTER	
	YES	NO
Households with over 5 members	~~HHHHHH~~ (10)	~~HHH~~ (5)
Households with over 5 children	~~HHH~~ (6)	~~HHHHH~~ (9)
Households with both parents	|||||||	||||||
Women-headed households	|||	|||||||||
Households worrying about not having enough food	|||||||||||||	|
Households who sometimes go to sleep without having food to eat	||| ||||	|||||||
Households who sometimes have limited types of food to eat		
Households who are greatly food insecure	|	||| ||||||||||
Households with more than one breadwinner	||||||||||	||||| (6)
Households with breadwinners with at-least Matric/Secondary	|||| (4)	|||||||||
Housing with breadwinner with primary schooling	|| (2)	|||||||||||| (13)
Households with breadwinners with no schooling	||| (3)	|||||||||||| (12)
Households with breadwinners with post-matric schooling	||||| (6)	||||||||| (9)
Households who get food support from government	(0)	||||||||||||| (15)
Households who indicated they require assistance in terms of food parcels	~~|||||||||||

Some families-no children - only elderly ← * 191 households interviewed.
→ no child headed - but some with no parents : living with their grand children.

VARIABLE	MTUBATUBA CLUSTER	
	YES	NO
Households with over 5 members	(12)	(19)
Households with over 5 children	(9)	(32)
Households with both parents	(37)	(15)
Women-headed households		
Households worrying about not having enough food	(36) 1	(5)
Households who sometimes go to sleep without having food to eat	(11)	(29)
Households who sometimes have limited types of food to eat	(26)	(12)
Households who are greatly food insecure	(2)	
Households with more than one breadwinner	(21)	
Households with breadwinners with at-least Matric/Secondary	(4)	
Housing with breadwinner with primary schooling		
Households with breadwinners with no schooling	(34)	
Households with breadwinners with post-matric schooling	(10)	
Households who get food support from government		(31)
Households who indicated they require assistance in terms of food parcels	(10)	
Households who indicated they require support with household or community gardens	(6)	
Households who require support in terms of employment opportunities		
Households who indicated the need for policy framework	1	
Household's with a member who has formal employment	(19)	(24)
Child-headed households	(5)	(36)

families in some
Some wards do receive food - Comments :
But we do not know how they get this as we also need food and do know people / families who need food (great need of food),
→ even those who receive food, this is not done in a consistent manner. It is only on ad-hoc basis.

(a) - food Parcels
(b) - support with household gardens
(c) - support with community Gardens
(d) - Provide more employment opportunity
(e) - Ensure education of children
(f) - Prioritise legal framework on food security
(g) - other

Some households not receiving grants
✓ in their households.
→ elderly headed households.

145 households interviewed in Jozini Cluster.
→ have women-headed households →
→ have ... (children) of households.

VARIABLE	JOZINI CLUSTER	
	YES	NO
Households with over 5 members	[illegible] (24)	[illegible]
Households with over 5 children	[illegible] (4)	[illegible]
Households with both parents	[illegible] (24)	[illegible] (24).
Women-headed households	[illegible] (17)	[illegible] (76)
Households worrying about not having enough food	[illegible] (35)	[illegible] (6).
Households who sometimes go to sleep without having food to eat	[illegible] (29)	[illegible] (16).
Households who sometimes have limited types of food to eat (mostly beat/starch/maize)	[illegible] (76)	[illegible] (4)
Households who are greatly food insecure	[illegible] (14)	[illegible] (5)
Households with more than one breadwinner	[illegible] (19)	[illegible] (28)
Households with breadwinners with at-least Matric/Secondary	[illegible] (17)	
Housing with breadwinner with primary schooling	[illegible] (9)	
Households with breadwinners with no schooling	[illegible] (28)	
Households with breadwinners with post-matric schooling	[illegible] (3).	
Households who get food support from government	0	[illegible] (97)
Households who indicated they require assistance in terms of food parcels	[illegible] (17)	
Households who indicated they require support with household or community gardens	[illegible] (10)	
Households who require support in terms of employment opportunities	[illegible] (18)	
Households who indicated the need for policy framework	0.	
Household's with a member who has formal employment	[illegible] (10)	[illegible] (38)
Child-headed households	[illegible] (4)	[illegible] (79)

support Extension
Education of children (4).

Most Important for households to be more of food
- Vacant land being leased
- keeping of gardens
- employment opportunities.
- selling of chickens, as a livelihood strategy. → not a business.
→ Nonetheless, these land be begins to [illegible] being leased by people who offer cash (often males)

* Total number of 15 households were interviewed
- mainly households with both parents → 60% split

VARIABLE	HLABISA CLUSTER	
	YES	NO
Households with over 5 members	(10)	(5)
Households with over 5 children	(6)	(9)
Households with both parents	(8)	(7)
Women-headed households	(7)	(8)
Households worrying about not having enough food	(14)	(1)
Households who sometimes go to sleep without having food to eat		
Households who sometimes have limited types of food to eat	(14) (Lack - varieties)	(1)
Households who are greatly food insecure	(2)	(14)
Households with more than one breadwinner	(9)	(6)
Households with breadwinners with at-least Matric/Secondary	(4)	
Housing with breadwinner with primary schooling	(2)	
Households with breadwinners with no schooling	(3)	
Households with breadwinners with post-matric schooling	(6)	
Households who get food support from government	(1)	(15)
Households who indicated they require assistance in terms of food parcels	(4)	
Households who indicated they require support with household or community gardens	(3)	
Households who require support in terms of employment opportunities	(7)	
Households who indicated the need for policy framework	(1)	
Household's with a member who has formal employment	(9)	(6)
Child-headed households	(0)	(15)

Extra education of children (1)
* many families still not having even primary education.

Issues of ha type related to other issues more pronounced in Hlabisa. Ward 20 has one of households interviewed which had some members of the household having decent employment level teachers, etc. Thus did not worry their lives in terms of food access & availability.

* Area largely rural
mountainous, which makes it difficult to access households.