

The dynamics of fast food consumption in a South African urban township environment

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstract</p> <p>The delineation of ethnographic qualitative research methods allowed for this study to explore the dynamics of fast food consumption in the South African urban township environment. This study aimed to investigate the factors that influence the consumption of fast food. The research question states what factors in the urban township environment create increased fast food consumption and decreased consumption of traditional foods which are healthier and more nutritious.</p> <p>The empirical data consisted of a series of transect walks, observations and sixteen interviews with various families living in the urban township about their daily food consumption patterns and why they prefer to consume fast foods over other available options. The approach of this study was based on the interpretivism paradigm with social constructivism theory, as the concepts allow the in-depth investigation of social practices.</p> <p>The themes identified from the empirical data, through the descriptive coding data analysis process, consists of socio-cultural, economic, and biological determinants of fast food consumption. It was evident that the South African urban township environment perpetuates the consumption because people do not have space for substance farming; the ingredients of traditional meals are scarce, and the fast-food industry is enormous in the urban area and offers convenience to quickly access diverse kinds of meals. It was evident that various factors influence fast-food consumption, and advocating for alternative eating will require understanding the complexities that lead to people preferring fast foods over other foods.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has been experiencing rapid urbanisation since the 1950s. As a result, in 2014 over 60% of South Africans live in urban areas as compared to 35% in 1951 (Turok, 2012: 3-6). Urbanisation provides both opportunities and challenges for the South Africans especially those in the low and middle income range, due to increased risk of finding themselves in poverty, food insecurities and environmental degradation, or at times have the potential for socio-economic transformation and reduced vulnerabilities (Fischer-Kowalski & Swilling, 2011: 1; Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014: 675). Historically the massive-migration from the rural to urban areas was due to the mining industry which attracted more unskilled labour to the urban areas (Kade, 2016).

South African urbanisation also experienced the apartheid regime¹, where the people were moving into the urban areas were segregated according to race, of which Whites stayed close to the city-centres, and the other races resided on the urban edges and faced with extended hours to commute to the city-centres. The rapid urbanisation in the country not only came with opportunities to access the services that people previously did not have but also with the challenges amongst many such as food insecurity, leading to massive dietary transitions (Puoane, Matwa, Bradley & Hughes, 2006: 92). In literature, it is acknowledged that the movement of people such as through colonisation, migration, and urbanisation lead to dietary changes to that of the place in which the people settle on. In urban townships, people are confronted with countless fast food outlets, which makes them adapt and accept the culture of fast food consumption.

¹ The apartheid regime is the era where between 1948 and 1994 there was massive spatial development segregation according to race in South Africa. Different locations according to race were meant to develop separately and non-white people were recognized as temporary residents of the cities, as it was perceived they will one day return to the rural areas (Maylam, 1995: 19-20; Pieterse, 2009: 1; Schensul & Heller, 2010: 78-81; Seekings, 2010: 1-4).

The urban environment, primarily townships, do not provide many people with enough land that there would be space for subsistence farming like it is in the rural areas (Turok & Borel-Saladin, 2014: 676). Townships in the South African context are areas in the urban edges that were previously designated for occupation by Black South Africans and had minimal infrastructure and public services (Seekings, 2010: 1-2). Lack of subsistence farming land space in the urban townships makes people rely on the store bought food and most conveniently rely on fast food. Fast food is a general term used to describe a limited menu of foods that lend themselves to the production line techniques; with specialised products such as fried chicken, hamburgers, pizzas or sandwiches (Kayisoglu & Icoz, 2014: 53). The shift from the traditional food that people grew themselves to the reliance on purchased well-packaged food has entirely changed the South African urban food environment specifically the townships (Blick, 2014: 2-6). The purpose of this study was to examine how the urban township² environment influences the changes in dietary behaviour from consuming traditional home-grown food to heavily relying on ready-made store-bought food. By reviewing the theoretical state of South Africa food environment and fast food industry, studying the determinants of food choices, and empirical review on the factors influencing fast food consumption.

In South Africa, urban food manufacturers present consumers with endless food types readily prepared. The media continuously advertise new food products, discounted food, and where its best to eat on what day (Steyn, Labadarios & Nel, 2011: 9). The country has been experiencing the problem of the rise in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart attack, and the issue is directly associated with the increase in fast-food availability and correlating with its consumption thereof (Steyn *et al.*, 2011: 2). Media coupled with the growth of fast food outlets makes it difficult for people to make healthy eating choices, as they are presented with wide variety of food that appeals to the eyes either through packaging or display.

² *Township*: I use this pseudonym to refer to the study area whose real name cannot be disclosed for ethical compliance reasons, and the township in small letters refers to an urban location which is differentiated from a suburb.

The high availability of fast food which some of it is found as street food³ does create an attraction for people to consume more. The fast-food sector is also one of the largest employers in the country both for formal and informal employment (Steyn *et al.*, 2011: 1). Most of the street food that people consume are processed food, such as snacks, crisps, soft drinks, and many other fried foods. However, not all fast food in South African are found in the streets. Majority of the fast-food comes from the fast-food outlets that generally operate as franchises inside the malls, complexes, and various buildings such as kiosks. Since majority of the South African urban population regularly purchases fast food, this has been associated with the prevalence of obesity and other non-communicable diseases in the urban areas (Puoane *et al.*, 2006: 92-93; Steyn *et al.*, 2011: 3-9).

1.1 Problem Statement

South Africa as a developing country is faced by various economic, social, environmental and political challenges. The economic and social stresses in the rural areas of the country resulted in rapid urbanisation as more and more people move to the cities in search of better lives. Rapid urbanisation does threaten the resilience of the city in term of its ability to provide sufficient services for everyone (United Nations, 2014). The urban food security is unstable as space requires for people to rely on purchasing and are unable to produce for themselves, as opposed to conventional subsistence farming in rural areas, which increases the consumption of fast food. South Africa has been experiencing a rise in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart attack, and the issue is directly associated with the increase of fast-food availability and correlating with its consumption thereof (Steyn *et al.*, 2011: 5).

³ Street food is the “food available in public places. This food is tasty ready to eat and its sold by hawker or vendor from a portable stall” and these are fast food (The Street Food Institute, 2018) <https://streetfoodinstitute.org/>.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore various factors that influence the changes in dietary behaviour in the urban environment, resulting in increased fast food consumption. The research question to explore states: *what factors in the urban township environment results in increased fast food consumption?* To answer the research question, the following objectives guided the study:

1. To present a theoretical review on the state of South African urban food security and fast food industry.
2. To present insights on the factors in the urban environment influences the consumption of fast food, from the empirical research data of the study.

This research investigated urbanisation and fast-food consumption in the *Township*. The motivation behind this research was to understand what motivate people to consume fast-foods regardless of various efforts made to show the long-term dangers of fast-food consumption, and the promotion of healthy eating by institutions such as the NGOs and government health department. Some studies have been done on how food consumption patterns have changed in South Africa since 1994, which might be the result of the country's abolition of spatial segregation (Ronquest-Ross, Vink & Sigge, 2016: 1).

The researcher observed the fast-food consumption culture by observing the location and advertisements of fast-food outlets and observe what informal traders are selling around the streets. Further, the interviews were held with families in their own homes. Visiting the houses was a strategy used to get on knowing the participants. Also, it was essential to understand what their families eat for family meals and what motivates them to each such foods.

1.3 The state of South African Urban Food Systems

To understand the issue of urbanisation and fast food consumption in South Africa required a review on the urban food environment and the fast-food industry guided by the first objective of the study. The purpose aimed to review the state of the South African food security environment and the fast-food industry. Most South Africans live in urban areas, which accounts for more than 60% of the country's population. Majority of these people resides in the low-income areas within the urban townships (National Planning Commission, 2012: 68). Various factors lead the urban residents finding themselves in poverty, but when it comes to food most research shows how the majority of the urban population has food insecurity (Steyn *et al.*, 2011: 4; Turok, 2012: 18). Rapid urbanisation itself is seen as a significant factor causing food insecurity, and this is tied with low income and unemployment, as the growth of the urban poor, this raises the question how everyone would be fed (Crush, Frayne & Pendleton, 2012: 272-273).

The Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) measures the number of food insecurities in households, and this scale has been practically applied to various South African townships in Johannesburg and Cape Town. This scale uses specified categories for the selected subjects and based on that the percentages are generated to determine whether the household is food secure or insecure (Crush *et al.*, 2012: 274-276). It shows how Cape Town areas have the highest food insecurity as compared to Johannesburg, with Manzini in Durban being the highest for the selected regions. The highlight of Cape Town food insecurity was necessary for this research as the study area was a Cape Town *Township*. The food insecurities are measured using the dietary diversity according to the Food Composition for Africa which are "cereals and grain products; roots and tubers; vegetables; fruits; meat, poultry and offal; eggs; fish and seafood; pulses, legumes and nuts; milk and milk products; oils and fats; sugar and honey; and miscellaneous products such as tea or coffee" (Crush *et al.*, 2012: 278). Most of the studies' results show that the percentage of food insecurities in South African urban areas is between 60% and 64% as compared to the rural regions (Ruiters & Wildschutt, 2012: 8-18).

The South African Department of Health has an established food-based dietary guideline, which outlines the healthy way of eating. The directive states: “enjoy a variety of food; be active; make starchy food the basis of most meals; eat plenty of vegetables and fruits every day; eat dry bean, peas, and soy regularly; chicken, fish, milk, meat or eggs can be eaten daily; eat fats sparingly; drink lots of clean safe water; if you drink alcohol drink sensibly; use salt sparingly; eat and drink food and drinks that contain sugar sparingly and not between meals” (Steyn, Myburgh & Nel, 2003: 600). Therefore, if the diet of an individual daily does not include the outlined food, the person can be considered food insecure. Food security is measured by the critical dimensions of availability, accessibility, affordability of the food products.

1.3.1 Food Availability

The urban food availability is determined by what the manufacturers and retailers supply, which shifts the reliant of food from agricultural produce purchasing the food that most of it is readymade. Hence, the food retailers’ business has grown as more than ever before, making people dependent on buying food (Kade, 2016). Thus, the food outlet chains take control in terms of what food they supply making people have access to convenient highly processed food, which is affordable to their incomes, and this has made them be distanced from nutritious fresh food that in the rural area most grew it for themselves (Kade, 2016; Pereira, 2014: 6). The fast-food retailers also expand to the townships and any other low-income areas providing consumers with food that are high in fat and sugar, with processed carbohydrates and refined sugars, and animal products at an affordable price. The abundant availability of food retailers including fast food have changed the determinants, preferences, and habits of the South African urban eating, especially the townships (Kade, 2016; Pereira, 2014: 2-5). What is mostly accessible from the township environment is small convenient stores that stocks limited fresh food that sells at a higher price, and a wide variety of processed food with longer shelf-life (Pereira, 2014: 9).

1.3.2 Food Accessibility

Accessibility is an important aspect of food security as people have to access what they want to eat. This includes access to shops, what food products are sold in specific geographic locations, and what is expensive or affordable where (Bellisle, 2006: 1-2). The availability of nutritious food is influenced by factors such as level of supply, production, net trade and distance to food retailers (Blick, 2014: 4). The availability and accessibility of food outlets do have an impact on people's food choices because their first choice would always be what is closest to them. Since 1994⁴ the diet of South Africans shifted towards consuming more "sugar-sweetened beverages, increased proportions of processed and packaged food including vegetable oil, increase intake of animal source foods, added caloric sweeteners and decreased vegetable consumption" (Ronquest-Ross *et al.*, 2016: 9).

1.3.3 Food Affordability

The cost of food and the ability of people to purchase can threaten or enhance food security. For most South Africans in urban townships, food accounts between 60% and 80% of their income (Crush *et al.*, 2012: 277-279). Food affordability is an important buying factor regardless of the food kind, even though certain food products are cheaper in other areas and expensive in the other (Crush *et al.*, 2012: 287). For example, processed food is more costly in rural areas than fresh food, and in urban areas, processed food is at the time an affordable option. One of the reasons for this is that agricultural land in the metropolitan area is expensive and most urban farmers grow the food for exports as they can generate more money, which makes the food to be expensive locally. For example, the most affordable food products in the urban areas consist of refined grains and cereals,

⁴ South Africa had its independence in 1990 and in 1994 the country held its very first democratic election and most of the policies that restricts people's movements and other segregation policies were abolished.

oil-based snacks, sugary beverages, margarine, and food high in sugar and fats (Steyn *et al.*, 2003: 601-605; Van Zyl, Steyn & Marais, 2010: 124-129). The urban areas in also where most food processing factories are located and will often sell to the public at discounted factory prices. There has been an increase in salt, sugar and fat consumption. Since the majority of the residents purchases their food, affordability is one of the factors that can determine what people choose to eat. As an example, the affordability of fast food makes people continue consuming it regardless of the negative impacts it has (Blick, 2014: 8; Crush *et al.*, 2012: 287).

1.4 South African Fast Food Industry

The era of the fast-food industry, in South Africa, started in 1960 when the international franchise Wimpy opened its doors. Later on, in 1971, it was followed by KFC, and McDonald's in 1995 (McKay & Subramoney, 2017: 2). Since then there have been more fast food outlets opening including the local ones like Chicken Licken, Fish & Chips, Mug & Bean, Steers, Nando's, Debonairs Pizza, and many more. In 2010 South Africa accounted to have more than 9000 fast food outlets (Maumbe, 2012: 159). Over the past two decades, the number of fast-food outlets has increased tremendously, and this has been because of the business opportunities open to all South Africans regardless of their race, the rapid urbanisation and population growth (Maumbe, 2012: 148-151). In most urban locations, including townships, the fast-food outlet is in easy distance of no more than 5km and some areas the distance is within 1km (McKay & Subramoney, 2017: 8).

South Africa has multiple fast food outlets. The fast-food outlets are under the authority of the South African Food and Beverage industry. These ranges from the international franchises, local franchises, street vendors, kiosks and other vendors that operates off streets like those cooking in their own houses and sell to the neighbours (Maumbe, 2012: 148-157). The domestic and international fran-

chises comprise of mostly the restaurants and the cafes. Most of these local franchises have also found their way to the other African countries. The supermarket chains have even penetrated the fast-food business, as they also have sections selling readymade meals to mostly urban consumers. There are also contract caterers that usually operates in business districts, schools and university residents, to provide quick meals to people in employment or educational areas (Maumbe, 2012: 150-157). Then there are street vendors who operate at the roadside, bus and train stations, taxi ranks, and any other designated area that got traffic and a substantial number of people passing by, selling hot food and beverages (Maumbe, 2012: 157). Most of these fast foods' outlets are well-established and operate within the global standards.

These fast food outlets also have active customer retention strategies to ensure that the customers come back. The food outlets do this by enhancing the meal solutions through free home deliveries. The food orders are speed up for fast delivery. There are proper, customer care strategies such as friendliness, loyalty and customers can complain if they are not satisfied with the services (Maumbe, 2012: 148). Most of the fast-food outlets are franchises, which aids to the uniformity of the service provided no matter which outlet the person visits. The other strategy that works for customer retention in word-of-mouth⁵, which spreads mostly through the internet and individual contact. For example, the consumers share experiences and opinions of their fast food purchasing behaviour with the others, which can positively contribute to the brand loyalty of specific fast food (De Meyer & Petzer, 2014: 18). Most studies focusing on customer retention strategies of the fast-food outlets, present the findings such as the price sensitivities of the customers makes the fast-food outlets not to increase their price regularly, or they would instead introduce new variety to add the higher price (De Meyer & Petzer, 2014: 23). In overall, the South African fast-food industry has active customer retention strategies, either a franchise outlet or street hawkers, as people continue to buy and have long term brand support loyalty.

⁵ Word of mouth is "an informal type of communication between private parties concerning the evaluation of good and services" (De Meyer & Petzer, 2014: 17).

It has been accounted that the total spending of South Africans on fast food is close R2 billion⁶ Per month, and this is due to the number of times people purchases fast food every week (BusinessTech, 2017). The spending on fast food continues to grow, even through severe economic conditions (BusinessTech, 2017). The studies done on advertising shows that the South African national TV channels on the period of six hours will show 1512 advertisements, and 665 of those advertisements would be food. Amongst the types of food, it would be desserts, sweets, fast foods, sweetened drinks, starchy foods, hot beverages and alcohol (Mchiza *et al.*, 2013: 2214). The aggressive advertising strategies of fast foods and sugary drinks have been indirectly linked to the growth of obesity in South Africa, as advertising encourages consumption of the specific product advertised. Majority of the adverts hardly shows fruits and vegetables as snack options; instead, they show various processed foods that claim to give energy, which can cause the increase in meal frequencies and promote the use of fast food outlets (Mchiza *et al.*, 2013: 2213). The advertising strategy is one of the findings of this research on the factors that encourages the consumption of fast food, as it influences the decision-making process of the food choice. With all the urbanisation challenges South Africa's Department of Health and other urban township researchers have been trying to promote healthy eating⁷, with the support of various private organisation on health and nutrition such as 4Roomed Ekasi Culture food truck⁸. Once a week, mostly Wednesdays, people will come to the organisation to collect seeds, compost, or even readymade meals. The organisation also hosts a series of the food market, which sells readily prepared vegetables and raw organic fruits meals as a way to reach out to the community about alternative, readily prepared meal options. It was during the market day and Wednesday feedings that the researcher approached random people and asked if they are interested in being participants of the study that wants to gain insights on their food choices and factors influencing such consumption pattern. However,

⁶ \$ 162 850 000,00 (US Dollars)

⁷ Example of nutrition and wellness Campaign by Provincial government: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/nutrition-and-wellness>

⁸ One of the organisations advocating healthy eating though selling nutritious and healthy fast food: <https://4roomedekasiculture.com>

of recent (2019) the 4Roomed Ekasi Culture has been selling healthy readymade meals all days of the week to the public.

The country has had lots of intervention on the health system, in terms of disease controls, vaccinations, wellbeing, and nutrition. Recently there have been interference into promoting healthy lifestyles through various urban food growing projects and the implementation of a sugar tax (WHO Africa, 2017). However, the complexity of South African fast food consumption patterns requires a more in-depth understanding of why people choose to eat what they eat.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

This study contains some key terms and constructs. Some of these might be ambiguous or not entirely familiar to a non-native South African. Although these terms are defined where they first appear, this section briefly introduces some of these terms to ensure the reader makes sense of the presented information.

APARTHEID: This was South Africa's city planning spatial segregation method. Apartheid city was spatial segregation of residential areas according to race. These areas were segregated by use of buffer zones which is 100m to 250m distance space between the racial categories, and mostly these buffer zones were main roads, railway lines, industrial areas, and natural features such as parks and forests. The main components of an apartheid city were racially segregated areas mainly residential, buffer zones, military controls, social infrastructure, and the enforcement of 300m maximum plot size for Blacks, as compared to 500-800m minimum for the Whites (Christopher, 2001: 449-456; Lemon, 1991: 2-25; Pieterse, 2009: 1).

BRAAI: This is a South African word for what is internationally known as barbecue or grill. Braai is often associated with masculine foodways as traditionally,

and it features male culinary skills and recipes (Reddy, 2016: 50). Braai mostly becomes the event food (sports games predominantly rugby) or public holiday meal signifying unity and belonging (24 September Heritage Day) or enjoyed as a daily meal often prepared by men.

FAST FOOD: The formal definition of fast food refers to "food that can be served ready to eat fast, which is dense energy high in sugar/fat/salt content and have low nutrient value in terms of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals" (Das, 2015: 1). This food is purchased readymade in a self-service, cafeteria, or take-away eating place, which contributes to the people's poor dietary quality (Van Zyl *et al.*, 2010). The fast-food outlets often feature a limited menu of pre-cooked and quick prepared foods such as burger meals, fried chicken and also snacks. Fast food is easy to access, quick to prepare, inexpensive and usually favoured by people of all ages (Maumbe, 2012: 154).

FOOD CHOICES: Various factors determine food choices. Food choices can be influenced by different biological, economic, physical, social, psychological, and personal preferences such as attitudes, beliefs and food knowledge (Bellisle, 2006: 1). The various determinants of food choices influence what people eat, how do they eat, when do they eat, where do they usually eat, and with whom they are eating this food. The other factors influence the food choices being urbanisation, globalisation, marketing, religion, culture, ethnicity, social networks, income and education (Ronquest-Ross *et al.*, 2016: 1-2).

TOWNSHIPS: In the South African context, it refers to the areas that were designed to segregate the people in the cities racially. According to the World Bank townships are "dormitory settlements built at a distance from economic activities as well as from the Whites residential areas, with rows of uniform houses, and lacks basic services, infrastructure such as tarred roads, sanitation, water or electricity" (Mahajan, 2014: 31). Currently, there are three types of townships: first, the Apartheid Townships which were created during apartheid to serve dormitory settlements as their layout where solely for the residential purpose (Mahajan, 2014: 34). Second, the Post-Apartheid Townships, which were created

by various policies and national housing programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme and Breaking New Grounds to solve infrastructure crisis in the urban areas (Jurgens, Donaldson, Rule & Bahr, 2013: 256-258). Third, there are Informal Settlements, some of these are illegal land occupying settlements and backyard dwelling in existing townships that have mushroomed throughout the South African urban spaces, as a result of rapid urbanisation, increased unemployment and urban poverty (McGaffin, Napier & Karuri-Sebina, 2015: 5-8).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Ethnographic Qualitative Research Methods

In ethnology studies, the research methodology is often inductive to generate new themes and theories from the data collection and analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 90). This research made use of multiple qualitative ethnography research methods to collect information from the natural setting of the *Township*. Moreover, the interviews happened in the participants' homes to understand the factors influencing the consumption of fast food. This section of the study describes the methodology, the source materials and the research design, including how the ethnographic case study approach was used. The research methods used for the collection and analysis of the data consists observations from the transect walks in the *Township*, semi-structured interviews with the key informants, and individual interviews with the families who served as the main participants of the study. All the used methods were essential for the emergent themes on urbanisation and fast food consumption, which represented this study. The families as participants provided the researcher with in-depth information on how the urban township environment leads to an increase in fast food consumption, using an ethnographic case study methodological approach.

Ethnography is essential to describe, interpret, and reveal meanings of certain cultural behaviours using qualitative inquiry. The value of an ethnography is that it provides an in-depth understanding of social practices and can be helpful to build societal knowledge (Suryani, 2008: 121-124). In ethnology research, ethnography can function as a primary method to collect empirical data in a study or it can be used as a toolkit in combination with other methodologies such as that case study, as it was used in this research (Keddie, 2006: 21; Suryani, 2008: 125). The ethnographic approach allows the answering of the research questions based on *Why*, *How*, and *What-ifs* of the studied concept. For example, in the context of this study, the *Why* Explored reasons the participants preferred fast food over other types of foods; and the *How* Focused on how the participants select their

food; and what is the primary motivation behind the selection of food. Thus, leveraging on the strength of ethnography to describe, interpret and disclose deeper meanings of a cultural behaviour such as that of fast-food consumption, using qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and observations.

This ethnographic case study on urbanisation and fast-food consumption were informed by various scientific qualitative research methods, to explore the factors which influence people's food choices. To explore these factors influencing the use of fast food families from urban *Township* were selected as research participants. The families functioned as primary participants of the study as the majority of them have direct experience in being part of rapid urbanisation, due to their move from the rural areas. A case study allows the representation of the theoretical and empirical data through the construction of the internal validity of the case being examined. A case study is defined as "an in-depth investigation approach of the real-life societal phenomenon using diverse data sources" (Keddie, 2006: 21). On the context of this research the ethnographic case study approach allowed to investigate how the culture of consuming home-grown food in rural areas have been affected by the changes that come with the urban lifestyle, such as people not wanting to eat what they used to but exploring new food options.

2.1.1 Case Study Method

This study fell under the case study category because it reports on the experiences and present evidence on the studied concept of fast food consumption in the urban *Township* environment without generalisation of the townships. Case studies can be both qualitative and quantitative, but on this study to the ethnographic approach allowed for the qualitative design. In this research, the case study was intrinsic in a holistic, context-sensitive, and systematic manner, because the researcher wanted to get a deeper understanding of urbanisation and fast-food consumption (Suryani, 2008: 119). Case studies are helpful to capture

real-life events on naturalistic settings, and also when interpreting the participants' experiences to reveal what is known and what is not understood about the concept (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 96–97). Case studies allow for researcher to "deeply observe the characteristics of an individual unit such as a person, a group, or a community to analyse the various phenomenon concerning that unit of study" (Suryani, 2008: 118).

A case can be a person, community, event, plan, policy or institution that can be studied inductively to gain a deeper understanding and learn new information about the context being studied – for example, investigating the case of urbanisation and fast food consumption to determine further details about the concepts (Keddie, 2006: 22). Case study as a method is essential when trying to understand societal issues that are complex, situational, problematic, and requires a holistic approach (Suryani, 2008: 119). It is also essential that the case being examined presents an opportunity for the researcher to learn something new and of interest (Suryani, 2008: 119). Reason for following a case study approach was because case studies are humanistic and allow for direct contact and experience between the participants and the researcher through context-conversation, observations, and interviews.

2.1.2 Demography of the Participants

The racial profile of the study location was quite diverse, with a balanced profile of Africans, Coloureds⁹, Indians, Whites, and also foreigners. Most of the foreigners in the *Township* came from Congo, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Somalia, Pakistan, and even China. Thus, the demographic profile of the participants could not be defined by race and can be separated from each other by culture or religion or language, as those are the more social groups unifying categories. The selected

⁹ These are people of mixed race between the Europeans and Africa or Asians, as it was defined by the South African government in 1950 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Coloured>).

Township had a different profile of religion that can be easily identified by the availability of Churches, Mosque, and traditional religion consulting places.

The participants of the study were found through a non-profit organisation operating in the *Township*. The functions of this organisation are to promote healthy eating by encouraging people to grow their vegetables in container gardens and preparing their home-cooked meals. An example of this would be the *Impilo Yabantu Market*¹⁰, which aims to educate the township residents about the importance of nutritious eating by selling pre-cooked nutritious meals at an affordable price. At first, it was nine families that agreed to participate in my interviews, and the additional seven were introduced by the families already interviewed. In total, sixteen families were the participants of this study, and they all had different backgrounds, but most shared the same religion, language and culture.

The chosen participants of the study were families that consist of the parents, children, in some cases, grandparents. The sole purpose of this study was to investigate the eating behaviours of the urbanising families, as opposed to selecting single participants whom their eating behaviours might change when they are in a group or family setting. Using families as participants were ideal because the study assumed that families have regular meal patterns, and it might be easy to track the change they encountered in their eating patterns. Further, being on the family setting also allowed the researcher to join some of the families during their mealtimes. Thus, again observing what meals are served to the visitors, which helped on the analysis of the collected data. The word participants in the study refer to all the family members within the household. The word participants in the results section represent opinions from different families as collective. Therefore, there are no individual opinions that were used in this study.

¹⁰ Social Media Page: <https://business.facebook.com/ImpiloYabantuMarket/> Research page about the market: <https://www.sustainabilityinstitute.net/si-news/5523-nutrition-in-the-townships>

The diversity of the participants for this study was important as it helped to get different perspectives on the same issue of urbanisation and fast food consumption. Further, the distinct profile of the participants served as an assurance of not stigmatising a specific race to be urbanising more than the others, but a general overview was presented on fast food consumption as a result of urbanisation. South Africa has a long history of racial segregation and behavioural stigmatisation according to race, and this study aimed at avoiding using race as the participants' classification, but instead use culture and religion as those cut across races.

2.1.3 Observation Method

Observation in scientific research exists in naturalistic and unstructured settings to observe the non-verbal expressions in events, behaviours, and practices (Riessman, 2006: 191). The observation in the *Township* was of the prevalence of fast food outlets in the *Township* and what kinds of food they were selling, and how busy they were. The observation method was used during transect walks and also interviews, to observe the relationship that the participants had with food. Observations were used as another method to collect the data without directly interfering with the context setting. In this study, the researcher followed a direct observation approach over being a participant observer (Reinharz, 2011: 5). The follow-up semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to talk more to the family members in their own homes about what is it they eat and why they choose to consume such foods.

2.1.4 Transect Walk Method

Transect walks are systemic walks that are planned around the defined path of the study area. It is useful for the researcher to understand the real-life actuality

of the study areas (Pretty, Gujit, Scoones & Thompson, 1995: 239). The identification of organisations focusing on food security was done by having regular walk around at the *Township*. The strategic walks were done with various informants of the research, who are representatives from the organisation that advocates for healthy food consumption in the urban environment. The transect walk allowed the researcher to observe the prevalence of fast-food outlets in the *Township* main-streets and retail centres. The researcher also had an opportunity to document the physical environment of the neighbourhood, including where the main facilities such as retail, schools and other government services are. The safety precautions were taken by knowing the crime hotspots, and also what equipment to decide at what area. Transect walks, in mostly participatory research, are used to collect the visual data such as problem areas, cleanliness of the environment, and in general, places that require intervention, by walking as many fields as possible through the neighbourhood (Pretty *et al.*, 1995: 239). On the context of this study, the main goal was to be able to find participants who can be interviewed about their food preferences in their own homes.

2.1.5 Interview Method

The sixteen families as participants were interviewed from their own homes Between May 2017 and September 2017. The natural setting of the household presents an opportunity to study people in the comfort of their own space and get to observe the meals they serve. In qualitative ethnographic research, there are basic standards for conducting the interviews to ensure the information is accurately recorded, such as the interaction between the researcher and the participants in a structured or unstructured context with guiding questions (Barbour & Rosaline, 2008: 133-116). The interviews can be one-on-one or in a group, as well as formal or informal. During interviews, research questions are essential, because they serve as guiding principles for the conversations. On the context of this study, the interviews were not only informed by the research questions. Further, the general interest from the researcher on urban development issues played a role in the fieldwork questions. For example, questioning why food

seems to be a vital component in every South African culture, to a point where every gathering their particular food type is associated with it.

This study followed the semi-structured interviews approach with very open-ended questions to allow the participants to interpret the question themselves. Some of the questions asked were: *“Tell me what your family eats daily?”*... following up with *“Why do you prefer eating that over something else? Is the food here different from the one you used to have in the place you lived before?”* The follow-up questions were asked according to how the participants were answering their questions (Refer to Appendix 1). For example, if their answers were more about the social norms, the follow-up questions became more direct about the culture, gender and religion. There was also a situation where the researcher was invited again to visit the household. The second visit to the family presented another opportunity to have more interviews with the participants. The length of the interview depended on how much friendly the families were. The participants were informed about the visit from the researcher, and they mostly created time to talk and socialise with the researcher, with minimum time spent together being 90minutes. However, there was flexibility, and there were no time limits. However, for formal interviews with participants such as the community leaders, it was no more than 60minutes. Thus, the interview context and time differed according to who the participants are.

2.2 Data Collection Process

2.2.1 Location

The Scientific research methods guided the data collection and analysis process of this study. This study took place in a naturalistic setting of people's homes, of which the researcher became an observer. The researcher was also an outsider in the cultural context of the urban township environment as one did not come from the Township or have ever lived there. The selected location for this study

was an urban Township closer to the researcher's residential area in South Africa. Using townships as the study area was vital because it is the space where people who arrive in the city from the rural regions resides. Due to the limited economic opportunities most of these people cannot afford to stay in the suburbs or the city centres, and the places they end up in the townships where there is freedom to build an informal structure for residential dwelling, at minimum cost or even free. Then Township also presented the opportunity to meet the different profile of the participants, as the people who stay there comes from different parts of South Africa and even from the neighbouring countries.

The selected Township has been in existence since the year 2000, and it is a reasonably small area as compared to the other urban townships, with a population of between 8000 - 10000 inhabitants. This Township emerged and grew as a result of the newly established Industrial park back in the 2000s. The people started occupying the empty parcels of land in search of jobs in the industrial areas and also having close access to the workplace. The slow temporary occupation of the area resulted in a full permanent community. In South Africa, when people reside on the land without paying for it or permission from the local government, the settlement is considered illegal, and the people might face forced evictions without notices. The Township used for this study was an illegal settlement until 2011. Before the formalisation, its residents suffered numerous evictions, demolition of their houses, relocations and lengthy waits to public infrastructure such as housing, sewage, roads, and water. Currently, the Township has sufficient public infrastructures, with the majority of the residents living in the formal house and small proportions staying in shack structures.

In 2015 the Township also received a public primary school and sports ground, to increase the access to public services. The formality of this Township has resulted in the rapid population growth. Besides, more and more people are moving into the area due to its formality status. Since its formalisation, it has become a favourite residential location, as the people know that they are secured and free from evictions. To control the inflow of the people who wants to reside, the

Township had a “self-appointed council¹¹” running and deciding on the area. However, gaining access and speaking to the residents did not require any council permission. Yet, when someone wants a space to put the structure, the person has first to get approval from the council.

2.2.2 The Role of the Participants

The participants of the study voluntarily became the informants and interviewees after being approached by the researcher. The interviews took places in the participants' own choice of location, which was either the organisation that they were found through or even their own home. The reason for household interviews instead of neutral space such as restaurants was also for cost-cutting purposes as the researcher did not have funds to conduct the study. Having interviews with the participants at their own choice of location ensured their comfort and openness to talk about their consumption behaviours. The participants were interviewed as a family also assisted with collecting various opinion from all the family members. Further, the purpose of having the participants in this study was to ensure that the researcher is not using their views on urbanisation and fast food consumption but having the results that come from diverse opinions to answer the research questions. Also, having participants in the qualitative ethnographic study increases the reliability and validity of the collected data and the results.

The participants in this research were verbally informed about the intention of the study and what purpose its results would be used. The confidentiality of the information they provided was assured, and they knew about their rights withdraw from the interview process even though they have started already. There was no remuneration offered to participate in the study.

¹¹. The self-appointed council is the governing body that usually governs the townships. At this context, the council committee consisted of people who resided in the area first, or they were the one who even started the *Township*. Thus, all new residents get the permission of this council to reside in the area or build a structure.

The researcher did not use any audio or video recording during interviews but took notes using the notepads or digital tablet, or a Cellphone. Where the families agreed the pictures of their food was taken, such as bought groceries, prepared meal, and to some extent, other participants sent additional photographs of their meals. However, in line with the confidentiality and protection of the participants' privacy, most of their faces were withheld. Verbal consent to participate in the study was given to the participants, and it was clarified with them that the purpose of the research is for the completion of an academic thesis, and their names would not be disclosed on the final report of the study.

This research was, therefore conducted following the ethical guidelines and values of academic research from University of Jyväskylä research guidelines. As a researcher, the student followed the responsibility: "to actively study, adopt and observe ethical guidelines and practices as well as other guidelines related to research" (Havilla, 2019).

2.2.3 Gate Keepers

The research location for this study was an urban *Township*, and as an outsider, the researcher required some permission and introduction to be able to access the participants. The Ward Councillor¹² granted permission to access the Township and also introduced the researcher to the organisation that deals with food security in the *Township*. The organisation was the one who gathered the people who were willing to be interviewed in their own homes. Gatekeeping in field research is a reality because, in every area, there are often people who function to safeguard the region and its culture and ensure the community is not being exploited. Moreover, gaining access into the township, the researcher needed to negotiate entry by being clear from the start of the intention of researching in the Township.

¹² is a municipality elected official for the specific geographic defined area to serve as a link between the community and the city council.

Creswell (2018: 150–152) emphasised that gatekeepers control access into the communities to ensure that measures are taken to protect the participants from exploitation. Gatekeepers can positively or negatively influence the study depending on their role. For example, if the gatekeepers are the one providing the researcher with participants, some opinions might be missed from those who were not selected. However, it is still the role of the researcher to ensure that the sample size of the participants is representative and diverse.

2.2.4 Field Notes

The researcher took notes during the interviews and had a post-interview reflection on the notes to synthesise what was being discussed, to expand on the noted brief points. Field notes were necessary for this study as they provided useful information to answer the research question. According to Phillippi and Lauderdale (2017: 381), fieldnotes are essential for the researcher to document contextual details. In the context of this study, the field notes were crucial when writing the research results, because what happened in the field was documented and can be directly quoted. The field notes were one of the valuable assets for the research to be able to understand the concept of fast food consumption in the context of an urban township environment. Field notes support in the construction of study descriptions, encounters and documentation (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2017: 381–382). The field notes of this research also captured direct comments and actions by the participants and the insights on how sometimes people consume fast food because of the peer pressure or wants to fit in with the rest of the community.

2.2.5 Limitations

The location of this study was a small urban *Township*. The sample size of the participants and the time spent doing empirical research were one of the limita-

tions of this study. The theoretical framework was also designed to have a narrow specific focus on the social construction reality of fast-food consumption. There was also limited literature on the studies focusing on fast food consumption in the townships, and the limitation on the ethnographic studies on South African urbanisation.

The results of this study cannot be generalised across the larger population of South African townships. However, it can be acknowledged that with the possibility of further research, urbanisation does have an effect on people's food choices and increases fast-food consumption as there is a high prevalence of fast-food outlets than in rural areas. The findings of this study can also inform the future studies on what motivates urban dwellers to consume fast-food and how value can be added in promoting healthy eating.

2.2.6 Delimitations

The desire to understand urbanisation and fast-food consumption determined the delimitations for this study. Instead of studying urbanisation as a whole and what causes it together with the correlation of fast-food consumption, the researcher chooses to limit the study into investigating the factors that influence food choices in the urban *Township* families. The researcher restricted the study into looking at fast-food consumption as a result of living in the urbanising environment.

2.2.7 Assumptions

The assumptions of this study were influenced by the interpretivism paradigm, which seeks to understand rather than explaining the social reality of the studied context. Further, interpretivism is also one of the suggested approaches when

analysing qualitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 9). Acknowledging assumptions in qualitative case study research is crucial as they influence how the study is designed, conducted, analysed and interpreted. The assumption of the study are "postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted for the operational purpose of the research" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008: 135). In the context of this study, the researcher aimed to understand the factors influencing people to consume fast-food with the assumptions that urbanisation creates a space to explore and consume fast-food.

2.3 Source Material Description

This study used an ethnography approach to describe the activities surrounding food that goes on in the urban townships of South Africa. The aim of the research was used to guide the fieldwork process of this study. Hence, when collecting the data, the researcher always referred to what extent to which the urban township environment influences the change in dietary behaviour, from eating the traditional meals to relying on store-bought food. Various types of sources were used to diversify the understanding of urbanisation and fast food consumption. Both primary and secondary data. The primary data being that data collected during the fieldwork and the supplementary secondary data being published scholarly materials, such as journals, books, reports, webpages, and thesis. The fieldwork data was collected using qualitative ethnographic methods such as observations, interviews, and transect walks. Supplementary data sources such as catalogues, advertisements, and media were also used to increase the understanding of the studied concept.

Various steps were taken before, during, and after the data was collected. The researcher had to find the urban location to study, the participants, a place to interview the participants and identify appropriate methods to use during the fieldwork. The fieldwork was an essential part of this study, as the collected data

was central to the writing of this thesis supplemented by secondary sources. The data collection process clarifies who was part of the study, the profile of the studied area, who were the participants, and how many they were.

This study also made use of other supplementary data sources to understand fast food consumption patterns better. The additional data sources used during the fieldwork consists of catalogues, advertisements, newspapers and other media forms. The catalogues used were those of weekly food advertisements showing discounted products or weekly specials. The advertisements consist of those shown in public spaces such as the back of the bus or even TV. Newspapers used were the low cost one and the community ones that are handed out for free. The other media sources consist of blogs, social networking, local news mostly talking about the state of the country and any other civil matters. The additional sources were essential to use as they helped with the clarification of what urbanisation is and what it means for South Africa. Having catalogues around was also another way to see the response and the reaction of the participants when they see the prices or presentation of certain products.

Further, this study also made use of some existing theories on the anthropology of food by well-known scholars such as Sidney Mintz (Anderson, 2014: 72; Fishchler, 1988: 275; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002: 99-119; Werkheiser & Noll, 2013: 201). The literature review was done to give a theoretical overview of how the studies related to food can be studied in ethnology. The theory was also used to clarify some concepts that could not have necessarily come from the collected data. Also, having some literature increased the validity of studying urbanisation and fast food consumption – materials and data sources were an essential part of this study. The fieldwork was a necessary part of this study as it helped to identify the location, find participants, and collect the data of the analysis chapters. Figure 1 presents various data sources used for the study, together with the methodological approach.

Source	Method	Approach
The <i>Township</i> (study area)	Transect Walk	Walking around the main streets of the <i>Township</i>
Key Informant (NGO)	Semi-structured interviews	Open-ended questions about the state of fast food consumption in the area.
Main Participants (Families)	One-on-One Interviews	Semi-structured interviewed, capturing the dialogues with handwritten notes and electronic data capture methods (Cell-phone /Tablet/laptop)

Figure 1: Sources, methods and approach

Source: Author

2.4 Data Analysis Process

The study used the inductive approach to analyse the empirical data. An inductive approach was useful when summarising the raw textual data because it assisted in creating links between the research objectives and the findings from empirical research (Thomas, 2006: 238).

Further, the researcher was able to develop a thematical analysis of the factors influencing fast food consumption in the *Township*. With the inductive approach, data coding was one of the critical strategies to analyse the results of the research, because it allowed the clustering of research themes to answer the study's research question and achieve the set objectives. This study made use of manual coding process because it was essential to have a cognitive understanding of the data content before the analysis (Thomas, 2006: 239). The data analysis included various coding cycles as a way to filter out relevant information while creating the categories and themes on multiple factors influencing fast food consumption in the urbanising environment.

The pattern of coding themes on the collected data was characterised by factors such as **similarities** on the interview dialogues; the **frequency** of used words;

and the **interconnections** that result in opting for fast food consumption, following Thomas (2006: 239) approach on inductive data analysis. The interviews responses were different and varied from each other significantly. It was essential to filter the codes to report on the review. Filtering the coding required the research to be analytical and try interpreting the collected data according to the objectives to be achieved. The coding filter method used was a Descriptive Coding (Thomas 2006: 242), for the analysis of diverse opinions on the motivation behind what families choose to eat. The coding process was a crucial exploratory process for more rigorous analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The example of the coding process used is on (Figure 2) below, which was useful in linking the raw data emergent themes and definitive codes used for the analysis. To distinguish families from each other different codes were created according to the interview chronological order. For example, the first family to be interviewed was labelled (F.1¹³) and the following ones being (F.2 F.3 F.4...F16).

Participant Number	Raw Data	Primary Codes (Categories)	Definitive Code (Themes)
Family 6: (F.6)	<i>"...every Friday I make sure I come back home with either a box of pizza, fish parcel, or KFC so that we do not cook ... and I go buy food on Saturday I make sure I buy lots of meat and some sausages and baloney for the kids to take to schools..., because you know people around here judge you if they see you eating vegetable every day... So, we prefer eating meat and bread rolls so</i>	<p>"Convenience"</p> <p>"Caring for the family."</p> <p>"Social Status"</p>	<p>Economic Determinants</p> <p>Socio-cultural Determinants</p>

¹³ F.1 F.2 F.3...etc are codes used to distinguish families from each other. F menas the family and the and the number is the order in which they were interviewed.

	<i>that we don't look like we are struggling..."</i>		
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Figure 2: Coding method for data analysis

Source: Author

2.5 Reflexivity of the Researcher

The qualitative research literature points out the importance of reflexivity, as it presents the opportunity for the researcher to share their insights and background in terms of how they interpreted the data and what they gained from the study (Deggs & Hernandez, 2018: 2552-2554). The interpreted data can be through measures such as observations, interviews, and also the analysis of secondary data. The researcher spent some time in the *Township* to interact with the participants. After every interview, the researcher made a reflection on the topics discussed.

The subjectivity informed the interpretive process of this study on information gathered from the participant (Reinharz, 2011: 5). Even though the study followed scientific research methods, the participants were engaged with responsibly. The researcher was not part of the fast-food consumption experience and did not reside in the *Township*, making most of the empirical research non-participatory observation process. Ethnographic case study methods allow the researcher to be a participant of the study, but the researcher minimised subjectivity and remained objective (Reinharz, 2011: 33). The researcher was an outsider learning about the culture of fast food consumption, and what motivate people to consume it, without being subjective on the matter. Subjectivity positions the researcher to engage more personally with the participants and the power or dominance can influence the results of the study (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 309-310). Social constructivism theoretical approach informed this study because knowledge about

food is often gained from people's cultural experiences with the people; they are close with, such as neighbours, friends, and families. Social constructivism theory is a sociological theory often used on the educational and learning fields due to the concept of knowledge construction and sharing (Kim, 2010: 56). What people eat they do learn about such consumption patterns from elsewhere. As a theory of learning the social constructivism theory helps to understand how people adopt group or cultural norms and continue to conform to those standards.

3 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The theory assisted in understanding the culture of fast-food consumption from the opinion of those who consume it regularly; how these consumption patterns have developed over time; and what influences families' food choices. Using theory in the research added to having a critical view of the studied content, by examining the field research responses using categories such as knowledge, identity, power, historical background, before the analysis. Theoretical framework in anthropology is vital to guide and direct the design of the research. Creswell and Poth (2018: 8) point out that the conceptual framework in social science research is essential when collecting, evaluating, and interpreting the data. This study made use of the social constructivism theory derived from understanding the interpretivism paradigm in ethnographic research. Using the interpretivist paradigm allows exploring the individual's personal history.

The interpretivist paradigm allowed the researcher to have an in-depth investigation of the culture of urbanisation and fast-food consumption, as opposed to testing the hypothesis on the extent to which people consume fast-food. The purpose of the study was to understand the social reality of fast-food consumption. The social reality was understanding was through the existence and experiences of those living in the urban townships when following the interpretivism. Interpretivist paradigm intends to understand a social concept rather than explaining it and observes subjective social reality through direct experience of people themselves (Glesne, 2011: 8-14). The use of interpretivism directed the understanding of subjective opinions on the meaning and motivations for fast-food consumption in the urban townships. Interpretivism paradigm views the world complexities through multiple lenses and meaning (Glesne, 2011:24). This research was designed to engage with the participants through dialogues actively, to reveal themes and patterns on the social construction of fast-food consumption culture in the urban townships.

3.1 Social Constructivism

The anthropological disciplines borrow theories from other disciplines such as sociology. In this study, the social constructivism, a sociological theory was used with the ethnological methods. Making use of theory is vital for ethnological-based studies that could not necessarily be explored using a deductive approach. At the context of this research, the theory was relevant for investigating fast-food consumption in the urban township setting as a result of rapid urbanisation, and how people learn such practices (Kim, 2010: 56). On this context, knowledge is understood as something that people accumulate through their life experiences or some form of historical or philosophical experiences.

According to social constructivism theory, people's actions are learnt through interaction with other peers, which can be parents, friends, or teachers (Kim, 2010: 57). Using social constructivism on the context of urbanisation and fast-food consumption, one can argue that the people's food choices are influenced by peers, families and friends within their environment. In the urban townships, people live close to each other due to lack of land space. They are living in such a small area, and it makes them form some kinships with each other regardless of their social and cultural background. The interpretation of how urbanisation creates changes in dietary patterns is a complex phenomenon which requires a deep understanding from the consumer.

In social constructivism, the learning process occurs on both cultural and social context (Kim, 2010: 56). Thus, one can argue the relevance of social constructivism based on the cuisine cultural learning and other social learning of food such as through religion or tradition. The learning of fast food consumption comes as a result of participating in the urban cultural activities, forming food identity. Irby (2015: 4) argues that using the social constructivist lens, the social interaction between people influence their identities and eating behaviour, because of the identity attachment that they develop with a particular type of food. Eating is one of the defining characteristics of people's identities, which can be people from

the same culture, peer groups or people that have a close relationship with each other (Irby, 2015: 5).

This research used the social constructivism theory to understand the connection between urbanisation and fast food consumption, and also identified various factors such as social norms, media, and religion, influences the food choices. Further, studying how different social factors influence food choices. Thus, considering how food choice is a result of social interaction and knowledge accumulated from social contexts. Factors such as biological, cultural economic, social and psychological all influence the individual's food choice (Bellisle, 2006).

The social constructivism theory was necessary for this study because it aims to understand the object or the event holistically, and also has the potential to adapt according to society or situation (Irby, 2015: 4). Social constructivism comes from the philosophical explanation of how society's phenomenon can be understood as the construction of human knowledge (Kim, 2010: 57). The expansion of the social constructivist theoretical approach was grounded with the discourse analysis as a way to understand how the interviewed families cultivated the meaning and the understanding of what influences their food choices. Discourse analysis is vital for the studies on social constructivism because both concepts seek to interpret the meaning of knowledge about particular societal practice. Thus, it helps to understand how food meanings are created and maintained through social groups of a situated reality and how they communicate with each other about food. Theoretically, food can be viewed as a social maker which changes according to various societal conditions.

3.2 Food as a Social Marker

The social classification of food is based on ethnicity, religion, class, race, and other social organisation. Food consumptions become a social act because people

do eat to socialise and survive (Anderson, 2014: 98). People construct the consumption patterns based on “growing up with particular families, friends, societies, culture, advertising campaigns, markets, travels and media influences” (Anderson, 2014: 139). The class, status and social rank do influence what people regard as pleasurable food as the food quality and the variety of the elites is different from that of the middle class. For example, the people from the townships will have various food choices than those from the suburbs because of the different social environment that they reside. Food serves as art for different cultures, which comes from having different designs and the way of making it. Food is a concept closer to phenomena such as music or visual arts. People choose according to taste preference, quality, and if it appeases their eyes. Further, the discussion focuses on the food types that are taboo by others while others enjoy them as delicacies. The examples of these are pork, dog meat, plants, insects, seeds, and any other items that are food to the others and not to others such as the tarantulas (Anderson, 2014: 115-118).

The diverse types of food make people to distinguish themselves and to cultivate their individuality in society. Food communicates one's ethnic group, lifestyle, social class, and another social positioning (Anderson, 2014: 124-128). Solidarity is also another social concept associated with food as when people share the food around the table, and they are usually in harmony and peace. The sharing and participating in food activities creates closeness and social involvement (Anderson, 2014: 6). Thus, food can also be used to separate groups from the other.

The social constructivist thinking emphasises on the social process, and the defining factors that enable particular food are tied with identity meanings coming from a social group (Fishchler, 1988: 279-282). For example, people defining themselves through phrases like "we are meat people". Individuals can feel the pressure of having to conform with their social groups, by eating what seems acceptable, such as eating braai meat at the rugby game. Through food, people can communicate their identity. Speciality eating is also associated with food and

identity, which expands to a sense of place, as various regions specialise in certain types of food. For example, the excellent cuisine being used as a product of social differentiation to separate the elites and the commoners. However, when it comes to gender, then things become a little bit controversial because the discussion shows how females often respond to high-status food (Anderson, 2014: 154-157). Food also forms part of the individual's status or the role that one has at a particular social setting, such as the father, fisherman, homemaker, or teenager. The various statuses and identities constructed through food do change either by choice or through the introduction of new cuisine.

3.3 Changes in Consumption Patterns

The changes in consumption patterns are caused by the economics, environment, health, family and work dynamics, politics, religion, status and class, permanent taste changes, persistence (Anderson, 2014: 2-6; Cruwys, Bevelander & Hermans, 2015: 4). For example, the global spread of hotdogs, hamburgers, French fries, and many other popular fast foods, have drastically changed the consumption patterns in various cultures and religions, thus influencing people's consumption patterns as they get introduced to new food. In terms of the environmental factors such as global warming has affected the production of food as certain food crops can only grow in certain climatic conditions. Health also does change the foodways patterns due to various health revolution that advocates for certain food products as healthier over others (Anderson, 2014: 7).

The economy does influence the production of food, considering that when certain food products increase the price, others become available at a lower rate. An example of this is the rise in fruit prices, led to the alternative of white sugar, which produced flavoured fruit products that sold at a lower rate. However, currently, white sugar is also increasing in price due to the production and growing costs, and the alternative to white sugar at a lower rate corn syrup, a sweetener

gaining popularity in candy production (Anderson, 2014: 38). Work dynamics does influence the changes in one's consumption pattern, as it correlates with the work times, and people are forced to consume what is easily accessible and available.

The transition to the processed foods is mostly visible in the low-income countries that have previously been on locally grown vegetable and grains diets, making processed meats, snacks, and sodas to be more plentiful than traditional food ingredients. These nutritional transitions have the epidemic results of obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, and even cancer (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 73). It is still ambiguous whether the shift in diets is forced or is based on the free individual choices. However, when it comes to most consumers in the low-income countries, the question is whether they had the informed concerns on the processed food consumption, based on the factors such as disclosure, understanding, competence and voluntariness of what one is eating (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 29-35).

The consumption of processed food does affect the prevalence of obesity in society. The environmental, behavioural, hormonal, and sociological factors do limit the individual's capacity to follow a healthy diet. However, people tend to enjoy sweet, salty, and fatty foods a lot, which are amongst many the causes of obesity. The environments that people live in does influence their preference to salty and fatty foods, and the abundance of these kinds of foods through fast food chains makes people prefer it over the food products that are not available (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 31). Thus, sometimes the capacity of humans to regulate what forms part of their diets is limited, making to food producers to influence the consumption behaviour.

There is scientific evidence that the consumption of processed and fast food caused the spike in blood sugar which inhibits stress, increases the appetite, and make people crave for more food (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 28-29). So, when it comes to obese people, they even have limited neuro control on their craves of high-calorie food. However, it is a challenge for people to control their caloric

intake even those who are not obese, due to various factors such as lack of information on how much one should consume and the caloric values of the food products. Further, some studies show how social ties influence the likelihood of obesity (McKay & Subramoney, 2017: 2). The "biology, psychology, culture, economics, political reasons, and individuals are often unable to make informed, rational choices when presented with food options that are high in fat and refined sugar and low in other critical nutrients, as many processed and pre-packaged foods are" (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 85).

3.4 The Ethics of Fast Food Consumption

The ethics of fast food consumption are highly politicised. These ethics ranges from examining issues such as the world hunger, nutrition support mechanism, the question behind fast food, and questioning whether genetically modified food should be labelled or restricted or even banned (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 48-55). Food consumption is nested in the past, present and future. Food is what people are as they get affirmed with being "carnivores, omnivores, pescatarians, vegetarians, vegans, diabetics, or even allergy sufferers" (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 25).

Eating fast food in some ways also supports other practices such as democratic, biological, political, ethical, and cultural practices through the preference that people have on food. When it comes to fast food ethics, not only the animal and the environment are the concern but also the exploitation that fast food industry has on their workers and workers on the sector associated with it. For example, the farmworkers faced by laborious, repetitive work of harvesting most crops that require handpicking, and are forced to work long hours for the minimum wage (Ibid). The long working hours in the fast-food industry is a burden to the workers, yet their products offer convenience and luxury to the consumers and increase the demands of having even more fast-food chains. This demand by the

consumer not only affect the fast-food chain workers but also led to the various industrial approach methods to meat and egg production, with the animals being raised on hormones and indoors to meet the demand (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 14).

The ethical issues on fast food consist of the decision of the parents to introduce their families to certain food products; the agricultural industry externalities; exploitation of farms and food industry workers; the treatment of animals; and food insecurities. The initiatives such as the modern approach to the agricultural sector have been active on producing food but bring more challenges to the environment and animals, as there is excessive usage of pesticides and fertilisers (Rawlinson & Ward, 2015: 14). When it comes to the moral and ethical register, people every day makes decisions about fast food with feeling such as love, care and concern connected to their choices.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Field Research Findings

This section presents how the researcher reproduced the research results collected through anthropological research methods. The discussion in this study aimed to enhance awareness about a subject or practice of urbanisation and fast food consumption, which is key to anthropological studies. The other important aspect of anthropology studies is self-awareness and self-reflection, which influences the validity of the study due to the researcher's personal bias in the research process.

Consequently, the results of the research were directly quoted from the participants' inputs gathered during interviews and observation. Presenting the results in this way was one of the methods to avoid subjectivity to the results. Poikolainen (1997: 6) states how "ethnology is not a positivistic discipline and should not even attempt to follow that kind of ideology, instead, by incorporating transparency at every step of the study, it is possible to fulfil the requirements of academic research and simultaneously avoid the fallacy of positivism". The view by Poikolainen (1997:6) is supported by the interpretivism paradigm, which aims to understand the social concept rather than explaining and makes the observation of subjective social reality through direct experience of the people themselves. In the context of this study, the aim was to understand the factors influencing the consumption of fast food from the urban township residents, who previously resided in the rural areas, and consume fast food regularly.

Using the transect walks and observation methods allowed the researcher to gather various information on the setting, the interactions, individuals, and temporality of the space. The researcher was accompanied by the local people who are familiar with space during the transect walks. Starting with the setting, the *Township* was equipped by modern infrastructure. The area had formal roads,

paves sidewalks bicycle lanes, storm drainage and streetlights. The houses consist of formal brick houses, corrugated iron shacks, timber shacks that are mostly on the size of 150m² to 300 m² or even less. Most of the formal homes were the government subsidy houses which some residents might have left it the way it was built, while others have made some adjustment and extensions or paint decorations. The formal dwellings seem to have backyard dwellers, as there are shacks attached to houses on the garden spaces. Usually, in the township environment setting structures attached to the formal house are often used for rental to earn income from it. The *Township* was clean as compared to other townships the researcher has visited before. Almost every third house had some form of business being operated ranging from the saloon, welding, pottery, butchers, scrap yards, an open market for household goods, or merely some second-hand clothing sales. Most of the business structures were shipping containers and tents for religious places (The physical layout of the Township can be viewed in Appendix 2). Second-hand shipping containers are often used for businesses, which ranges from grocery stores, hair salons, butcheries, or cafes. The most famous shipping container business park in one of the South African Townships is Philippi Village¹⁴. The rectangular shape of the shipping container makes it ideal for businesses that are closer to the road and in places like taxi ranks because there is little open land space. Shipping containers are durable which means they will also last longer through harsh weather conditions, and they also provide excellent overnight security as once the container is locked everything inside is invisible to the public. Nowadays shipping containers are increasingly used as household dwellings¹⁵ and also as pre-schools. Turning shipping containers into home came as a response to housing shortage in the South African townships, by providing alternative housing. Religious places mostly used temporary structures such as tents and this is because most of them did not have permanent land

¹⁴ Philippi Village township business hub “upscales and refurbish old shipping containers for modern business spaces to small businesses, ranging from 13 square meters to 27 square meters”. (<http://www.philippi-village.co.za/part/the-container-walk>)

¹⁵ The popular example of these are the Berman-Kalil Housing Concepts shipping container dwellings (<https://www.berman-kalil.co.za>)

spaces and would temporarily occupy spaces like public parks when having a service.

The vibrant interaction between people in the streets reveals the unique socialising culture in the urban environment. People in most places in the urban areas often live alone and do not interact much with neighbours or people they meet in the streets. However, in the township environment, the social interaction is more intimate, people talk to each other including greeting the strangers, and it is common to find children playing around the streets without adult supervision something one will hardly see in the urban suburbs. In the *Township*, the interaction amongst individuals on the roads was friendlier, and people seem to know each other and are happy to see one another. Caring and sharing is part of the township culture. Individuals openly talk about how they look out for each other in terms of job opportunities and personal safety. It was clear from the observation that the businesses being run in front of the houses are more for social interaction because it brings the people to each others' front yard. There was more social interaction between the people at the front house businesses than business transactions. What the researcher observed was that the people come to socialised without buying anything and sometimes they will sit together and try sell to the passer-by. Even those that seem to have bought something they will still stand there for an extended time chatting. The township culture of socialising is something unique that only exist in that space.

A power dynamic was hard to capture from the observations and the walks, as the environmental setting displays the interaction as one social, cheerful and happy where people co-exists with each other equally. However, entering the *Township* space required the researcher asking permission from the Ward Councillor, who then introduced the researcher to the organisation dealing with food-related issues. However, through talking to people also reveals who holds more powers in the area over the other residents, even though such conversations took

place with caution and high confidentiality. Further, during the first few times of the transect walks the researcher avoided taking any notes or the use of cameras, as a way to avoid being labelled as an outsider coming to extract information; and avoiding taking pictures of 'staged' settings. This context is explained theoretically as *temporality*, which states when specific environmental parameters are created only for the temporal use of the event they tend to be staged and falsify the reality, and when the temporal use ends the environment goes to its normal-self which might be the opposite of what was staged (Pretty *et al.*, 1995). For example, township residents regularly see researchers and organisations coming to their areas to conduct the studies and participating in research have become exhaustive for them. Therefore, what the residents do, is that when they see a new researcher in the area, they tend to exaggerate their situations and sometimes even lie about their living conditions with the hope to receive help. They can stage their environment to suit the researcher's expectations and stereotypes about their location, and when the researcher leaves the environment goes back to normal. Hence, it is advisable that when doing field research in townships researchers must not start taking notes and pictures the first time, they arrive but become familiar with space including arriving there unannounced. Because what the researcher sees first might not be an accurate representation of the area, but a 'staged' setting.

The one-on-one interviews were held with present members of the family with open-ended questions and follow-up questions based on the response. The interviews started with personal introductory questions and getting on knowing each other, as a way to create a more relaxed environment and making sure everyone is comfortable. The study interview questions were used to lead the conversation and allowed space for the participants with their thoughts and opinions. The questions were designed so that the participants can also reflect in their eating patterns of the past.

Further, why the participants find their current consumption patterns more preferable over the past ones, it was not in every interview that the participants answered all the questions, some families were less vocal than the other, and others were less interested in talking about food and more interested in sharing their personal stories. Some of the data from interviews were filtered to leave relevant discussion themes. The interview conversations were private as they took place in individuals' home, with only their family members present. Various texts quoted reflects the insights and feelings of families about their daily food consumption.

“What does your family eat daily?” This question was used for the participants to give a general response on what they eat on a typical day. Further, it also focuses the conversation on eating over other things that happens in the household. According to Warren (2004: 522), having open-ended questions for interviews creates the tone for the conversation, and guides the participants on what is it they should discuss during the conversation. The participants expected that they start to open up about their food in a more casual format with the responses in list format such as: *“Commercial fried chicken, bread... some vegetables, pizza meat fruit and fish” (F.15)*. *“ In a week in this house we eat white bread, vegetables, rice, beans, chicken nuggets, and any other ready-made store-bought food...with our favourite being lasagne” (F.6)*. The participants were also asked to take pictures of some of their best meals and send them to the researcher. A selection of these pictures can be viewed in Appendix 3.

The food that majority of the participants mentioned to eat was more or less the same ranging from bread, legumes, rice meat and fish, which is mostly bought prepared with the exception to rice and the tinned beans. The list of food that the participants gave had fewer vegetables in it, and mostly contained foods that require less preparation time at home. One participant mentioned *“ ...that would be bread, fried fish, vetkoek, chicken regularly...fruits and sausages for the kids...side salads...all these depends on the day of the week” (F.7)*. With this information, using general knowledge, the researcher was able to know that the family most eat

readymade meals such as fried fish which will mostly come with side salad or potato chips. To make conclusions if the majority of the foods that the participants' consumer was fast foods in was necessary to know where they purchase it, through the follow-up interview question.

“Where do you buy your food?” The responses to this question required significant confidentiality consideration to protect the privacy of the families where they buy their food. It was with this question that the researcher was able to determine if the family consumes more fast food or not because certain outlets only exclusively sell fast food. For example, one participant mentioned *“We get it from the burger joint, fried chicken outlet...for bulk groceries, we go to supermarkets, and if we want something quick, we get it at the street markets here”* (F.16). With this response the researcher was able to conclude that the specific family purchase mostly readymade food in franchises and local shops.

Further meals such as *“pizza, fish parcel, or Kentucky Fried Chicken...”* (F.11) all these are purchased in specific fast food outlets. Majority of participants mentioned purchasing their foods at fast food outlets, supermarket delis, cafes, and restaurants as their primary place to buy food. Only a few admitted that they to buy their food at the organic vegetable market but not as main meals but sides for what they already purchased elsewhere.

The question of food preference was asked as: *“Why do you prefer eating that over other types of food?”* This question was framed differently according to the other participants. Others were asked. *“What motivates you to choose your food daily?”* While others where asked, *“How do you make a selection of what to eat for your family?”* The purpose of these questions was to gather insights on the motivation behind the consumption of fast food and why it is highly preferable over other types of food. Factors such as convenience, time, and costs were mentioned as some of the motivations for the families to choose the kind of foods they consume. For example, a member of one family said *“The fast-food outlet food is convenient and closely located, it is affordable if you go there on Wednesday...”* (F.15). While others said, *“Time is what motivates us to choose what we eat. So, the foods that*

consume minimum time to prepare and are mostly found ready-made in our first choice” (F.16).

Having the responses on the food preference was essential in understanding the dynamic factors that result in increased fast food consumption in the urban townships. Further, to conclude that the urban environment, especially the townships does lead to an increased fast food consumption it was essential to know what the family members used to eat in the rural area before they came to the city. Also, knowing what their traditional foods are and how often they still eat it. The question of traditional food was asked in two ways: Some participants were asked “*What is your traditional food and how often do you eat it?*” While others the question was more direct asking “*Is what you eat here in the different from what you used to eat in the area you stayed before?*” The participants were expected to share the memories of the food they used to consume before coming to the city. The response to this question was emotional as the participants started mentioning what they used to enjoy and most of them it reminded them of their village homes. One participant said “*city food is very different from what we used to eat in our village... before coming here, a typical lunch would be **Masonja** (mopane worms) or **Seswaa** (shredded beef) with **Bogobe** (millet porridge cooked in melon juice)...melon juice is a crucial ingredient in our traditional cooking and being her in the city, and it is not easy to find. That is why we hardly eat our traditional food here” (F.9). It was evident from responses that most of the participants, especially adults in the family, have traditional foods, which are very different from what they currently eat. They mostly illustrated their traditional food as something associated with life in the village and rare to find, but also not fit for the city environment. The visual illustrations of some of the traditional foods can be found in Appendix 4.*

The results of the field notes were filtered through various coding cycles to generate significant themes and subcategories that form the dynamics of fast food consumption in the urban township environment. The themes are 1) The Socio-Cultural Determinants of Fast Food Consumption, 2) The Economic Determinants of Fast food Consumption, 3) The Biological Determinants of Fast Food Consumption. These themes implied how fast food consumption culture is a

complex phenomenon that requires multidimensional approach to understand it. The following sections will discuss the themes in detail while providing examples from the empirical data.

4.2 Analysis Part 1: Socio-cultural determinants of fast food consumption

The social determinants also include structural factors like physical environment, identity, prestige, gender, social activities, tradition and religion. Theoretically, social determinants involve the social modelling of eating behaviour where people modify their food choices to match that of their companions, forming part of social support, social reinforcement and social norms (Cruwys *et al.*, 2015: 11). It was clear from the empirical data of the study that the people ate according to what is considered to be socially acceptable. Therefore, the normative social influence of eating is persuasive according to the social setting and the presence of other people (Higgs, 2015: 39). The evidence of this influence would be discussed in the following categories that form part of the socio-cultural determinants that perpetuates fast food consumption.

4.2.1 Social Norms

When eating or choosing what to eat, the social norms play a vital role in one's choice food and the amount they consume, as a way to conform to the eating norms. Higgs (2015: 40-41) mentions that because eating often appears in the social context, consuming food with other people affect how people eat and what they choose to eat. Some participants mentioned the importance of being seen carrying fast food and how that shows the person is not struggling financially. Participants such as states: *"and I go buy food on Saturday I make sure I buy lots of meat and some sausages and baloney for the kids to take to schools... because you know people around here judge you if they see you eating vegetable every day..."* (F.11). Having acceptable food is a typical example of how social norms are unspoken code of conducts that presents doctrine a person needs to follow to conform with those norms, in terms of acceptable consumption patterns. Complying with the social norm of consuming fast food to avoid being labelled as inferior by the community, becomes an unspoken cultural rule and practice, of which whoever does not

abide with them will stand out. The extensity of avoiding inferiority was important that mentioned that *"we prefer eating meat and bread rolls so that we don't look like we are struggling..."* (F.6). The other participants who said to eat *"... Milk, bread butter, yoghurt, eggs, fruits (a bit), tomatoes onions and potatoes because of these foods multifunctional, can be used breakfast lunch and supper. Grilled chicken, salmon and sausages (beef)"* (F.4). The grocery list of (F.4) included expensive ingredients such as salmon, and this shows how families will want to be on top of the other by eating what is not locally available. The family further mentions that *"...weekends we go eat out or bring takeaways from the restaurants... we do not like buying our food around here..."* (F.4). Eating the food from elsewhere or takeaways does show that a person has enough money and would not be considered struggling or impoverished.

Abiding with the social norms of fast food consumption also help people to be affiliated with different social groups within the *Township*. An example of these would be men groups that meet on the weekends for meat, alcohol, and entertainment. Usually what happens in these groups is that men come together in groups between five to ten people based on friendship, culture or religion. On the weekend they are meeting they will have a target budget that each of the members contributes towards reaching it. The money is then used to buy meat for the braai and alcohol on the meeting day. Within these groups there is often a leader, whom most of the time is the person that makes more substantial contributions than anyone else or they drive the most expensive car, or their house is bigger than the others. Women do not form part of the men groups, but they are occasionally invited and are not expected to make any contribution. One participant in mentioned that *"...I prefer meat because that is what most of our friends eat when we are hanging out...it is crucial that I have money for the braai meat on the weekend, because if I do not contribute the braai people will think I am poor and struggling..."* (F.12). What the participant stated is an example of how when a man does not have money he instantly does not belong with other men, which might be the

risk to his dignity and respect. The participant also mentioned “...no one will respect you if they think you do not have money” **(F.12)**. It shows how important it is that a man receives honour from his peers and society in general.

From the theoretical perspective (Higgs & Thomas, 2016: 2), states belonging to a social group increases the person's self-esteem. Thus, making eating together a part of promoting cooperative behaviour of shared practices, such as that of fast food consumption. Hence, people will often alter their acting preferences according to where they are and who is around. The participants displayed the adjustment of the way they eat to maintain their public image and create individual impressions to their peers.

4.2.2 Identity

Food identity is constructed through behavioural and cognitive changes, psychological and cultural differences, and it is because of collective belonging to the group (Fishchler, 1988: 275). Identity-based on food is constructed socially, biologically and psychologically, on a group or individual forms. In the *Township* environment, fast food is part of people's social identities. The food identity that the participants presented was two-folds. First the food associated with the urban township identity, which is fast food or anything that is not prepared at home. Second the food associated with the village identity being the traditional food. Some participants mentioned eating the following: “*Commercial fried chicken, bread... some vegetables, pizza meat fruit and fish*” **(F.15)**; “*In a week in this house we eat white bread, vegetables, rice, beans, chicken nuggets, and any other ready-made store-bought food...with our favourite being lasagne*” **(F.6)**; “*...pizza, fish parcel, or KFC... meat and some sausages and baloney for the kids to take to schools...*” **(F.11)**. The list of what people eat has similarities is if when one living in the township that’s what they have to eat because to avoid being seen as an outsider. It shows how food becomes the central part of their identity as it distinguishes the people in the urban townships from those in the villages. The traditional food was associated

with the village identity because of the lack of its availability in the city, and also those who were born in the townships might not know what the family's traditional food is. One participant mentioned "...our children do not know our traditional foods... they have never seen it, and they think pizza, fried chicken toasties are their traditional food" (F.16). This statement emphasises the two-fold identity of food in urban townships. Further, the social, political and economical food system of the townships resulted in the creation of the unique township cuisines that forms part of the township food identity.

When food becomes part of the identity, it distinguishes self between the insider and the outsider, which can be formed through various cultural and religious aspects. For example, foods such as *kota*¹⁶ are associated with the township identity, because unless you truly come from the township, you would not know what it is or even how to eat it. Fast foods like *kota* are symbols of urban township food identity, which have become a source of wellbeing and pleasurable eating, that bloggers will even call it "*kota* a beloved, carb-loaded and uniquely South African street food"¹⁷. The history of *kota* dates back to apartheid period in South Africa and the attachment that township people still have to it is part of their identity and environment. There are other foods associated with townships, such as the *chakalaka* (spicy relish); *amashwamshwam* (grilled chicken head and feet); *shisa nyama* (braaied meat); *amagwinya* (vetkoek) to name the few. The unique township cuisine show how what people eat becomes part of their identity and distinguishes them from the other to emphasise their diversity, hierarchy and social organisation.

¹⁶ This is a popular township street food which the quarter loaf of bread (*kota*) in hollowed and filled out with polony, chips, cheese, eggs, sausages atchar and tomato.

¹⁷ Food24 blogger Anna Trapido: (<https://www.food24.com/News-and-Guides/Features/edible-ubuntu-the-history-of-the-kota-a-beloved-carb-loaded-and-uniquely-south-african-street-food-20170903>)

4.2.3 Prestige

The discussion on the social norms and identity presents how, to a certain extent, the consumption of fast food is deeply embedded within individual's pride and social statuses. Fast food seemed to be glorified over nutritious foods because it is a symbol that and the individual can afford. When the participants were asked about what they eat and places in which they get their food they, most of them mentioned fast food outlets as their main places to get the food. *"We get it from the burger joint, fried chicken outlet...for bulk groceries, we go to supermarkets, and if we want something quick, we get it at the street markets here"* (F.16); *"We usually buy our food in the local supermarket because they have both cooked and fresh ingredients..."* (F.7). Others mentioned purchasing local food, but the ones that come pre-prepped already. For example, other family said to buy the food at *"...street markets, spaza shop, because whatever you buy here those guys can prepare it for you...the live chicken they kill it, clean it and give it to you cooked the way you want it..."* (F.9) Purchasing fresh ingredients and are prepared while one wait shows that a person can afford to outsource their cooking, and there are special status and pride that comes with it. In the Township there are also levels of fast foods outlets, for example, that buying in the local cafes, local grills and spaza shops being seen as holding lower social status than those who buy from the international franchises as they are more expensive than the local ones. For example, others mentioned to purchase food from *"...community shops (sells mostly local food), and cultural shops since we prefer to continue eating what we used to eat in the rural areas such as the brown chicken...nettles...mung beans"* (F.3). It means the family purchase their food in the local shops, still eats traditional food regularly and cooks at home, which might make them to look as less fortunate or not having enough money by the neighbours.

In the township environment, the highly educated and resourceful people are often referred to as 'black diamonds' due to their socio-economic status, and they can be men or women. The anthropological literature of South Africa in the township studies defines 'black diamonds' as "township people prosperous because they are better educated and therefore managed to get well-paid jobs"

(Donaldson, Mehlomakhulu, Darkey, Dyssel & Siyongwana, 2013: 115). 'Black diamonds' celebrate their success through the joys of having money and expensive consumptions. Most of the participants mentioned how paying for friends' meals when eating out is also a symbol that one can afford and is not struggling financially, and this is the practice the 'black diamond' will follow. On the context of this study only one family could be identified as the 'black diamond' because of their house, cars, and what they eat. This family said *"For weekday meals we shop in the regular supermarket closely because it is closer to our home...weekends we go eat out or bring takeaways from the restaurants... we do not like buying our food around here so occasionally...like Sunday... we will buy meal kits¹⁸ From the exclusive supermarket...and prepare it ourselves"* (F.4).

Further, one family also mentioned to share their food with the children in the community and also how they routinely get food sponsors for the pre-schools, nursing homes or even other families. Another research presented that 'black diamonds' stay in the townships, (even though they can afford to live in the suburbs), because of the social networks and traditions that constitute them being role-models to the neighbours (Donaldson *et al.*, 2013: 118). Hence, in terms of fast food consumptions the people will continue to eat it because it holds a high moral ground and can put a person on different social status such as being seen as a 'black diamond'. The participants also mentioned the fear of being judged by the neighbours if they are seen carrying vegetables all the time. Members of one family said on a typical week they eat *"...pizza, fish parcel, or KFC... meat and some sausages"* and reason for their meal choices are they like what they eat *"because it is easier to prepare... we do not regularly buy food from the local shop as it makes you look poor... you know people around here judge you if they see you eating a vegetable every day..."* (F.11). Responses as this one shows the symbolic value that township people put on food even if its not the healthier option. On the township context one get to learn that eating habits are more than just for eating healthy or unhealthy options, but food is part of the personal prestige, which they can use to

¹⁸. These are boxes of food containing counted ingredients and instructions to make specific meals. These promises buyers to make gourmet 'chef standard' meals in their own homes. Something familiar amongst high-income earners, but also contains a lot of processed ingredients.

show-off. Therefore, eating fast foods makes individuals belong to community of those who can afford to feed their families without cooking at home daily. The same goes for sharing fast food in can show that an individual has more money.

In the urban township environment, fast food is a symbolic and material factor, that creates cultural capital, which distinguishes socio-economic classes determined by the kind of fast food one consumes. For example, the empirical data presented how the participants who buy their fast foods from the local outlets fall under the low-income bracket and those who purchase their fast foods in global fast food retail chains have a higher income. It is because the prices of global fast-food retailers are higher than the costs of the local shops and street foods.

Nevertheless, some participants did acknowledge that fast food is expensive to eat all the time. But as a way to keep up with the prestige and impressing the neighbours, the participants mentioned how they had developed the mechanisms of fitting in with their neighbours. So, what they do is that the day there would be no meat in the house they will eat very late at night indoors as compared to good days where they will eat on the porch or in front of the house. Making people eat in public what is behaviourally accepted such as take away food in public, and when they cannot afford that, then they eat in private. Buying food is also done in the public space, and space can put pressure into the buyer that they will buy what the majority are having. What most people do is that when they purchase vegetable, they often hide them to bring them back home. However, but when they go purchase, take away boxes or pizza, they carry those things outside the bag and walk very proud of it. Surprisingly, vegetable and other healthier meal options are more embarrassing to buy and even eat than actually fast food.

4.2.4 Gender

The effect of gender on fact food consumption was also identified. Within the interviewed families, there were gender disparities on meals preparations and consumption. It was observed that in most families, meal preparations were left for women to do; men would assist occasionally, and children were the recipients of what the adults prepared. Women mentioned the reliance on fast food because of its convenience and the portion sizes, amongst other factors. For example, one family said “...After the taster we do look if we can afford that particular food, making price and affordability is an essential factor for us as a family. Because whatever we buy must be able to cover all the members of the family... the combos from the pizza joint are perfect for family meals...they come with dessert too” (F.5). Therefore, as women are the one responsible for feeding the whole family finding what is convenient and can supply the entire family becomes a priority to them. Others mentioned eating fast food because they “choose meals that are easy and fast to make...so buying ready-made from the deli is convenient because I only have to put it on the plate... After working all day, the last thing, I want to do is cooking, so I will instead go to the drive-through” ...readymade food saves the family time” (F.13). It shows how the burden that women have of having to work their daily jobs and still have to come home and prepare the meals for the family becomes a motivation to instead opt for food that comes readily prepared.

Women also presented the concern over the food they give for the children to take to school and even feeding the children what they accept to eat. There was a mention of “Baloney for the kids to take to school...” F.6; “the children likes to take pie to school...they say fruit is hard to eat...” (F.16); “fruits and sausages for the kids...” (F.4); “Yoghurt to take to school, sandwich, fruits (a bit)...” (F.7). In South Africa school children have to take lunch with them. The school does not regulate the school lunches as parents are given the freedom to provide what their children prefer to eat. However, school lunches often become a competition between the parents who want to show off, whose child has the ‘best’ food. Parents make lunches for their kids that contains things like pizzas, fish fingers, hamburgers, fried chicken, or chips, with the reason that it is what the child prefers to eat. The

other family mentioned that their meals selection is based on that, "*The fast-food outlet food is convenient and closely located, it is affordable if you go there on Wednesday ...and the children enjoys it over something I will try cook for them...*" (F.15). It is an example of a parent who would instead buy fast food because the children like it more than homemade meals, and also stays close to a fast food outlet offering convenience to their daily routines.

Though men did mention to prepare meals occasionally for their families, they mostly stated the importance of having money for the weekend and being able to host the braai as something which is of high priority. One family member stated *...I prefer meat because that is what most of our friends eat when we are hanging out. "...it is crucial that I have money for the braai meat on the weekend...* (F.12). Men braai happens either in people's houses which is basically on the road. Within the Township there were places in which people can buy meat and the grillers braai it for them while they wait. Braai has thus become a central socialisation aspect for most men and also women.

Further, other family member mentioned to like fast food because "*it is spicy and just tastier than what we can prepare at home...the presentation of readymade food is also excellent... it makes you hungrier. Therefore, it does not matter what kind of food it is, homemade, Deli store-bought or any kind of fast food as long as it is presented well and appealing to our eyes*" (F.2). It shows how men prefer fast food because of the way it is presented and the taste, as opposed to home food, which they are familiar with the taste and it might not be well presented as everyone might be expected to dish for themselves. Thus, without generalising the men's behaviour, one can say that prestige was one of the motivation factors for men to consume fast foods because they want to hold a high moral ground in society.

Further, portion sizes were also crucial for men when they choose their foods. In one family someone said "*We mostly choose buffet meals because they are affordable, and you can eat as much as you can...you do not have to prepare anything...*" (F.7). The large portion meal choice shows how men will often opt to eat in places that offer large quantities especially during lunchtime at work. In the literature, the portion

sizes by the fast foods outlets are one of the customer retention strategies to ensure the people continue buying (Maumbe, 2012: 152).

In food literature meat is considered masculine food due to the historical facts of men being hunters, and vegetable salads or any other light and sweet foods, being considered feminine due to the household care that women did in the past as gatherers (Guptill, Copelton & Lucal, 2017: 32-35). It was at the context of this study; it was evident that there are meals that women prefer and those that men prefer. Women preferred food that is soft and enjoyable by the children. Some states in their typical week they have “...pizza, fish parcel, or KFC... meat and some sausages and baloney for the kids to take to schools...” (F.11); “In a week in this house we eat white bread, vegetables, rice, beans, chicken nuggets, and any other ready-made store-bought food...with our favourite being lasagne” (F.6). Further others mentioned “...that would be bread, fried fish, vetkoek, chicken regularly...fruits and sausages for the kids...side salads...all these depends on the day of the week” (F.7). The men mentioned to eat “...braai meat and bread on weekends...some weekdays rice and chicken curry...sausages, fruits...” (F.12). Most men also said alcohol as part of their meals.

Nevertheless, the gender disparities on fast food choices, both men and women justified their consumption of fast food based on family's preferences and personal conveniences. One can conclude that women preferred fast foods that they enjoy and quick to prepare. For men portion sizes and the amount of meat it contains is essential.

4.2.5 Social Activities

Social activities are the determinants of fast food consumption because of their social setting. The social context refers to venue in which food is eaten beside the household. For example, the food consumed in schools, workplace, restaurants, special occasions, functions, or any other place with social activities taking place. When asked what it is, they eat on a typical week the participants also mentioned

the food that the children take to school, which is different from what they will eat in the house. The one family member mentioned “...*Baloney for the kids to take to schools*” as part of their children’s school lunch (F.11).

Further, some participants mentioned to frequent fast food outlets when they are at work and also at the train stations or bus stop because it’s the only food available. According to food anthropology theory venue can influence what a person eats due to what is available there and at what hour certain foods are available (Bellisle, 2006: 2-3). The participants further mentioned how in places like cinemas the only food you can buy is snacks and sugary drinks with no alternatives or the people are not even allowed to bring their food. This social context in on the scenario of the space that does not offer options to fast food creates a direct influence on individuals making them believe in a specific social setting that’s what needs to be consumed. Other social activities in which there would be food is that of meeting friends over drinks or meals. Most participants mentioned going to fast food restaurants every week because it’s time they will be able to socialise with their friends. One of the participants said, “*on weekends we go have breakfast in the restaurants because if we do not go, we will not be able to see our friends...*” (F.15). Meeting the friends for food, emphasise the culture of how doing something together always begins and ends with meals.

There were also foods identified for special occasions or a specific day of the year. Some participants mentioned what they would eat on weekends or payday. For weekend example one participant mentioned to eat “...*braai meat and bread on weekends...*” (F.12). For the pay day the other stated “... *so on payday, we buy our food from the mall because we want to have some things that they do not sell around here*” (F.9). It also goes for special days foods such as in Christmas (ginger cookies and ham), Eid (custards and vermicelli), Ramadan (akni and chicken briyani), and Easter holidays (hot cross buns and pickled fish) even though a person does not observe the holiday. Also, though braai meat is something which is eaten on weekend, it is something consumed while watching sports games together with the beer. The association of certain foods with specific days and celebrations does

increase the consumption of fast food. The fast foods outlets also have discounts according to particular days of the week. For example, pizza outlets who have promotions of all you can eat pizzas on Thursdays; the Grill joints with all you can eat ribs and wings on Wednesdays; and burger joints with two for the price of one burger meals on weekends.

The other social context that influences fast food consumption is that within the household, people support each other's habits and preferences. An example of this would be mothers who choose fast food because of the children's favourites. It shows how the family support for fast food consumption strengthens the bond and family ties. For example, the children might like their parents more because they give them food they like to eat; or in the context of men one can have more friends because of the braai they host regularly. Nevertheless, it was clear from the empirical data that various social activities and contexts do encourage people to consume fast foods, which can make it difficult to break the habit of eating certain foods in certain places.

4.2.6 Tradition and Religion

Food traditional is something that other people strongly believe in as it is part of their culture they do not want to lose when they are in the city space. There were families mentioned to still regularly eat their traditional foods. One of these families mentioned to buy their foods in "*cultural shops since we prefer to continue eating what we used to eat in rural areas such as the brown chicken...nettles...mung beans*" (F.3). The traditional foods are mostly sold in the local and cultural shops because the global food retail chains do not sell the local foods.

An example of this is goat meat. Most South African traditions have goat meat as part of their traditional diet, and South African supermarkets or fast food outlets do not sell goat meat. Hence, the only place to buy goat meat would be from cultural shops.

When asked about the traditional foods, and how often they eat it, most participants did mention to have traditional cuisines of which some of them still have regularly and others do not eat it anymore. The table below presents the participants' traditional foods and the reasons why some of them still eat it regularly, and others don't.

<i>Types of Traditional foods</i>	<i>Reasons for having or not having traditional foods</i>
<p><i>F.3: Our traditional foods are so many, but our main staple is Umngqusho (crushed maize ad beans) and stew which can be vegetable or meat-based; and Umfino (spinach or cabbage mixed with potatoes and maize meal...</i></p>	<p><i>F.3: Our family does not have small children, so we still eat our traditional food more often. This is because we still find our traditional food more appealing than all these modern foods sold around here.</i></p>
<p><i>F.7: Our traditional foods consist Amaceba (pumpkin slices), Sonka sa Mbako (pot bread) Umphokoqo (Crumbed porridge with sour milk) ...some things made with barley, rice, beans, meat and vegetable. We also have a root-based vegetable diet like sweet potatoes, cassava, arrowroot.</i></p>	<p><i>F.7: We do not eat our traditional foods more often because most of the important ingredients are not available here... another reason being cooking time...it takes way too long to cook traditional food... with a regular job and studying on the side, we do not have time to be preparing lengthy ingredients.</i></p>
<p><i>F.11: ...on all the traditional food our favourite is Mleqwa (a chicken stew made out of brown chicken), but that chicken takes longer to cook than regular chicken from the shop. We eat this with Pap (cornmeal porridge) ...Umgca (Pumpkin mash mixed with corn-flour) is also one of our traditional food... other things include some traditional vegetable like marog and some fruits that you can only find in the rural area.</i></p>	<p><i>F.11: We still eat pap regularly...even though the one here is not prepared like in the village, because it is cooked using a stove and not fire.</i></p>

<p>F.15: <i>Our main traditional food consists of maize-based dishes which is prepared in different forms... it will be eaten with stews, soup or meat, but sometimes the maize can be combined with beans, onions and other vegetables. Something exclusively from our village would be Madumbe (a dark-skinned root vegetable) ...and also Amasi (sour curd milk) you have to go to our village to eat that.</i></p>	<p>F.15: <i>So yes! the food here is very different from what we used to eat in the village...we have learned to adapt and try new foods, that end up becoming a staple.</i></p>
<p>F.9: <i>city food is very different from what we used to eat in our village... before coming here, a typical lunch would be Masonja (mopane worms) or Seswaa (shredded beef) with Bogobe (millet porridge cooked in melon juice)</i></p>	<p>F.9: <i>melon juice is a crucial ingredient in our traditional cooking and being her in the city, and it is not easy to find. That is why we hardly eat our traditional food here.</i></p>
<p>F.16: <i>Sorghum and maize-based meals served with goat meat is the staple that we used to eat before coming here</i></p>	<p>F.16: <i>...we do not eat these foods anymore because goat meat is not available in the shops and sorghum comes in small bags from the supermarket.</i></p>

Figure 3: Types of traditional foods by research participants

Source: Author (using interviews data).

The list of traditional foods was endless, and the selected few are presented in figure 3. Majority of the participants did have traditional foods which are part of their cultures. However, there were various reasons most participants did not eat their traditional foods regularly. The common reason was the availability of the ingredients in the city. Some even mentioned the traditional fruits and vegetables do not also grow in urban areas.

Further, others said how traditional food takes longer to cook, which discourages them from eating it. Therefore, factors such as ingredients scarcity, time, conveniences and money to buy were amongst the reasons most people choose not to eat their traditional foods. However, some participants mentioned they still eat their traditional food regularly with the reason they do not want to eat 'modern food'. Other said alternative ways of cooking traditional meals so that they can consume some of it regularly.

Meat is generally part of every meal in South African traditional food context. Naturally, most South Africans will feel that their meals are incomplete unless there is meat. However, traditionally the meat is cooked in the way that nutrients are preserved, and it is eaten with grains and vegetables. The fast-food outlets have introduced meat that is fried, coated with flour or crumbs, and comes ready prepared. The introduction of fast food presents people with meal options that consist of more meat than they used to traditionally. Some participants reflected on how the urban working conditions introduces new time slots for meals such as tea breaks, and this encouraged the individuals to eat more food. Traditionally people will eat an essential meal two or three times a day. Thus, the changes in the working environment can also lead to increased fast food consumption.

Besides the culture and traditional foods that people have, the fast food outlets have created the new culture around the consumption of their meals, which people slowly adapt into and make it part of their tradition. The diversity of cultures in the urban area also introduces people to new cuisine, and they learn to adapt food from different part of the world as part of their daily meals. For example, products such as French fries, burgers, pizza, pasta, rice, and other store-bought food are nowhere in South African's original traditional foods. One of the participants stated how the children in the house think pizza is their traditional food because that is what they have got accustomed. One family mentioned "*...our children do not know our traditional foods... they have never seen it, and they think pizza, fried chicken toasties are their traditional food*" (F.16). Since those children have never been in the village, they associate what they currently eat as part of their culture

and tradition. However, today, most of the traditional meals are served with foreign ingredients. For example, they put spices such as curry on traditional meat or even cooking with olive oil. Serving traditional food with foreign ingredients have become common because if other ingredients are not available to prepare a meal something else will be added.

Religion was also one of the influential factors for food selection. The religious standards seem to be uncompromised, even in the case of fast-food consumption. One family said, *"We usually buy our food in the local supermarket because they have both cooked and fresh ingredients..."* (F.7). Local supermarkets are mostly owned by individuals, and their customers would be primarily people who know them or those from the same religious practices. The customers of the local shops will often have trust in the shop that it adheres according to their religious standards. The example that stood out would be the Muslim participants. They mentioned to buy their fast food strictly is Halal certified outlets that are mostly locally owned because they trust the seller. The others mentioned to buy their food *"...right here at the street markets, spaza shop, because whatever you buy here those guys can prepare it for you...the live chicken they kill it, clean it and give it to you cooked the way you want it"* (F.9). An example of how a person would want to see how their meat died to ensure that it fits their religious standards. Though religion was one of the factors that determine which fast foods the individuals consume, most participants did not have any religious rules.

4.3 Analysis Part 2: The Economic Determinants of Fast Food Consumption

The person's income and their socio-economic status are one of the determinants of fast food consumption. The socio-economic status of people can become a significant determinant of what they consume, based on price, quality, healthy diet, luxury dining and more (Bellisle, 2006). However, having more money does not mean that the person can follow healthy and quality nutrition. But it does allow them to have diverse meal and a wide range of food to choose from (Bellisle, 2006: 2). The ability to reach the fast food outlets is a physical-economic factor as it determines which outlets would be accessible and for which people. Time is also another economic determinant of fast food consumption, and facilities such as drive-throughs present an opportunity to buy food when a person is on the go. Media and advertising do perpetuate the consumption of fast food, as through advertising, people can know which meals are discounted or what the new products are.

4.3.1 Costs and Prices

The personal finances have various ways in which it influences the person's choice of food. Having too much money can lead to unhealthy consumption and so is having little money. However, the people who can afford luxury foods have the choice of consuming healthy foods, but the people who have limited finances end up eating the little they can afford, which sometimes can be high carbohydrates-based meals. Nevertheless, food choices are individually based, and sometimes even the people who can barely afford will sacrifice the little they have to buy processed expensive foods so that they can fit into a particular lifestyle. There is no clear answer as to whether having little money or more money makes a person make healthy or unhealthy eating choices. But the empirical research did show how people make their food choices based on costs and value for money. The other family mentioned "*We mostly choose buffet meals because they are affordable, and you can eat as much as you can...you do not have to prepare anything...*" (F.7).

Further the others said “...motivation to our food choices would be convenience, price, and how easy is it to prepare...the food we get from the fisheries comes already prepared, and the size of the parcel is huge...we sometimes makes a salad to have some vegetable to go with the fish and chips” (F.1). The portion sizes and the prices encourage people to buy fast food as they don’t have to do any preparations to enjoy it. This family also said “We mostly choose buffet meals because they are affordable, and you can eat as much as you can...you do not have to prepare anything” (F.7). Buffet meals are attractive options to most people because there is no restriction on what one can eat, and they contain variety of foods.

Some participants mentioned buying readymade food because it saves electricity. For example, the other family said “...Price of the food is what makes us choose what to eat. So, the more affordable one and tasty we buy it. Like ready-made supermarket chicken, it is affordable and tasty, but it saves time for making and cooking electricity. However, if we find affordable ready-made vegan food, we do buy those also as our healthier choice and creating diversity in our meals” (F.16). The other family also said “The fast-food outlet food is convenient and closely located, it is affordable if you go there on Wednesday...does not finish your electricity to prepare” (F.15). The issues of electricity cost are massive in South Africa because of the increase in the household population and the national grid struggling to supply every household with electricity. As a result, for the last five years the cost of electricity rapidly increased, making electricity to be one of the significant household’s expenditures. The same now goes for water, where after the drought the water prices have also risen. Recently the South African Electrical Supply Commission has implemented the power supply sharing strategy called *load shedding*¹⁹. The *load shedding* is a scheduled power cut in a suburb for two hours at a time. Having *load shedding* means the household might not be able to cook for two hours, and if this happens during mealtimes, the fast food outlets become convenient alternatives as they have backup power. With high electricity costs and *load shedding* most families might opt for fast foods all the time because it is always readily available.

¹⁹ Load shedding “is done countrywide as a controlled option to respond to unplanned events to protect the electricity power supply from total blackout” (<http://loadshedding.eskom.co.za/LoadShedding/Description>)

Fast food also comes in variety, making it easier to eat what one wants within the same costs. For example, if a person alone, it is cheaper to buy readymade food, but on a family set of four or five people cooking becomes more economical. If one calculates the time to go to the readymade food outlet and waiting in the line, and finally getting the order and bring it home, that in total is more expensive than getting into the supermarket picking the ingredients you want and prepare at home. Also, the advantage of home-prepared meals is that there are leftovers, and food can be prepared to last for longer. One cannot get leftovers with store-bought readymade meals because they are measured and cooked in a way that it is for quick consumption and cannot be kept for longer. Nevertheless, it is uncertain about concluding which is better alternative to another between home-cooked meals and ready-made fast food, because every individual had their food preference and reasons why they choose what they eat.

4.3.2 Accessibility and Conveniences

Accessibility is one of the physical determinants of what people eat. This include access to shops, what food products are sold in specific geographic locations, and what is easily accessible (Bellisle, 2006: 2-3). Some participants said they eat fast food because *“The fast-food outlet food is convenient and closely located... (F.15)*. Others said *“For weekday meals we shop in the regular supermarket closely because it is closer to our home...weekends we go eat out or bring takeaways from the restaurants...” (F.4)*. While others mentioned *“...and if we want something quick, we get it at the street markets here” (F.3)*. The participants said eating fast foods regularly because the outlets are easily accessible from their homes, work and even public transport interchanges. The prevalence of fast food outlets in South African townships is enormous. There are considerable varieties at different prices, which means there is fast food for everyone.

It was clear the fast-paced urban environment, and convenience seems to be what people are looking for to make their lives easier. Some participants said “...*motivation to our food choices would be convenience, price, and how easy is it to prepare...the food we get from the fisheries comes already prepared...*” (F.1). The drive-throughs for food, the house delivery, the online order and pickups all seem to add to people's convenience. To emphasise the convenience one family stated I “*choose meals that are easy and fast to make...so buying readymade from the deli is convenient because I only have to put it on the plate... After working all day, the last thing, I want to do is cooking, so I will instead go to the drive-through ...readymade food saves the family time*” (F.13). One cannot deny that being able to get your meal while driving home from one it is one of the convenient inventions by the fast foods' outlets. The person can get their food before they reach their home and when they get home the food might require only reheating and eating. These days people are also able to order their meals in the comfort of their homes and get it delivered to their doors. It means instead of cooking the person can be doing other things such as cleaning or spending some quality time with the family while they wait for their food.

Most participants did agree that ready-made meals are not suitable to consume every day because it is oily, highly processed and contains lots of preservatives, but they still eat it regularly. Some even said if there are ready-made healthier options, they will buy it. One family member said “*if we find affordable ready-made vegan food, we will buy it as it would be a healthier choice and it will create diversity for our meals*” (F.16). But having fast food frequently allows for convenience and the shortening of the cooking time introduces a new lifestyle which makes people efficient in other activities. This because bringing something already pre-cooked at home it takes a shorter time to prepare, thus cutting off food prepping time before cooking. The example of the convenient pre-made food was the chicken nuggets and meatballs. One responded pointed out how it is time-consuming to cook the chicken or beef, shred it, spice it, mould it into balls and start cooking. However, the chicken nuggets from the shops are faster to prepare, because all

you need to do is to put them in the oven or sometimes even microwave and they are ready, which gives convenience and its time-saving.

The participants also mentioned how the variety and the prevalence of fast food outlets in their neighbourhood do create an attractive option to be reliant on them for daily meals. Mostly in rural areas, the fast food outlets are not prevalent, and a person will need to travel a long distance to access them, while in the urban areas it is found everywhere. Having an option to get a variety of foods nearby was also another motivational factor to consume fast food that the participants mentioned.

4.3.3 Time

Time was one of the factors that influence what and how people eat. So ready-made fast food meals offer time-saving as the meals are sold ready to eat or require little effort and time such as reheating. Most participants did emphasise on the fact that fast food saves a person time because of the minimal effort needed to create a meal. For example, one family member said that *“time is what motivates us to choose what we eat. So, the foods that consume minimum time to prepare and are mostly found ready-made in our first choice”* (F.16). It shows how important it is for people to have meals that are already made because it saves them time. The time-saving convenience that fast food outlets presents to the buyers is something that cannot compete with cooking meals at home. Most participants mentioned not eat at home and also not to eat their traditional food more often because it takes longer to prepare. The other family member said that *“we do not eat our traditional foods more often because most of the important ingredients are not available here... another reason being cooking time...it takes way too long to cook traditional food... with a regular job and studying on the side, we do not have time to be preparing lengthy ingredients”* (F.7). Cooking in the township incurs costs such as that of electricity and water, making people rather choose the meals that will save time while using minimal resources.

4.3.4 Media and Advertising

Media and advertising are the significant economic determinant factors of fast food consumption. The aggressive advertising strategies and battles of marketing campaigns, by the fast food outlets surpass many advertising campaigns specifically those promoting healthy eating. For example, large billboards on the size of the highways advertising things like pizza or burgers or fried chicken. When walking around the township the researcher noticed that more prominent companies such as Coca Cola had adverts in most shops, and companies like McDonald had their adverts in places like train station and taxi ranks. The fast food promotions make it look like something everyone should be eating. One can say that the price reduction strategy or over-sized combo at a lower price is another way to encourage the over-consumption of fast food. When looking into places like supermarkets, most of the time the reduced food products are processed foods, snacks, soft drinks, cakes, or readily prepared food in the deli section. One can argue that reducing the prices of processed foods it's a way to make it affordable for everyone to consume. Most fast food outlets also sell over-sized family meals in more substantial quantities such as buckets of chicken and epic-sized pizzas. The over-sized meal combos perpetuate the culture of fast food consumption as it comes large enough to cover the whole family. To emphasise on the importance of portion sizes, one family mentioned *"whatever we buy must be able to include all the members of the family... the combos from the pizza joint are perfect for family meals...they come with dessert too"* (F.5). It shows how attractive fast food is considered it covers the whole family and come with additional items such as deserts.

The factor of decoration and presentation of fast food meals was something the participants emphasised on. One family member said that *"...the presentation of readymade food is also excellent... it makes you hungrier"* (F.2). If food is well presented, it is attractive to eat, even though it might not be the healthiest option. Fast food outlets also offer some beautiful facilities such as children's play areas.

The packaging of fast food seems to be another appealing factor because fast food comes in well-decorated containers and presented in a way that a person might not be able to replicate from home. Some of the participants mentioned how the fast-food outlet food looks and taste way better than what they could prepare at home, and with that said, it will always be their preferable foods. The other family member said *“the children enjoy it over something I will try cook for them...”* (F.15). The participant was referring to fast food and why they prefer to have it regularly. Fast foods outlets marketing campaigns also involves advertising products as sugar-free, but it still tastes sweet or fat-free, but it still feels oily, and never explain what the other ingredients that might be unhealthy are. The rewards by fast food outlets such as giving free happy toys with meals, discounts on second orders, and free home deliveries are amongst the marketing strategies to encourage fast-food consumption.

Things like TV advertisements often present things like energy drinks, weight-loss products, fast-food discounts, or multivitamins, and there is a little vegetable that ever gets advertised. One study done on South African television advertising found that on the period of six hours in one channel there where 1512 adverts of which 665 of them where food products such as desserts, sweets, fast foods, sweetened drinks, starchy foods, hot beverages and alcohol (Mchiza *et al.*, 2013: 2214-2217). This study showed the intensity in which South African consumers are exposed to adverts that do not contain healthy lifestyles or food choices. It is by no doubt that media and advertising increase the consumption of fast food, due to the presentation of food it gives to the public, and less advertisement it has on healthy and nutritious meals.

4.4 Analysis Part 3: Biological Determinants of Fast Food Consumption

As humans, it is unavoidable that we need energy and nutrients in our bodies to survive. Humans also respond to hunger, satisfaction, and moods (Bellisle, 2006: 1). Being hungry is controlled by the central nervous system, which triggers the appetite stimulation, hunger, and food intake. Human beings need the micronutrients to generate satiety from carbohydrates, fats and protein (Bellisle, 2006: 1). Humans satisfy their hunger and satiety while getting nutrients to survive. Food is one of the biological necessities with the power of being the symbolic cultural artefact, which makes it serve as a tool to express moods and feelings (Shaw, Mayers, Goltz & Astulfi, 2014). Hunger is a moderate social influence on eating behaviour because the other biological factors are not the primary determinants of fast food consumption (Cruwys *et al.*, 2015: 10). Biological determinants are one of the factors to fast food consumption because people eat what they like when they are hungry.

People eat because they are hungry, but at the same time, they have to be satisfied with what they are eating. The satisfaction from food can depend on texture, taste and appearance (Bellisle, 2006: 2). Sweet and fatty foods often look appealing to the eyes and can smell good as opposed to healthy food such as leafy vegetables. Hunger and satisfaction are one of the determinants of fast food consumption. The participants mentioned how, besides satisfying the hunger, the appearance of fast food makes it taste good also. One family said they enjoy fast food because “...it is spicy and just tastier than what we can prepare at home...the presentation of readymade food is also excellent... it makes you hungrier. Therefore, it does not matter what kind of food it is, homemade, Deli store-bought or any kind of fast food as long as it is presented well and appealing to our eyes” (F.2). Other family said that reasons they will buy fast food is “...After the taster we do look if we can afford that particular food, making price and affordability is an essential factor for us as a family” (F.5).

Further, in the other family someone said “...Taste is what motivates me to choose what the family eats. I give them what I enjoy eating...fish and chips...you must also be

hungry or have a great appetite to decide what to eat" (F.9). These are the example of how besides eating because one is hungry, the taste of food needed to satisfy them, or their eating is pleasurable. Getting satisfied by the food that one eats is important because people in the township often work long hours and having fast food all the time might be some form of a reward to the person's hard work.

4.5 Analysis Summary

Township residents seem to influence each other in many ways. The influence of fast food consumption on each other can be because their houses are situated close to each other, and there is hardly any privacy or individualism. The decisions that the families make, including what they eat was influenced by worrying about "what will the neighbours think" about what they eat, which repetitively came out during the interviews. Having fast food easily accessible has led to an increase in its consumption to the point that people feel the pressure that if they do not consume fast food, they will be considered poor. In the township environment fast food holds a symbolic value of having money or being a 'black diamond'. For men buying expensive alcohol and having meat for the weekend gatherings were also something which earns them respect from their peers. The women who mentioned to cook at home sometimes, most of their ingredients were foreign foods such as pasta and rice, and these kinds of foods have the status attached to them because they show a person is exposed and they can buy and cook foreign meals. The value assigned to the packaging of fast foods was undeniable a boost to the status of individuals because it also determines how much money they have, and the neighbours can see which bag one is carrying. To keep up with the high status, participants also changed their eating according to who is in the house. For example, when the researcher went to interview the participants in their homes, they will usually serve the best foods they could get such as cakes, coffees, and some expensive juice, at times they will even send a child to buy drinks from the local shop quickly. Costly purchases are how people

display their prestige to their neighbours, and there is a competition on who holds the higher moral ground. The participants who did not serve the researcher any expensive foods on the first day of visit always requested for the second visit from the researcher. When the day arrives, there would be so much food in the house, of which most of them are fast food.

Eating habits are also something inherited from example parents to children, as the children eat what is presented to them. The children that are born here in the city grew up seeing various food outlets such as restaurants, cafes, food markets, will have a diet based on store-bought food. On the other end someone who grow up in the rural areas where most of the food is homegrown, that person has a diverse background of where food comes from, even though their diet might change when they are in the city. It might be because they will eat what is most accessible. People in the urban areas want to give their children the best modern life they possibly could, and this comes with introducing new cuisines to the children and making them familiar with various fast foods because that way they can fit in with other children in school. Most participants did acknowledge that their eating patterns are not entirely healthy and somewhat need to eat less fast food and add more vegetables to their diets. However, some mentioned as a way to supplement the missing nutrients from what they currently eat they can always take vitamin supplements.

It was unexpected also to find out that the people who wanted to continue eating their traditional food cannot openly do so in the urban space because of various by-laws that do not accept certain practices. An example of this was that of killing animals that it is not allowed to do that, and if a person tries, they would be faced with animal abuse criminal charges from the Animal Welfare Organisation. It was an inconvenience to most people because the traditional food will contain goat meat that cannot be bought from the shops. Space availability was another component for people not to be able to eat their traditional foods because they do not have the land which is enough to plant vegetable products that can feed the

family. The spatial grid layout of the urban townships in South Africa was designed to maximise space for residential houses and some businesses in between, and as a consequence, a household cannot have space to grow their food as they used to in the rural areas. As a result, having restrictions on animal treatment and lack of space to grow vegetables lead to most people settling for fast food as their daily meals.

5 CONCLUSION

This ethnographic qualitative case study intended to explore the factors in an urban township environment which lead to increase in fast food consumption. The study was approached through the qualitative and ethnographic interpretivist paradigm to have an in-depth understanding of fast food consumption social reality in urban *Township*. The data collected from transect walks, observation and interviews presented significant evidence on the complexities of fast food consumption. Through literature study, of social and cultural learning processes in social constructivism showed how people learn what to eat which ends up becoming a defining characteristic of their identity. This study made use of various qualitative ethnographic methods to gather and analyse the data. The collected data provided information on how the growth of townships in South African urban areas increases food insecurity. As a result, the township residents are forced to find alternative diets such as those of fast foods. The empirical research of this study presented the complexities that lead to increased fast food consumption when in the urban township environment. Some of these complexities are those of the socio-cultural systems which creates space and gives reasons to consume fast food. These social systems consist of various factors such as first, seeing the actions that are portrayed to the person by media (e.g. food advertisements); second when the viewer identifies with the actor (e.g. the influence of social relationships or culture in food choices); third when the viewers imitate the actor (e.g. children imitating their parents in terms of what they should eat, or residents imitating their wealthier or respected neighbours); fourth when viewers get motivated or rewarded for their activities (e.g. food competitions, and surprise rewards such as toys on fast foods meals) (McLeod, 2016).

The participants mentioned a lot of how changes in status, life ranks or income levels, influence how the person should eat, to suit their current state. Life status changes are understandable considering that people in the urban township environments previously lived in the poverty-stricken rural areas, and for them coming to the city was a step to change their life situations. Most of the *Township*

residents, who were interviewed as part of this study, worked in low-skilled sectors, which is burdened by long working hours. Therefore, consuming fast food comes as a reward for their hard work and also living up to their current standard of living. For example, if the person used to prepare their meal while living in poverty, and now, they can make more income, they will upgrade into buying what already comes ready. The change in the income also changes the individual's eating habits because with more money now they have more buying power and ability to explore a variety of foods that they previously admire and where not able to buy, even though what they prior ate was the healthiest option.

This study has the potential to contribute towards the growing literature of urban food securities or insecurities, and also on methods for advocating healthy eating. The empirical research results inform the research on the challenges and opportunities for promoting healthy food consumption in urban townships. However, when advocating for change in dietary behaviour to encourage healthier and nutritious eating, the organisations responsible for such advocacy have the responsibility to investigate and understand the influence that conforming with the social norms have on the consumption of fast food. This study showed how sometimes people do not consume fast food because it is their choice, but because they want to belong in the environment and also want to earn respect to their peers. Therefore, conforming with the social norm of fast food consumption creates a positive change for the individuals, they can associate with an identity of urban *Township* living. In this context, the dynamics of the eating norms can be harnessed for the promotion of healthy and nutritious eating behaviours. For example, people often copy what the wealthier residents or the “black diamonds” eat. Therefore, these more affluent residents can be used as advocates for promoting healthy eating and people might follow the new eating trend.

Feeding the family is a personal practice, which is linked to phenomena like freedom, sovereignty and fundamental household responsibility. The choice of consuming fast food in the household should not be disapproved because various

factors influence the decision of the family to consume fast food. Fast food consumption is a personal choice, of which on the context of this study made most consumers' lives easy; it boosts their social status; it helped them belong to a group or religion; it saves them time; it forms part of their identity; and most importantly it satisfies their hunger, which fulfils the biological component of eating. Therefore, advocacy for healthy and nutritious eating will require more work than informing people that what they currently consume is bad for their bodies. For the various organisations and government departments that advocate for successful healthy eating initiatives, they have to understand the dynamics of fast food consumption are complex and will require individual intervention as no family is the same. By understanding the dynamics, then create incremental solutions that local people see more beneficial and suit their lifestyles. Only solutions that offer benefits and conveniences more than what fast food outlets do can be successful in promoting healthy eating.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sample of Questions used for Fieldwork

1. Tell me what your family eats on a daily basis?
2. Why do you prefer eating that over something else?
3. Is the food here different from the one you used to have in the place you lived before?
4. Why do you prefer eating that over other types of food?
5. What motivates you to choose your food on a daily basis?
6. How do you make a selection of what to eat for your family?
7. What is your traditional food, and how often do you eat it?

Appendix 2: Selected images of the Township²⁰



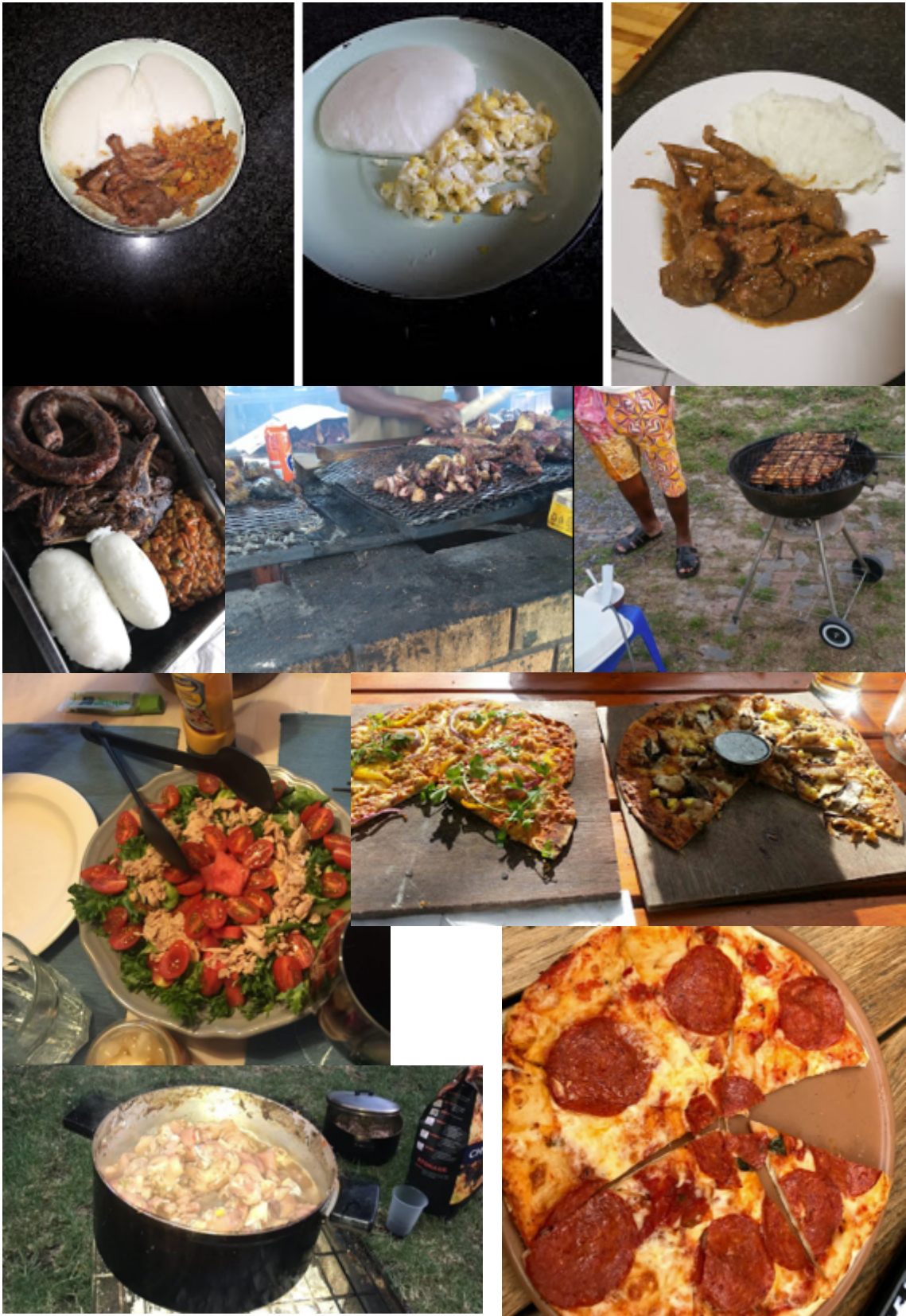
²⁰ These are selected images of the Township taken during the transect walks with community representatives and other interested parties.

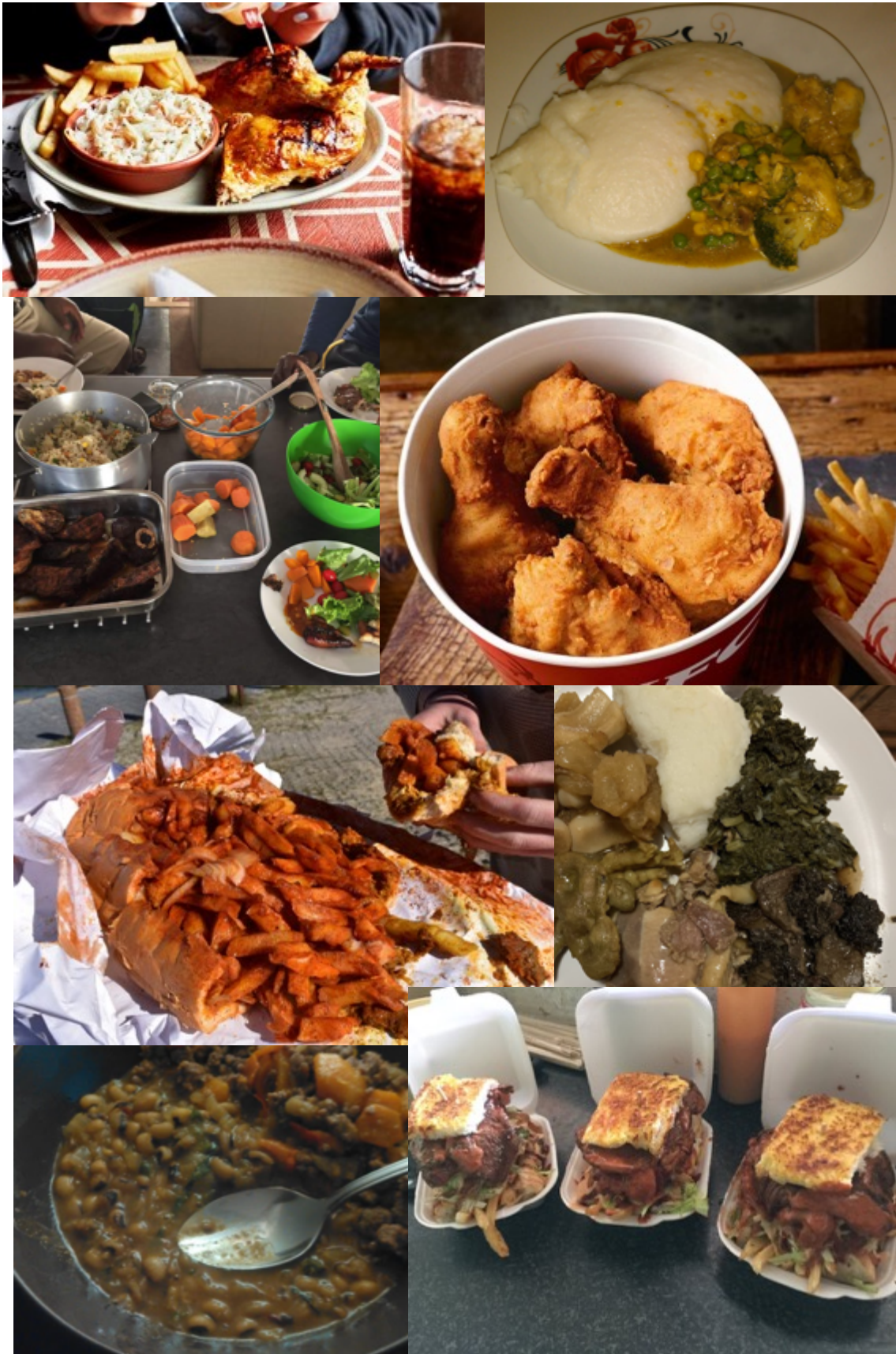


Appendix 3: Selection of Meal Pictures²¹



²¹ These images were taken by the participants themselves and sent to the researcher, in line with answering the question what it is they eat on a typical week. These images are not representative of what families eat but show what foods that the families were comfortable in sharing on photographs, for the purpose of writing this report.





Appendix 4: Selected pictures of traditional dishes²²



²² These are selected pictures of the traditional dishes that the participants mentioned. Most of the photographs were found from various South African websites on food. The websites are as follows:

<https://www.indizafoods.co.za/p/food.html>

https://www.masonja.co.za/product/mo_phane/

https://publications.csoftintl.com/aroundthetable/africa_seswaa2.html

<https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/archive/imifino-traditional-food-with-a-future-2/>

<https://www.news24.com/MoveMag/Archive/umphokoqo-african-salad-20170728>



Sorghum & Spinach

Mala Mogodu (tripe)

Pap & Marog

Umleqwa dish

- ²³ <https://cookpad.com/uk/recipes/8210378-umleqwa-hard-body-chicken>
<https://social.shorthand.com/SABCNewsOnline/ny9Wl5D2ff/south-african-food>
<http://southafrica.co.za/ss/amadumbe.html>
<https://www.imgrumtag.com/hashtag/SEROBE>
<https://www.thespruceeats.com/african-magwinya-recipe-39483>
<http://www.dac.gov.za/content/promoting-heritage-through-indigenous-food>



Umphokoqo



Umfino



Seswaa dish



Mopani Worms

