

University of Alberta

Local Institutional Structures, Culture and Food Security in South Africa

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Science

in

Rural Sociology

Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology

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Spring 2013

Edmonton, Alberta

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Abstract

Culture provides a lens through which to increase our understanding of community responses that both contribute to and detract from a population's food security. This qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, observations and visual methodology identifies how culture is manifested within local institutional structures and how culture impacts community and individual responses to food insecurity. A case study explores one community group (Siyazondla Homestead Food Production Programme) to understand how culture is represented through this group and how it impacts food security. Key findings show that multiple initiatives and strategies are employed to cope with experiences of food insecurity. Furthermore, these initiatives are most aptly understood through a cultural lens, highlighting areas in which culture can positively contribute to a community's food security through elements such as support in adaptation to shifting gender roles, self identity and cultural change, as well as negative impacts such as challenges presented by power imbalances.

Acknowledgements

Many hands went into the research and writing of this thesis and for their support, assistance, and participation I am extremely grateful.

First I would like to thank my supervisor John Parkins and my co-supervisor Georgina Cundill. For your abundance of knowledge, mentorship, and encouragement in this project as well as your tireless dedication to reviewing and editing every step of the way, I am extremely grateful.

A special thank you goes to Robin McClelland and Zelda Odendaal, I can not tell you how much I appreciate both of your hard work not only in helping me, but many other graduate students in the day to day task of completing our degrees.

My deepest appreciation goes out to the communities of Gatyana and Lesseyton and the many people who opened their homes, lives, and histories to me without hesitation. This project is dedicated to you more than any, as it is your stories that are depicted here. Thank you.

The project would not have been possible without funding from the IRDC towards the project, ‘vulnerability, coping and adaptation within the context of climate change and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Investigating strategies and practices to strengthen livelihoods and food security, improve health, and build resilience.’ I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that was provided through their support as well as the vision and guidance from principal investigators, Marty Luckert, Charlie Shackleton and Sheona Shackleton.

To my Mom and Dad, two of the most inspiring people I will ever have the privilege of knowing. Your excitement for travel and adventure, and your compassion and dedication to the betterment of the environment and world around you, are the most valuable lessons you have taught me. Thank you for your support always – I look forward to our next adventure together!

Finally, I would like to thank the person who was with me every moment of every day of research, fieldwork, and writing. To my partner Kevin – I am forever indebted to you. Thank you for encouraging and supporting me throughout this processes and for the three months spent in the field working side by side with me on the project. Your amazing talent as a photographer enriched the experience and stories that came from our work more than you know. Thank you for your presence throughout the whole process and never doubting my abilities even when I did.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Photos

List of Abbreviations

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 The Challenge of Terminology	1
1.2 Research Aims	2
1.3 Frameworks and Theory	3
1.4 Data Collection	4
1.5 Visual Methodology	4
1.6 Limitations	5
1.7 I Subject	6
1.8 Organization of Thesis	6
1.9 References	8
Chapter 2: Local Institutional Structures, Culture and Food Security in Gatyana and Lesseyton	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Linking Food Security, Culture and Institutional Structures	9
2.3 Research Objectives and Questions	12
2.4 Study Area	12
2.5 Research Methods	15
2.6 Results	16
2.6.1 Evidence of Food Insecurity in Lesseyton and Gatyana.....	16
2.6.2 From Growing to Buying.....	18
2.7 Responses to Experiences of Food Insecurity	20
2.7.1 The Formation of Institutional Structures.....	20
2.7.2 Individual Responses to Food Insecurity Outside of Institutional Structures...	23
2.7.3 Kinship and Community	25
2.8 Discussion	27
2.9 Conclusion	30
2.10 References	30
Chapter 3: Case Study Exploration of the Relationships Between the Siyazondla Homestead Food Production Programme, Culture and Food Security	35
3.1 Introduction	35
3.2 Exploration of Power, Gender, Cultural Identity and Cultural Change	36
3.3 Research Objectives	39
3.4 Research Methods	40

3.5 Case Study: Siyzondla Homestead Food Production Programme, South Africa, Gatyana District.....	41
3.5.1 Power.....	43
3.5.2 Cultural Identity.....	46
3.5.3 Gender and the Role of Women	46
3.5.4 Cultural Change	50
3.6 Discussion.....	55
3.7 Conclusion.....	57
3.8 References	59
Chapter 4 Conclusion and Future Developments.....	62
4.1 Conclusion.....	62
4.2 Future Developments of this Research	64
4.3 Reference.....	66
Chapter 5 Appendices	67
5.1 Appendix A. Summary of Organizations/Activities Potentially Related to Food Security in Willowvale and Lesseyton	67
5.2 Appendix B. Participant Information and Consent Form	73

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Local Institutional Structures, Related to Food Security in Gatyana and Lesseyton	21
Table 2-2: Outline of Key Food Security Related Institutional Structures, in Lesseyton and Gatyana.....	22
Table 3-1: Youth Future Aspirations.....	53

List of Figures

Map 3-1: Mbashe Local Municipality (Willowvale) and Emalahleni Local Municipality (Lesseyton), Eastern Cape Province.....13

List of Photos

Photo 2-1: Community of Lesseyton.....	15
Photo 2-2: Community of Gatyana.....	15
Photo 2-3: Student with School Feeding Program Meal.....	17
Photo 2-4: Local Store at Gatyana with only Non-Perishable Items for Sale.....	20
Photo 2-5: Lesseyton Traditional Healer Distributing Bread to Children.....	23
Photo 2-6: Local Gardener in Gatyana Collecting Food to Give Away.....	26
Photo 3-1: Food Preservation Workshop.....	40
Photo 3-2: Gatyana District.....	41
Photo 3-3: Community Agriculture Day Organized by Department of Agriculture.....	43
Photo 3-4: Women with Limited Agricultural Resources Assisting in Corn Harvest of a Larger Farm in Return for use of Cattle.....	44
Photo 3-5: Leader of a <i>Cretch</i> (daycare) Who Receives Financial Relief Through the Donation of Food from a SHFPP Garden.....	48
Photo 3-6: Focus Group Discussing Photo of Local Store.....	49
Photo 3-7: Grade 12 Focus Group Discussion.....	52
Photo 3-8: Local <i>Shebeen</i> Selling Alcohol.....	54

List of Abbreviations

DoA: Department of Agriculture (South Africa)

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

HBME: Household Based Microenterprises

IDRC: International Development Research Council

SARD: Sustainable Agriculture and Research Development

SHFPP: Siyazondla Home Food Production Program

WHO: World Health Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationships between culture and food security. This research is one component of a larger study sponsored by the International Development Research Council (IDRC) on *Vulnerability, Coping and Adaptation within the Context of Climate Change and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Investigating Strategies and Practices to Strengthen Livelihoods and Food Security, Improve Health and Build Resilience*, administered through Rhodes University in South Africa and the University of Alberta. The study site is located within two communities in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, both of which are navigating major economic, political, environmental and social change due to shocks such as climate change, food insecurity and HIV/AIDS. I focus on local institutional structures that interact with food security and the elements of culture presented in them. To understand the impact of culture on the food security of the communities I draw on a broad view of these structures present at both sites as well as a case study of one organization providing an in depth look at the relationships between culture and food security. An institutional framework as well as cultural analysis is taken up in this thesis research and the contributions of both are explored.

The areas chosen for the study have both been impacted in the last decade by outmigration, loss of agricultural industry, and an increased dependence on grants and external funding in addition to the national concerns mentioned above. An understanding of the degree of impact these challenges pose and the ways in which the community is coping with them is important to understanding the shift that is taking place in these communities. Culture provides an avenue through which to explore the changes occurring and gain context and understanding about the responses undertaken on a local level.

A cultural view encourages questioning about the ‘why’ behind the strategies employed by a community to adjust to food insecurity. Why a population responds the way it does to a negative challenge like food insecurity, is largely impacted by their cultural perspectives. Similarly these local challenges may be reflected in changes that occur within their culture. Accordingly, this study aims to highlight the relationships between culture and food security as observed through local institutional structures, presenting a tangible and observable manifestation of culture and a basis for research in this thesis.

1.1 The Challenge of Terminology

Every effort was made to use the most accurate descriptor of the different aspects of the community’s efforts to cope with food insecurity. This challenge was compounded by the need to include the scope of culture into this analysis. Initially the term ‘cultural organizations and activities’ was identified as a suitable term, however during fieldwork it became apparent that this was not the case as

activities and individual actions that fell outside the scope of this term were identified as potential elements impacting community food security. Moving towards the inclusion of ideas such as institutional structures and institutions proved to be a necessary addition, although as discussed in Chapter Two, is not without its limitations as well. The challenge of finding a concept that was adequate to explore the variety of elements the study hoped to address was largely due to the fact that in applying a cultural lens to this study the boundaries that would perhaps be present in a study not including culture were dramatically blurred. Culture does not maintain the limitations that academic definitions and terminology would perhaps like it to in order to make it more accessible to observation, measurement and interpretation. Culture intersects the individual, group, community, activity, object, or symbol and to view its role in food security it is necessary to take many elements and concepts into consideration. During data analysis and interpretation it became increasingly evident that multiple elements of culture interacted with or were employed by the community to cope with food insecurity. Formal organizations, informal activities, institutional structures, relationships, governance structures and initiatives are all terms that could be associated with one or more of the identified community elements that interact with food security.

Notwithstanding this complexity, the thesis adopts some formal language in that the term ‘institutional structures’ describes the broad range of elements found in both communities in Chapter Two. Institutional structures differ from institutions in that they are not the rules, beliefs or norms that govern a group as defines the latter (Ostrom 1990), but rather the tangible body within which those institutions can be seen acting. The case study in Chapter Three uses the term ‘group’ or ‘organization’ in a way that is somewhat interchangeable with the term institutional structure defined here. This study strives to recognize and navigate the challenge of using a cultural lens to guide a program of study and the complications it brings to creating clear definitions and concepts to adhere to.

1.2 Research Aims

This research started as an exploration of how culture features in local institutional structures that interact with food security and the relationships seen between culture, food security and the institutional structures. Drawing on the literature linking the importance of studying culture and food security a cultural lens is applied to the understanding and interpretation of these structures in the context of food security issues. The inductive nature of the data analysis progressed into a broadening of scope about how culture can influence food security as the complexity and interconnectedness of individual, community, leadership, and government relationships came to light. Given these insights through initial field research, the purpose of this thesis came to focus on culture as a lens to understand community interaction and adaptation to the challenges of food insecurity at the village level. Taking an action oriented approach, a goal also involved field work to encourage and strengthen local voices. These activities

resulted in numerous possible recommendations for future work as well as a tangible skills based workshop at the conclusion of the study.

The final product of this thesis consists of two chapters looking first at institutional structures that respond to food security issues in the communities as a whole and the second focusing on a case study group. Their purpose is to provide insight into the intricate dynamics that are played out on a daily basis between culture and food security both in challenges and successes. My hope is that this work will prove useful to academics from multiple disciplines as well as policy makers, government and development organizations. My greater hope however, is that the knowledge given to me by the community will be utilized by these multiple stakeholders to support those people or cultural elements that improve food security within a community.

1.3 Frameworks and Theory

Culture acts as a guiding perspective for this study. Within the discipline of sociology culture has increasingly been seen as “unpredictable, incoherent, and inconsistent” (Crane 1994:5). Cultural studies have had resurgence in the 1960’s in what is being called the ‘cultural turn’ with the advent of structuralism and postmodern perspectives. Important figures in this turn have been Clifford Geertz who wrote *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (1973) Michel Foucault in his work *Discipline and Punish* (1995), and Pierre Bourdieu’s *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). Fredric Jameson (1998) brought the cultural turn to popularity by stating:

The very sphere of culture itself has expanded, becoming coterminous with market society in such a way that the cultural is no longer limited to its earlier, traditional or experimental forms, but it is consumed throughout daily life itself. (p. 111)

Within this renewed interest of culture is the sociology of culture, understood as the creation of symbolic codes from material items that a society creates and shares within themselves. Geertz (1973) applauds the shift in understanding of culture towards being a “narrowed, specialized, and, so I imagine, theoretically more powerful concept of culture to replace E. B. Taylor’s famous “most complex whole”” (p. 4). Culture is no longer limited to items, actions or statements but becomes the meanings embedded in these things.

Much of the postmodern work produced in the cultural turn sees the sociology of culture as a theoretical framework most commonly applied to material aspects of culture and most recently to the realm of media or recorded culture (Crane 1994). Authors such as Foucault (1995) and Bourdieu (1977) have been influential figures in this area. However the framework of cultural analysis can be applied to more abstract forms of culture as Swidler (1986) does in her theory of culture as a “tool-kit”. Culture as a “tool-kit” is the influencing elements within a person’s life such as “symbols, stories, rituals, and world views”

(p. 273).

The concept of culture itself has shifted, expanding from not only material culture but also the way we process and create meaning from those materials as a form of culture. Geertz (1973) underlines this idea stating, “I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (p.9). Anti-positivists and critical theorists who reject the scientific method as a form of study for the social realm look to cultural analysis as a more applicable form of research. Consistent with this perspective on culture, this study takes an interpretivist approach to the research focusing on the meanings attributed to the ways in which people cope and interact with issues of food insecurity.

This study applies the sociology of culture to an interpretation of local institutional structures using the concepts of meaning and symbolism found embedded within them to sketch a picture of the influence culture has on food security. Using the focus of local institutions identified in both communities the study explores their history, role, and participants, as well as the aspects of meaning within them and how culture is manifested in them.

1.4 Data Collection

A period of introduction and interaction with the community upon arrival was given to identifying and meeting with key leaders in the community. These meetings provided a start to gaining understanding of the norms, traditions and customs of the community and to request permission for the study as well as the use of photography. Non-participant observation and involvement with the community and its events such as religious ceremonies, conflict management meetings and agricultural fairs was done both as data collection and as an avenue through which to introduce the project to a wide range of people and groups within the community. This also served to provide networks through which I was able to identify institutional structures through referral sampling. Ongoing analysis of photographs, interview transcripts and observation logs was done consistently during fieldwork in order to guide the study and subsequent data collection. Further details of specific data collection activities are provided in Chapters Two and Three.

1.5 Visual Methodology

One component of data collection is the use of visual methods, specifically photography, to enhance interview research. Visual methods of data collection have been used in sociology dating back to Mead and Bateson in the early 1940’s (Pauwels 2010). The use of visual methods is not as widely used as many of its other qualitative counterparts such as observation or interviews; however, they maintain their own significant contribution to the understanding of society and culture in a way that many other methods cannot accomplish. Visual methods

enable the researcher to capture a moment, activity or artifact in its original context for further exploration and expansion. Visual methods offer a complexity and richness that can be added to interview and observational data collection in an attempt to document as closely as possible the true nature of the events under consideration.

There are a number of important issues that must be taken into consideration and accounted for when using visual methods. It is close to impossible to capture people acting in a 'natural' way with a camera; the reaction to photographs being taken inevitably leads people to alter their behavior in different ways (Pauwels 2010). To minimize this, introduction into the community with both project and camera equipment was done slowly. Interpretation of the images is also open to criticism when using visual methods. However, although visual research is open to the influence of not only the researcher's culture but also the historical and spatial setting it is viewed in, this should not deter us from its use (Riviera 2010). The criticism that visual methods lack objectivity does not discount its ability to depict a greater degree of truth or wholeness of an experience (Parkin and Coomber 2009). It often provides greater voice for those who are marginalized or whose voices are often not heard (Gwyther and Posamai-Inesedy 2009). They are an attempt to move into a space of capturing a more dynamic view of people, their interactions, beliefs, cultures and creations. Photography in this study is utilized as a form of observation as well as a support to focus groups. During focus groups the photos were provided for interpretation to gain culturally relevant understandings and insight into the images portrayed, this provided a degree of objectivity to the visual data in order to strengthen its contribution to the study.

1.6 Limitations

There are certain limitations to the extent and scope of the study as it focuses on only two study sites. There are also a number of limitations in fieldwork and data collection. It should be noted that there is an imbalance of interview participants being middle age to older females. At the Lesseyton site three males and eighteen females were interviewed, at the Gatyana site four males and ten females were interviewed. Diversity was intentionally attempted amongst younger demographics and males in the communities to balance this and gain as representative a perspective as possible of the communities. However, due to the overwhelming majority of food responsibilities being female this was not always possible.

There were also numerous limitations due to language and cultural differences as well as simply being an outsider to the communities. Although translators were used this resulted in an added layer of subjectivity to the data, not only through the researcher's interpretation but also the translators and vice versa. These limitations were navigated by the consistent use of a local translator in each respective community throughout the duration of study so that understanding of the project could be maximized for more accurate interpretation of questions and

responses. Community involvement outside of research activities was also undertaken and as much time as possible was spent living within or in proximity to the study sites in order to enhance familiarity and trust and reduce barriers as much as possible. However, a three-month field research timeframe made this trust building process somewhat limiting.

1.7 I Subject

My parents, both wildlife biologists and active travelers, prompted an interest in exploring other cultures early in my life. My interest in the interaction between people, their cultures and the environment grew in my youth through discovery of individuals such as Wade Davis and Jane Goodall whose urge for increased collaboration and effort for the betterment and indeed preservation of those groups whether human, animal or ecosystem that are on the brink of extinction resonated strongly with the early mentorship of my parents. Food has also been a long-standing passion for me. I am not sure how my parents found the time to grow or raise our family's food, while simultaneously instilling in me the value, significance and knowledge of 'homemade', 'homegrown' or 'hand raised' but their doing so was fundamental in directing my current path.

Upon entering university, my interest in both food and culture lead me to explore social movements that supported shifts towards sustainable agriculture, traditional foodways, preservation of heritage crops and the growth of urban agriculture. It is this combination of interests that encouraged me to seek an academic path that would encompass both food and culture and which has strengthened my sense that both are intricately connected and of great importance to the future health of our world.

1.8 Organization of Thesis

In this thesis, I use a two-paper format with brief introductory and concluding chapters. Chapter Two provides an introduction to the two community study sites and the topic of food security and culture and examines the potential contribution of the concept of culture to the study of food security. It also explores the use of an institutional approach to food security and the study of culture. It looks at the presentation of food insecurity in the communities and the responses undertaken at both study sites in relation to this challenge. A broad, descriptive account of local institutional structures that are present at the two study sites is given and the cultural elements they exhibit (which either contribute to or detract from food security) are discussed. Chapter Three offers a more in-depth look at one group, the Siyazondla Homestead Food Production Programme, and its role in community food security. It explores the complexities of culture and the way they are presented within the group. Specific cultural themes and their significance to food security are identified. Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of the possible directions that academics, government and other

institutions can proceed with to achieve greater food security through an understanding of cultural influences. Chapter Four is a concluding chapter that provides a discussion of the future of food security research and recommendations for areas of further research.

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Chapter 2: Local Institutional Structures, Culture and Food Security in Gatyana and Lesseyton

2.1 Introduction

An estimated 850 million people were chronically undernourished globally in 2006-2008 (FAO 2006-8). South Africa contributed approximately 5% of this number, with 2.5 million undernourished people accounted for in the 2006 - 2008 period (FAO 2006-8). According to a more recent study, malnutrition effects 25 percent of South Africa's youth under the age of six, and 14 percent of the countries population is classified as being at risk for food insecurity." (Koch 2011:1). Rising levels of vulnerability and insecurity have been documented in South Africa, particularly for the rural populations and their surrounding environments (Shackleton and Shackleton, 2011).

As the topic of food insecurity has gathered new urgency (MDG 2011), the question of how to define it has also gained attention. Maxwell (1996) cites a collection of almost two hundred definitions of the term 'food security'. One of the more commonly referenced definitions is that offered by the WHO at the 1996 World Food Summit. It states that food security exists "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (WHO 2011:n.p). This emphasis on access, quantity, and nutrition are mirrored in some combination in the majority of the definitions listed in Maxwell's (1996) appendix of definitions of food security and insecurity.

Current explorations in food security research in South Africa suggest a trend towards success in self-ownership programs aimed at agricultural production (Charman 2008, Denning et al. 2009). Collaborative projects like the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) are calling for attention to the significance smallholder farms have in providing food security and the need to support these and other such local initiatives (<http://www.agra-alliance.org>). Against this backdrop, this study explores local institutional structures that relate to food security.

2.2 Linking Food Security, Culture and Institutional Structures

Perspectives from multiple disciplines are fundamental to obtaining a holistic view of food security, which is a complex social, economic and environmental challenge. Within sociology specifically, a number of contributions have been made to the study of food security. Neo-Malthusian views focus on population as a key factor (e.g., Hendrix 2011), techno-ecology theory, which falls in line with the human exemptionist paradigm (Buttel 2003), looks to technology to solve food security issues (e.g., Godfray et al. 2010), modernization theorists assume an argument that food security will be achieved when third world countries reach first world status (e.g., Jenkins and Scanlan 2001), dependency and world-system theories take a perspective that global food dependency has

created much of our issues and urbanization perspectives view the issue not as being between international borders but rather urban and rural separation (Scanlan 2003). An institutional approach has also been applied as a framework for food security studies within the social sciences.

Within the social sciences, the body of research that examines the roles of institutions stems largely from the work of Ostrom (1990). Institutions within the context of this chapter are defined as “the rules, norms, and strategies adopted by individuals operating within or across organizations” (Ostrom 2007:23). They are the governing elements that structure interactions, understandings and interpretations of the world around us. The diversity and quantity in which institutions are present is a challenge to understanding how institutions interact with and influence society and individuals. As Ostrom (2005) indicates, there are innumerable rules, norms and strategies that influence our lives, often largely without our conscious awareness of their presence. It is because of this complexity that Ostrom suggests the need for a framework of institutional analysis. She demonstrates the importance of identifying universal institutions that create uniform human behavior regardless of culture, place, setting or era (Ostrom 2005). Knowing these universal institutions allows for a far greater understanding of human behavior.

North (1991: 97) argues that institutions “provide structure to every day life”, but that this structure does not equate to stability of a society, that we can in fact trace elements of history through the changes in institutions and that there is a high degree of complexity to the process. Much of the institutional research on food security focuses on the adaptation and vulnerability in communities coping with social, environmental and health risks. Research has shown that institutions can both support and inhibit adaptation abilities in communities coping with multiple stressors, but regardless of the nature of their influence are seen as having an important role in the experiences and responses of a community (e.g., Tweeten 1999; Adger 2000; Agrawal 2010). Institutions for the purpose of this chapter will be understood as rules, beliefs and norms (Ostrom 2007). The systems, organizations, groups and activities within which these institutions function will be identified in this chapter as institutional structures as discussed in Chapter One.

There is limited exploration of the contribution of culture to institutions and food security (Woodly et. al 2006). Although culture can be understood in a variety of contexts and encompasses elements as diverse as physical artifacts and language to symbols and beliefs (Dert, Schroeder and Mauriel 2000), for the purpose of this study we limit our application of it, with the understanding that our use is simply one amongst a wide breadth of literature on culture. Culture, in the context of this chapter, can be understood as the shared, dynamic and fluid beliefs, values and norms that influence and underlie the meaning behind people’s interactions and relationships with their physical environment and community.

The link between culture and institutions, although limited, is present within the literature (e.g., Schaller et al. 2010). Robert Wuthnow (1989) outlines four approaches to culture: subjective, structural, dramaturgic and institutional. He distinguishes between these four categories based on how culture is

understood and defined within each one and subsequently the methodologies associated with them. The institutional approach applies the structural aspect of “patterned sets of elements” as well as the dramaturgic approach of expressing “something about moral order” with the role of “actors and organizations that require resources and, in turn, influence the distribution of resources” (p. 15). This application of culture within sociology gives attention to the idea that culture is created by a series of groups or stakeholders within a society, which then “ritualize, codify and transmit cultural products” (p. 15). These methods of expressing culture are in part seen through the rules, norms and strategies of a group; institutions in this way become a product of culture.

The connection between institutions and culture is outlined by Bonnekesen (2010) in regards to the study of food:

Culture creates ideas, rituals, and rules about food that specify quite clearly what is good to eat by whom, how people may “reasonably” be denied access, and how to reward or punish those who cultivate, prepare and serve food. In short, food becomes a lens through which we may explore the stratified realities of a society, its ideas about worth, and about class, sex/gender, race, religion, and even nationality and humanity. (p. 280)

Bonnekesen approaches culture from the standpoint that it includes a diverse range of areas of our lives including our relationship with food. Within this he places institutions, the ‘ideas, rituals and rules’, as cultural constructs that operate within the dimension of food security. To further ground our understanding of using a cultural lens to view food security through an institutional framework we can turn to the body of knowledge focusing on the connections between food security and culture. Molnar (1999) looks at food insecurity by focusing on gender relations and cultural patterns that result in an imbalance between men and women, often to the detriment of women. He points to cultural factors that are repressive towards women such as a lack of emphasis on education for women, marriage at young ages, and patriarchy within families and communities, as patterns that all create food insecurity for women. These practices and beliefs determine the status of women including “norms regarding who eats first, who eats most, and who gets what is left” (Molnar 1999: 491). It is not only the patterns and norms that create food insecurity that culture plays a role in, but also the ways in which people respond to food insecurity:

Coping strategies are the mechanisms used by those facing hunger to alleviate the situation for themselves and their children. Culture provides a matrix or repertoire of responses that may variously include cooperation, self-denial, self-exploitation, risk taking, and other mechanisms for dealing with adversity (Molnar 1999: 491).

The links between culture, institutions and food security are multifaceted,

culture can contribute to the level of food security an individual is able to obtain, and plays a significant role in directing the ways people respond and cope with food insecurity. Imbedded within culture are the institutions created and upheld within a group, which further influence the food security experiences of its members. Given this conceptual work on culture and food security, there is general recognition of this important link, yet we lack empirical and field-based examples that focus explicitly on the relationship between culture and food security. Toward this end, the following research objective is defined.

2.3 Research Objectives and Questions

The objective of this study was to explore local institutional structures that relate to food security and provide a descriptive overview of these structures within two rural study sites. The goal was to identify how culture was manifested within these institutions and the impact it had on community and individual responses to food insecurity. This involved documenting a group of key local initiatives that related more-or-less directly to food security within the community

A summary of key questions used to direct the semi-structured interviews are outlined below.

1. What groups exist in the communities that tackle some aspect of food security?
2. What are the key roles of each group and why did it form?
3. What are the key functions of the initiative and who constitutes its membership?
4. What are the elements of the group that interact with food in the community?

2.4 Study Area

Two study sites were chosen based on the existing locations from the International Development Research Council (IDRC) project *Vulnerability, Coping and Adaptation within the Context of Climate Change and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Investigating Strategies and Practices to Strengthen Livelihoods and Food Security, Improve Health and Build Resilience* (<http://www.idrc.ca>). The two sites are located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Gatyana, a rural community, is situated in the Mbhashe Local Municipality (See Map 3-1 as 'Willowvale') and Lesseyton, which resembles more of a peri-urban community but is still considered rural, is in the Emalahleni Local Municipality (See Map 3-1). With a population of approximately 6 000 000 (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2012) the Eastern Cape Province is the poorest of the South African provinces. According to the 2007 national Census the Eastern Cape Province is

reported to have the lowest levels of services such as access to piped water, electricity, and toilet facilities (SSA 2012).



Map 3-1: Mbhashe Local Municipality (Willowvale) and Emalahleni Local Municipality (Lesseyton), Eastern Cape Province

Traditionally the amaXhosa were farmers and cattle herders and had a local government system run by a village chief (Jenkins 2001). Many of the amaXhosa in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape still practice traditional customs and lifestyles including the presence of chiefs within their local governance structures. Willowvale has three traditional leaders (Mbhashe Local Municipality 2010). Christianity has become a dominant religious practice within the amaXhosa population, however traditional elements of ancestor worship are still included in daily life (www.mbhashemun.gov.za). From approximately 1948 onward, Apartheid policies resulted in further oppression of the amaXhosa and other black Africans by the Afrikaner National Party (Jenkins 2001). However, the amaXhosa were also a particularly vocal group rebelling against Apartheid and claim Nelson Mandela amongst the prominent political figures amongst their population. The amaXhosa continue a rich involvement in traditional practices and ceremonies surrounding events such as weddings and initiation rituals for passage to adulthood, particularly for men. There is also a history of community and sharing amongst the population, lands were traditionally communally held and it is historically common for families to assist one another with large projects

such as construction of houses or buildings and planting food crops (Magubane 1998).

Both communities are located in areas that were impacted by Betterment Planning policies as well as being within former homeland territories. Betterment Planning was initiated nationally as a means of coping with the negative environmental impact of population pressure resulting from forced migration into the homelands. National government saw the solution to be in the centralization of rural populations into communities with more sustainable agricultural and animal husbandry methods (Cundill 2005). This came on the heels of the homeland project during the apartheid period when blacks were made to live within designated land areas that were considered self-governing by the South African government of the time. The long-range effects of both of these measures are important to consider in understanding the context of the study sites.

The two communities are significantly different in their geographical make up, particularly in house proximity, structure, land use and access to an urban settlement. Lesseyton (See Photo 2-1) is located approximately 16km from Queenstown which is a major urban centre in the Eastern Cape. The site is made up of multiple villages located between 2 and 5 km apart along a main paved road, although the roads within villages themselves are unpaved. The houses in the villages are densely positioned in proximity to one another. There are five schools, and a large community hall, however there is little job creation or infrastructure present. The area surrounding Lesseyton has experienced drought conditions in recent years, which were mentioned repeatedly in response to questions regarding the lack of agriculture in the area. Respondents described a multigenerational removal from agricultural practices in the community and a shift towards urbanization.

The Gatyana study site (See Photo 2-2) is a series of villages located along a 30km stretch of unpaved road between Gatyana village proper, a small community inland, and stretches to the coast. The homes in Gatyana are primarily brick and concrete or mud with a higher proportion of traditional rondavel (circular) style homes and with a greater distance between each homestead. There are numerous small schools in the villages but similar to Lesseyton there are few other businesses aside from small stores that sell minimal goods and alcohol. There is a higher percentage of visible agriculture occurring in Gatyana with small homestead gardens being the most common. However, agricultural practices in both study site areas are reported by locals to have decreased dramatically, a trend that has been documented throughout the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces (Andrew and Fox 2004).

Photo 2-1: Lesseyton



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

Photo 2-2: Gatyana



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

2.5 Research Methods

The research methods employed for this study consist of qualitative data collection using participant observation, semi-structured interviews and visual methodology through photography (See Chapter One discussion of visual methodology). The nature of qualitative research methods provides the opportunity to study the dynamic nature of culture within a given setting. Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe this nature in their guide to designing qualitative research stating that it is “pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (p. 2). The benefits of using qualitative data collection allow for a continual method of data collection that accesses behavior

and interactions on multiple levels, individual, familial, group and community. The flexibility in research design that qualitative methods encourage allowed for the opportunity to build on data as it was collected and analyzed in the field. This iterative approach greatly shaped the questions and scope of work (Richards and Morse 2012).

All interviews were conducted using a translator from the local communities to assist in both language and cultural transmission. The translator at both sites played a fundamental role for referral sampling (i.e. snowball sampling) (Goodman 1961) as they held in-depth familiarity of their communities. A total of eleven interviews at the Lesseyton site and fourteen at the Gatyana site were conducted. Interviews were conducted in each community during a two-week period of fieldwork during the month of February 2012. During this time observation and participation within the two communities was also used to collect or verify data by attending and participating in daily life and activities within the villages. The additional use of focus groups was employed in both communities in order to gain group perspectives on key initiatives that came to light.

Visual methodologies allowed the research to move beyond traditional conceptualizations and descriptive text-based methods toward a more complete representation of knowledge and reality (Liebenberg 2009). During fieldwork I employed the use of researcher-generated visuals through photography for analysis as well as for use in interviews as visual stimuli to encourage discussion and description of the activities and significance behind the images that were depicted. The use of the images during interviews was done in order to gain a more culturally true or honest interpretation of the events, people and artifacts that were photographed. The photos are used as observation data and allow for a visual representation of activities, events or situations relating to the study that provide both new insight as well as support for data collected during interviews. Over 500 photos were taken and analyzed for possible use as support for elements from interviews.

2.6 Results

2.6.1 Evidence of Food Insecurity in Lesseyton and Gatyana

Statistics show that the Lesseyton and Gatyana areas present with food insecurity, a review of national surveys amalgamated by the WHO showed that the Eastern Cape Province presented with the highest cases of food insecurity in 1999 (Labadarios et. al. 2011). However, beyond statistics such as these it is important to explore the ways in which food security manifests itself within the communities in order to understand the ways in which people respond to that challenge. Observations and in-depth interviews in Gatyana and Lesseyton suggest that the food that is being consumed and the access to it both present significant limitations to food security levels. For example, within the school feeding schemes, which as a government funded initiative are present in both communities at all of the schools, the food most commonly served is some

variation of ‘pap’, which consists of ground corn (locally referred to as mealie meal). Although pap and other corn based meals are traditional foods for the amaXhosa people (Osseo-Asare 2005) it is now being used as the primary filler and the fresh vegetables and meat that would have been eaten with it are being replaced with inexpensive, low quality soup mix (See photo 2-3). This diet is lacking in many vitamins and minerals, particularly A and C and does not provide sufficient energy as a primary source of sustenance (Oniang, Mutuku and Malaba 2003).

Photo 2-3: Student with School Feeding Program Meal



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

According to in depth interviews with school staff in both communities there are many children who come from single parent households, child headed households, households with chronically ill family members or homes where children are cared for by their grandparents. All of these situations contribute toward the possibility of limited access to fresh, nutritious and consistent food for all age demographics. In interviews with respondents who engage in agricultural activities it was expressed that during times of harvest fresh food is abundant, but lacking means to store produce that has a limited shelf life results in multiple months per year where there is no access to fresh food unless one has the means to purchase it. Participants in both sites expressed limited access to fresh food within the community for purchase, where access to purchased produce is limited to a small number of stores. Based on observations of three such stores during February, March and April in each community, these stores carry almost exclusively non-perishable items (See Photo 2-4). We can take these observations

from the field and interviews as indicators that the communities within the study do experience food insecurity, at least at certain times of the year.

2.6.2 From Growing to Buying

The issue of financial scarcity is a repeated theme in the villages with evidence of an increasing reliance on the wage economy to survive. At both sites it was stressed repeatedly that in the ‘past’ people had grown their own food and built their own homes without the need to purchase provisions within the marketplace. However, change has occurred in both communities that are noticeable to the older generation. There is a trend towards purchasing more and more commodities, particularly consumer items such as food, clothing and household supplies. This has brought a new dynamic to food security issues as the population, which is largely unemployed and reliant on grants or contributions from family members who have left the community for migrant labor options, struggles to meet the cost of goods and foods.

People have food, but not enough because of the grants. They just wait for the money and don’t want to work or garden. [Headman in Gatyana]

The new generation just wants to have money to buy food. They do not see gardening and growing food as something they want to do. Now people depend on buying food. The younger generation stopped gardening because they grew up with the mentality that growing food is not what you do. [Elder in Lesseyton, founder of community garden project]

Tweeten (1999) depicts economic growth as the solution to food security challenges. However, experiences from both communities suggest that the change to a more market-based society is not as smooth as Tweeten perhaps suggests. Although economic growth may have positive effects at a certain point in that growth cycle, neither study community appears to be at a place where the economy is strong enough to benefit from this. It appears that the change to a monetary based economy in the communities has contributed to the creation of greater degrees of food insecurity as people shift from local food production to purchasing food without the financial means to do so.

One of the effects of this financial strain has been the appearance of household-based microenterprises (HBMEs) (ECIAfrica Consulting 2003). These range from small dry goods stores run from people’s homes, shebeens for the sale of alcohol to the sale of fruits, vegetables and poultry. However, as discussed in the ECIAfrica’s report, there is little financial ability in many rural communities to support these enterprises. The leader of the Gatyana Poultry Association made this evident stating that people would provide written I Owe You’s as payment for their chickens but would never be able to clear their debt. This creates a cyclical pattern in the villages whereby people are unable to increase their financial

wellbeing through the sale of goods and services but that same lack of finances creates the need for local, affordable markets. ECIAfrica states that, “there is little or no scope for individual HBMEs to “graduate” to SME [small and medium enterprise] status, because there is not enough cash in the village economy to fund purchases of their goods or services” (p. 6). This cycle continues to then stagnate the community’s economy and perpetuates food insecurity through the change in practices of relying on purchase versus production.

The challenge of limited funds was a concern recognized by all interview participants. The adoption of the Stokvel system was reported in both sites as an attempt to cope with this financial stress. Found widely in the Eastern Cape, the Stokvel system started as a women’s urban movement post 1920’s and 30’s when drought caused large out-migration from rural areas to urban townships. The change in kinship structure and financial abilities that urban life caused women to construct an alternate means to create greater financial security for themselves and their homes (Verhoef 2001). In rural areas the Stokvel system has been adopted with much the same purpose as the urban movement and acts as a financial security system.

The importance of the Stokvels is evident as a form of providing a degree of financial security. The history of the groups and their continued presence in both communities (Tables 2-1 and 2-2) shows the sense of solidarity that women hold and although men are allowed to join there was no evidence of their participation during interviews in either community. When this lack of male participation was probed it was emphasized that food and care of the home are the responsibilities of women and it is these areas of life that Stokvels are intended to support.

It is the women who have problems. Women realized that they needed to support one another and we hope to pass that idea of supporting one another to the younger generation of women. [Elder member of Stockvel in Gatyana]

The challenge of moving beyond a simple pooling of money towards the generation of funds as a group in order to progress into a greater degree of security was brought forward by Stockvel members in both communities. This development of the system was attributed to a lack of viable markets in which to sell goods and services as well as a resistance amongst members to work for communal gains or that the work was simply ‘too hard’ for people to want to participate. This was consistent in both villages.

Photo 2-4: Local Store at Gatyana with only Non-Perishable Items for Sale



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

2.7 Responses to Experiences of Food Insecurity

2.7.1 The Formation of Institutional Structures

Despite the food insecurity challenges discussed above, community involvement in institutional structures aimed at tackling the negative effects of food insecurity are occurring at both study sites.

Respondents identified thirteen institutional structures in Gatyana and fifteen in Lesseyton. Complete lists of the institutional structures identified in both communities are presented in Table 2-1. Descriptions and expanded details of each institutional structure are provided for information in Appendix A. Although many institutional structures are present in the two communities, for the purpose of our discussion there is a focus on those identified by participants as most significant to their food security needs. The formation, purpose and roles of these key initiatives are outlined in Table 2-2.

The trend in date of formation that can be seen between the key structural organizations is that the majority was initiated in the last 10-15 years. Of the ten structures identified, six were founded in the years, 1994, 2001, 2002, or 2005. This supports our knowledge that the communities are increasingly becoming food insecure, but also indicates that there is a simultaneous increase in awareness of the challenge and local measures are being taken to provide coping options for residents. In comparison of the reasons for formation of the ten key institutional structures, two themes are repeated, rising costs and decreasing food security. These purposes correspond with the interpretation of the dates of formation in that

these local institutional structures are purposefully initiated to deal with a growing awareness of the issue of food insecurity.

Table 2-1: Institutional Structures Related to Food Security

Gatyana Site	Lesseyton Site
Poultry Assoc.	Poultry Assoc.
Burial Groups	Burial Groups
Agriculture Group	Cattle Project
Stokvels	Stokvels
St. John's Church	Zion Church
Home Based Care	Home Based Care
Siyazondla Gardening projects/groups	Community Gardens
Tractor/Cow Sharing	Individual Food Handout
Veterinary Work	Informal Adoption
School Feeding Program	Private Food Packages
Kinship Ties	School Feeding Program
Headman/Chief	Food Packages
Livestock Care	HIV/AIDS Group
	Victims Against Crime
	Land Title Group

***Table 2-2: Outline of Key Food Security Related Institutional Structures in
Lesseyton and Gatyana***

Institutional Structure	Role of Institutional Structure	Reason for Formation	Date of Formation
Burial Society	Primarily financial support but also emotional support and funeral day assistance for those members who have experienced a death in their family	There is a need to help with the increasing cost of burials	Respondents felt it was something that had started within their lifetimes
Stockvel System	Acts as a financial group in which members contribute a set monthly amount and depending on the organization of the group the money is then distributed monthly or annually to one member in turn	There is a need for women to gain the ability to purchase household items that they could not accomplish on their own	The Stockvel system has been present for more than one generation according to informants
School Feeding Program	Provides a snack and one hot meal per day to all school students at both primary and secondary schools	Government initiated program, respondents indicated not knowing when it started but that it was not at the request of the schools or community to their understanding but its purpose is to provide hot meals for all school children	Estimated 10 years (around 2002)
Kinship Ties	Provides support in raising children, or coping with stress and finances of ceremonies or funerals	The use of kinship ties has reportedly increased as more of the youth leave the community for work or urban lifestyles and care of their children falls to grandparents	Historical activity that has always been practiced.
Community Garden	Provide food and income through collaborative gardens for consumption and sale	Low employment, food scarcity and drought conditions	2002 - 2008
Government Food Packages	Provides quarterly annual food relief for most vulnerable community members	Needed a measure of food security for those not receiving income or government grants	2001 – until present
Tractor/Cow Sharing	Provides access for greater agricultural abilities for those without means to plough	Traditional use of cattle/ox for agriculture has dropped due to death and sickness of animals and the need to borrow in order to continue agricultural practices has increased	Infrequent occurrence, no start date
Poultry Association	Raises and sells poultry products including eggs and chickens as a five person collective made up of women	Needed a means to provide income for the members and local food source to community	1994-2010
Agriculture Group	Discusses agricultural issues within the community and presents them to the Department of Agriculture	With the onset of illness amongst the cattle and challenges with the climate farmers now have to work together to gain help	2005 – until present
Siyazondla Growing Group	Groups of 15 women provide gardening knowledge, motivation and support	Needed access to fresh fruits and vegetables without high cost of purchasing	2005 – until present

2.7.2 Individual Responses to Food Insecurity Outside of Institutional Structures

Group activities are not the only way in which community members tackle food security. The community of Lesseyton, in particular, exhibited individual practices that influence food security. Individual activities in the community that

related to food security included a traditional healer and her son who provided food support to over 100 children, six nights a week (See Photo 2-5).

I saw the situation of the children and saw that they went to bed hungry and wanted to feed them. [Traditional Healer in Lesseyton]

Photo 2-5: Lesseyton Traditional Healer Distributing Bread to Children



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

Also in Lesseyton is one of only two Home Based Care Workers in the village who not only engages in care for the vulnerable on a daily basis but also pools her pension once a year to buy private food parcels for those community members she works with that she feels are particularly vulnerable. She also provides full time care for 6 ‘adopted’ children, which she has been doing since 2007. And despite the tremendous effort involved in these activities feels that they are necessary contributions to her community.

I do it so that the children in my community can have a brighter future and so that people who are sick can feel the same comfort as people who have a better life. [Home Based Care Worker in Lesseyton]

These individuals contribute to our knowledge of how culture informs food security as these activities were carried out by the individuals who indicated that they simply ‘felt’ that this was something they were compelled to do and that this feeling was part of who they are. We can interpret this as their actions being guided by the values they hold and through these actions are building awareness and education in those around them. Despite their tendency to engage in actions that run counter to the norms within the community these individuals are perhaps

driving a new norm based on the emerging needs of the population. These activities may in this way be of particular interest to sociologists who study cultural change.

Influence on food security experiences is also seen within more traditionally defined institutional structures. We will look more in depth at case study examples below.

2.7.3 Kinship and Community

In the past there was much food sharing and gardening by our great-grandfathers, it was very casual between families. [Leader of a Cretch in Lesseyton]

Kinship ties have been an important element of culture within both communities that continues to impact food security. This brings to light an area of further exploration in relation to a pattern of culturally accepted and encouraged cooperation and collaboration seen historically within the community (Deklerk In Press) and the shifts that are taking place within these relationships. This can be compared to individualistic mentalities potentially contributing barriers to the success of food security measures and the influence of kinship relationships to both of these cultural elements.

The gardens created a strong sense of trust and community. It was an older generation who started it and they wanted to build this for the younger generation but this did not work. [Original Organization of Community Gardens in Lesseyton]

During a burial immediate family is responsible for paying for the funeral, but kin could provide support through things like sheep or goats as well [Gatyana Member of a Burial Group]

If someone dies or there is an initiation ceremony your siblings will help bring things to events, like food and drink or AmaXhosa beer which is an important part [Gatyana Community Member].

The role of kinship was reported as influencing food security in both communities historically and in current practice. During observations and interviews participants described present attitudes of people not wanting others to benefit from their labor, long term and damaging grudges between neighbors if one was seen to be profiting more than the other without sharing their goods and particularly garden produce, and the unfair distribution and sharing of government-given goods such as tools, seeds and tractors by chiefs and their families.

My group has received these things already, rake, hoe, spade, watering can. It was not easy to get them but we got help from the Chief. He talked to the Department of Agriculture. [Chiefs Wife and head of a Siyazondla Gardening Group in Gatyana who received assistance from the Department of Agriculture while others have not received the same benefit]

When the Department of Agriculture gives us something it is for group A and B and C. But when those materials arrive they say that they are only for group A [Chief's wife's group], those tools, they say they are just for group A and they told us we would get them also, group B and C, but we do not get them. [Member of Siyazondla Gardening Group not connect to the Chiefs wife's group in Gatyana]

The institution of kinship has seen change and adaptation to the demands of modern existence. The villages have seen an increase in outmigration of the younger generations who leave the communities seeking work, often leaving their children in the care of grandparents. This has changed from years past when the role of the parent would have been to raise food for an intergenerational home. The resulting situation is that the care of young children is left to an elderly generation that often has little financial or food support available.

Up to 50% of the children do not have adequate food in their homes and are considered vulnerable. Some mothers are not working, or no parents at all or they are dependent on their grandparents for support. This area [Gatyana] is classified as category one, meaning it is very poor. [Teacher at Gatyana School]

The concern of grudges was perhaps one of the most commonly mentioned social norms that result in people supporting one another with food sharing activities. Many of the participants who were interviewed about gardening activities responded that they give food away on a regular basis (See Photo 2-6); they also expressed frustration over the social pressure to conform to the activity with fear of having a grudge held against them if they did not.

I think that it is not right because if you do your garden, those people who doesn't want to do their garden, they would come to you and ask you to give them something and they don't want to help you when you do garden, they want only when your food is ready and if you don't give them your goods they will have grudges on you. [Female Gardener in Gatyana]

It is a big impact [gardening] because those people who do not have gardens, they will depend on you, that you have a garden, they will ask for everything in your garden, and if you don't give them, there will be grudges. [Female Gardener in Gatyana]

This social pressure that grudges place on people may contribute to the assistance between families and neighbors that is currently in practice in the communities. However, it is clear that there was some reciprocal food sharing historically from the statements participants gave of the easy flow of garden produce between family members and neighbors. It is possible that with increased food insecurity this reciprocity of giving has diminished, as less community members are able to contribute. However, the expectation of those with means to give to do so still present, possibly resulting in a negative experience of grudges.

Photo 2-6: Local Gardener in Gatyana Collecting Food to Give Away



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

2.8 Discussion

Within both communities people can be seen responding to food insecurity in multiple ways. The formation of community groups, individual actions, and within the context of historical kinship practices, multiple reactions and coping tactics exist in response to increasing food insecurity. Some key areas of focus can be drawn from the data presented in this study. There is a large body of knowledge detailing the importance of institutions and institutional structures as contributors to the study of food security (Zeller et al.1997; Nemarundwe and Kozanayi 2002; Mazzucato and Niemeijer 2002; Agrawal 2010). This study reinforces that institutions and institutional structures can both support and detract from food security. For example, the kinship practices resulting in power imbalances that effect the distribution and access to resources expresses as a negative impact on some members of the community. In contrast, we can see the stockvel system as a positive impact on participants' ability to create a greater

degree of financial security. Complexities surrounding the institutions within kinship relations, cultural change and the impact of individuals can express themselves as both positive and negative impacts to food security. Perhaps most importantly to the discussion of food security, institutions and institutional structures reflect an expression of what a group perceives to be rising issues and what tools they feel they have access to in order to adapt and cope with challenges.

Critiques of the institutional approach have been brought to concerns that it does not take into consideration that institutions change over time and have multiple effects on society (Dacin et al., 2002). Dacin et al. (2002), and Oliver (1992) have also highlighted the lack of acknowledgement within institutional theory of the significance of deinstitutionalization, which refers to the dissolving of institutions. Findings from their study suggest that institutions can be used to view the shifts or transitions in culture that take place at a community level, contributing to and detracting from food security. For example, respondents emphasized the move from an agricultural based society that produces much of their own food, towards a greater dependence on grants and migrant labor to provide income for the purchase of commodities, and trend corroborated by others (e.g. Pauw and Mncube 2007, Local Government Profile Mphashe Local Municipality Statistics, 2011). A response to this change towards a greater reliance on money has also seen an increased role for women in household finances as Stockvels and Burial Groups represent a response to the strain of financial poverty. I would argue that through the culture lens we can highlight non-static cultural and institutional entities around and within an institutional structure and the experiences of change that occur that allow for the persistence of that initiative or the breakdown and replacement of it within a community. Using a cultural lens to explore institutions offers the potential for understanding the changes in a community's culture and the ripple effect that has on their food security as seen in the historical role of kinship ties and the current context in which they influence people's access to food.

The data emphasizes the insights that culture offers us into the complexities and ambiguities of food security in addition to what an institutional approach reveals. Institutional theory has a long-standing history in sociology through the broader study of elements such as organizations, agency and class structure. Given the institutional approaches contribution to the field of sociology it is not to dismiss it that we examine its possible shortcomings. The purpose rather, is to explore the areas in which a cultural perspective can strengthen the institutional approach. As Bonnekesen (2010) discusses, culture allows us to look at the 'realities of a society' (p. 280). And food insecurity seen through the lens of culture can provide insight into the many different relationships within a community to say something about the wider experiences of its population.

Crawford and Ostrom (1995) identify a difficulty in using the institutional framework given the invisible nature of institutions. A cultural understanding of the community within which institutions reside assists in the identification of otherwise invisible norms, rules and structures. We can see examples of this in the gender roles within the study communities. Gaining a cultural context of past and current gender dynamics through interviews and observations, it was possible

to also identify the institutions presented in institutional structures that contributed to gender constructs and impacted the experiences of food security such as the informal rules outlining the responsibility of women to be the primary providers of food. The degree to which a population is experiencing food insecurity, how they are coping with it and why those options are available become more visible through culture. Kinship and community ties observed in the communities demonstrate this point. The positions of traditional government, and cultural expectations of family responsibility within the study sites are cultural elements that impact the distribution of resources and food. Culture allows us to look at the 'why' and 'how' of peoples interaction with food and explore the spaces between people, their community, and their food. Using a cultural lens also provides commentary on the institutions themselves as dynamic and fluid aspects of the community that are affected by the way people think, act and feel and in turn reciprocate that impact. Examples of kinship relations impacting the social norms and consequences of giving of food, hierarchies amongst traditional leadership and their influence on an institution's ability to flourish and the increasing role of grandparents in the care and food provision for youth all detail the significance that culture plays in understanding food security.

Focusing exclusively on institutional structures and institutions can result in potentially obscuring the role of individuals in impacting food security. This study suggests that a cultural lens brings to our attention the significance that individuals carry in potentially supporting food security and further, in creating or facilitating cultural change. Examples from interviews with homecare workers of the shifting attitudes and practices amongst families exposed to the education provided on the stigma and need for care of HIV/AIDS affected members suggest that individuals have influence on shifts in not only beliefs but also tangible actions. As authors such as Jennings and Zandbergen (1995) highlight the contributions of individuals often fall outside the scope of the institutional framework. Through exploring institutions as a cultural element this study indicates that they may be brought into focus and their impact on food security and cultural change can be considered. The actions of specific individuals such as the home based care work; private feeding schemes and informal adoption are all examples that possibly indicate a role that individuals play in cultural change. Although culture is often viewed as a community manifestation it is also present within the individual as a dynamic interplay between community and group actions. I would suggest that the actions of these outliers, although limited in number, have the potential (if they are not already doing so) to be very influential on the mindset and culture of a community and particularly in regards to how people view their role in providing food security for others around them. We can see this as a potentially positive impact of culture on food security and an element that is understudied in this field.

The extent to which both communities are responding to the challenge of food insecurity seems significant. With 28 voluntary groups identified between both study sites and the addition of individual contributions it appears evident that these populations are not waiting for government or foreign aid, as may be the dominant western stereotype. Rather there is a sense of not only responsibility

and ownership but also a statement of ability that creates a form of agency within the communities that they are able to contribute to their own wellbeing. Using qualitative, open-ended methods and the application of a cultural lens enabled this view of the community to be highlighted. This may suggest a need to re-evaluate the ways in which food security responses are explored within academia as well as how development initiatives are determined so as to best support existing local structures.

2.9 Conclusion

Drawing on insights from two villages in South Africa, this chapter illustrates the presence of local institutional structures that interact with food insecurity. These structures range in formality and structure, from organized Agricultural Associations to informal, individual activities. Identifying and understanding the role of these institutional structures is an important step in recognizing the full impact they may have on food security experiences within a community.

This chapter highlights several important advantages in taking a cultural perspective on food security. Using a cultural lens provides an opportunity to understand food security at a depth of human experiences and relationships that I would argue are essential to our understanding in this field.

Furthermore, exploring the link to culture through an institutional approach provides multiple stakeholders such as policy makers, community leaders and advocate agencies with important insights. For instance, they may better understand the perceived needs of a community, their ability to respond to stressors, the existence and influence of key cultural institutions and cultural actors, cultural changes that are taking place that impact food security and the sensitivities and role of relationships within a group. In this sense, a strict focus on institutions as an analysis of group behavior, norms, and practices is insufficient in gaining deeper insight into questions of food security. Perhaps most importantly culture can tell us not necessarily what an institutional approach misses or lacks, but rather an alternative view of those things, particularly in light of the limited attention cultural perspectives have been given in sociology but the significant contribution that it potentially offers (Wuthnow 1989). The use of cultural analysis comes with its own set of complications and critiques, perhaps to an even greater extent than that of an institutional approach due to the relatively smaller body of knowledge dedicated to it (Wuthnow 1989). However, this only adds to the necessity of exploring the areas in which culture can contribute and expand itself as a unique and important perspective within the field of sociology.

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Chapter 3: Case Study Exploration of the Relationships Between the Siyazondla Homestead Food Production Programme, Culture and Food Security

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores one local institutional structure, a women's group that is a section of the Siyazondla Home Food Production Programme (SHFPP), in the community of Gatyana in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. It looks at the ways in which culture presents itself in the group's members and activities, thus reflecting the success of the SHFPP in supporting food security. Specific cultural themes are examined and the relationship between those cultural elements and institutions, or rules, norms and behavior, are examined in relation to how they impact food security. Culture is currently an understudied topic within the food security literature despite its resurgence into the social sciences with the 'cultural turn' of the 1960's. This study seeks to contribute to the further application of culture within the social sciences and to highlight the significance of culture in relation to local institutional structures, pathways for adaptation and efforts to enhance food security at a local level. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the possible directions that academics, government and other interest groups can explore to include culture to a greater extent in efforts to reduce food insecurity.

3.2 Exploration of Power, Gender, Cultural Identity and Cultural Change

The Sustainable Agriculture and Research Development program (SARD) (2007), part of the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO), indicates the call, for the increased use of culture in determining food security needs and responses (SARD and FAO 2007). They argue that culture is equally as important as social, economic and environmental considerations and recommend that it be considered a fourth "pillar of sustainable development" (n.p.). In response to the 2002 Declaration of Atitlan, a call for the integration of their culture in sustainable food systems and agricultural development by the Guatemalan people, the SARD collaborated with multiple stakeholders to create a document entitled "Cultural Indicators of Indigenous Peoples' Food and Agro-Ecological Systems" (Woodley et al. 2006). The paper, based on an extensive survey, recommends a set of cultural indicators that interact with agro-ecological systems through which culture can be observed and measured. However, the authors conclude that the current work and research is limited in the use of culture and call for an increase in its integration. In some respects, this document by Woodley et al. (2006) on "Cultural Indicators" represents a leading guide for the necessity of cultural analysis as it relates to food security research. The document also serves as a reference for ways in which to apply selected cultural indicators such as looking at food and crop preferences, knowledge surrounding agro-ecosystems, and spiritual and ceremonial values or practices. Although the article focuses specifically on indigenous populations, this concern can be applied to many populations whose basic values, traditions, practices and way of life are not accounted for in future planning and development goals. This study strongly echoes this acknowledgement of the gap in current practice of food studies and uses an institutional framework to highlight examples where understandings of

cultural influence can be seen contributing to our knowledge of food security.

If we look at local institutions, rules, beliefs and norms (Ostrom 1990) as elements that both contain culture and influence culture then we can start to answer questions about the *meaning* behind those institutions, why they were formed, who participates in them and how they impact the food security of the community. An institutional perspective highlights questions of who decides the structure of an organization, what the function of a group will be or a community's response towards a group or organization by understanding the institutions that are present in them. Culture focuses deeper on the meanings that are the determiners and drivers of these institutional elements of a group (Bonnekessen 2010). A cultural lens looks at not only why a group formed in response to a challenge, but the meaning behind why that group formed; it looks at not only the membership of an institutional structure but how that membership can be understood within the context of the community. From a cultural perspective institutional structures become one of many complex symbols of representation of the culture in which it resides; infused with history, tradition, values, norms, rituals and relationships all of which underlie the way in which it is formed, the way it functions, the roles it performs in the community, the success or challenges it experiences, and its membership that constructs it. Applying a cultural lens to institutions focuses one to consider elements such as the power relations, gender dynamics, cultural shifts, and identities, which influence the emergence and experience of institutions. These elements of culture are taken up with some detail in the following section.

A cultural lens exposes the importance of a number of key factors that have a bearing on food security, including power, gender, cultural identity and cultural change; these themes emerge inductively from fieldwork and data collection. The theme of power and inequality is significant to the sociological explorations of food security. Frances Lappe (1973, 1977) identifies food insecurity due to agricultural strain and vulnerability to climate disasters as results of inequalities amongst political and economic goals (Lappe 1973). She argues that it is not a need to produce more food that we are experiencing in the struggle to feed the world's hungry, but rather it is the need to address the imbalance of political and economic control of production (Collins and Lappe 1977).

From a more theoretical perspective Lukes (2005) offers a compelling conception and assessment of power. He outlines three dimensions of power, the first dimension of power is, "a focus on behavior in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of interests, seen as express policy preferences revealed by political participation" (p. 19). From this view people have opportunity, although not necessarily equal opportunity, to participate in decision-making and power if they feel strongly enough about an issue and conflict is viewed as a necessary stage of determining the ruling class. The second dimension of power addresses the less obvious forms of power, which the first ignores. This form occurs not in the actual making of decisions and who gets to participate in this process, but what issues are permitted in discussions and decided upon within a society. The repression, taboo or manipulation of certain

topics or groups is a form of power and control according to this dimension. Lukes suggests that there is yet a third level of power operating within society, the third dimension he suggests occurs at a level so hidden that many are not even aware that their interests are being influenced. This level of power is focused not on behavior as the first two are but on the hidden forces that operate indirectly until an individual's behavior, thoughts, or beliefs are no longer their own, but without their awareness that these thoughts are not theirs. An example of this is communities being propositioned for resource development activities where conditions are created in which they are unaware of their interests or manipulated to adopt interests that are contrary to their wellbeing. Within this dimension of power, people accept their role in the existing system making them compliant and unaware that they are subject to anything other than their own free will. This becomes one of the most effective forms of power.

Marx and Engels (1965) discuss this notion of power in their work *The German Ideology* and their suggestion that the proletariat is held in a state of false consciousness in which the working class structure is maintained. The third dimension also looks at elements of power like the socialization process that inhibits empowerment, the internalization of subordinate status, particularly in gender relations, and the concept of entitlements that determine your position as a community member.

On the topic of gender, early founders of sociology, Herbert Spencer, Ferdinand Toennes Vilfredo Pareto, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim all wrote on the biological inferiority of women to men (Chafetz 2006). Supporters of Marxist theories such as Engels and Weber supported the concept that gender was inequitable however it was largely on the sideline of topics such as politics and class struggle and less so on the social construction of these inequalities between the genders (Chafetz 2006). Classical sociologists Simmel and Parsons came closest to a feminist theory of gender inequalities as a social or cultural product, however it was not until the turn of the century with the rise of feminist theory and female academics contributing to the male dominated sociological canon that the construction of gender has truly been discussed (Chafetz 2006). Authors like Dorothy Smith (1990, 1987) and Patricia Collins (2000) have contributed greatly to feminist theories growing contribution to the discipline of the sociology of gender and the questioning of what elements of a society's culture contribute to its inequalities. An important element that brought gender into the discussion of sociology was the recognition that gender is not biologically determined, but rather a construct of our particular culture. "What gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them – all of these notions do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological "givens" – but are largely products of social and cultural processes" (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:1). This idea came largely from the discipline of anthropology and the work of Margaret Mead (1935, 1949). This gender socialization (Henslin 1999) is contributed to through one's sense of place and their role in society and contributes to and is reinforced by their cultural identity.

A sense of connection and identity with one's culture can be contributed to through many aspects of our lives. Race, ethnicity, religion, and gender all

influence how we see ourselves within the context of a wider cultural identity. This relationship however, like culture itself, is not static. Stuart Hall (1996) articulates this, “cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (p. 225). Maintaining a sense of place and stability within a culture in order to adapt to this constant change and continue an identity with that culture can be a challenging task. In order to understand how cultural identities are formed and maintained we can look at individual contributing elements within very specific contexts and times. “Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies” (Hall 2000:17). This task is complicated by the fluid nature of culture and particularly in times of dramatic cultural shift during which people’s sense of place and self within their community and culture is being renegotiated.

The culture of a group of people can sometimes be perceived as a static entity. “Culture is better thought of...not as a unity, entity, or deposit, but as a set of processes imbricated in the production and circulation of images and as a site of the elaboration of identities” (Dolby 2001:1). This understanding of culture as undergoing periods of change is echoed in the work of Swidler (1986) who argues that culture is best seen not so much in the values held by people but rather as a ““tool kit” of symbols, stories, rituals and world-views, which people may use in varying configuration” (p.273). She differentiates between two models in which this tool kit operates, “settled” and “unsettled” lives. “There are more and less settled lives, and more and less settled cultural periods. Individuals in certain phases of their lives, and groups or entire societies in certain historical periods, are involved in constructing new strategies of action” (p.278). Institutions provide an area of exploration for understanding those cultural shifts and identifying what impacts them as well as the ways in which those shifts influence a community and the broader population.

The set of rules, norms and taboos within a community create an understanding of why certain roles, relationships and changes are occurring within that culture. This particular study involves a “cultural look” at institutions to reveal the elements contributing to gender roles, cultural identity, power relationships and cultural change. These cultural elements influence the way in which a community and individuals are able to cope and adapt to stressors such as food insecurity. It is in this way that we can see a relationship between culture, institutions and food security and the ways in which each has the potential to interact with and impact the others. What follows is an exploration of some of those relationships within the context of the SHFPP.

3.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to understand how culture is represented or manifested in the connections between institutional structures as identified in

Chapter Two and local food security. This objective focused on one organization to understand more deeply the connections between culture and food security.

3.4 Research Methods

A qualitative research approach is used for this study (Marshall and Rossman 2011). Within this approach, I selected a case study method for data collection; the case study population is a subsection of members of a local organization within one community (Hancock, 1998). An instrumental case study method is used with an issue-based focus and progressive focusing of the research questions (Stake 1995). Following the cautions within literature on qualitative studies of producing homogeneous data (Richards and Morse 2012; Hancock 1998), I use a triangulated design of participant and non-participant observation, and semi-structured interviews that are enhanced by visual ethnography as well as secondary research (Richards and Morse 2012). The use of multiple methods and data types to address questions of food and culture within the case study institution creates a more holistic and complete picture of the role local institutions play in food security.

Fifteen semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with members of the community. Participants were chosen using referral sampling and interviews were conducted with the support of a local translator. Two focus groups were also conducted with members of the case study organization as well as a local agriculture class from one of the community schools, in which there were four and nine participants respectively. Photography and photographic observation was used in conjunction with in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Selected photos were taken of community activities or events and objects taking place and were brought into interviews in order to gain interpretation from community members of those activities or objects and their significance. The hope was to not only gain a more accurate observation of the images, but also to understand what elements participants found significant and whether those differed from the views of the researchers (See Chapter One for discussion of visual methodology).

Fieldwork was conducted over a three-month period from February to April 2012 spanning approximately eight weeks in the villages. The majority of this time was spent in the community engaged in data collection as well as participation in community events such as religious ceremonies, agricultural fairs, community conflict resolution meetings and meetings with chiefs, headmen and ward councilors. Presentations of the project were made during community events. Seed packages were distributed to all interview participants at the conclusion of the research period and feedback was provided. A final workshop was held to introduce food preservation techniques and particularly fruit and jam preservation at the request of community members, see Photo 3-1.

Photo 3-1: Food Preservation Workshop



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

3.5 Case Study: Siyondla Homestead Food Production Programme, South Africa, Gatyana District

The study site of Gatyana consists of multiple villages located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa situated between the town of Willowvale and east towards the coast. Gatyana is part of the former Transkei homeland area and its population is made up predominately of amaXhosa people (See Chapter Two for discussion of homelands). The population lives in dispersed homesteads linked by footpaths with few roads passable by vehicle aside from the main road running from Willowvale to the coast (See Photo 3-2). There is little opportunity for employment in the villages and migrant labor is common. Small stores selling limited dry goods are the extent of consumer products available and most people travel up to 30km to Willowvale for their goods and services. There is limited electricity in the village, however communal water taps are available for most homes to access. A number of challenges face the population such as illness, unemployment, substance abuse and agricultural changes. Currently, Gatyana has seen a trend towards decreased agricultural activities of distant fields and increased use of intensive homestead gardens for food production (Fay In Press, DeKlerk In Press). The Eastern Cape Province experiences high levels of poverty, those living on less R,5,057 per annum, particularly amongst its rural population at 82.2% as compared to 42.1% in urban areas. This is experienced in even higher percentages within rural areas amongst households that identify as agricultural households as compared to those that do not, indicating that households that participate in agricultural activities, primarily for personal consumption, are amongst the poorest in the province (Provide Project, 2005).

Food security interacts with the majority of the livelihood issues identified by respondents in the community. A number of local institutional structures were described within the community of Gatyana by interview participants as providing support for some of these challenges experienced (See Chapter Two, Table 2-1). Many of the groups found in the community provide food security support

through multiple avenues. For example, burial groups and Stockvels provide financial savings opportunities, home based care, school feeding programs and kinship ties tend to act through tangible foodstuff support, and the livestock care, veterinary work and tractor and cow sharing provide practical animal husbandry and animal health care. The focus of this chapter is the SHFPP. This particular institutional structure was selected because of its close connection to issues of food security and the large number of participants across the Eastern Cape, described below (Provincial Growth and Development Plan, Eastern Cape Province 2004).

Photo 3-2: Gatyana District



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

The SHFPP was initiated in 2004/2005 in the Mbashe Local Municipality in South Africa by the Department of Agriculture (DoA). The program was widely promoted by government who felt it would receive a high level of response, however the funding and organizational support allotted was inadequate to cope with the 265 SHFPP clubs totaling almost 4000 members who registered by the end of the first three years. Lacking human and financial resources to support these numbers, only 56 of the clubs received assistance from the DoA despite all 265 of them having met the necessary procedures of opening bank accounts, detailing membership, outlining constitutions and roles and having prepared garden plots (DeKlerk In Press).

The ability of government to provide the groups with items such as watering cans, gardening tools and seeds as originally intended has continued to drop since the initiation of the program. However, evidence of the program is visible in communities like Gatyana where groups of women have continued to work together. As government interaction has dropped, the focus of the group and the participants have expanded the role of the group beyond the initial intent of supporting individual food accessibility. The program objectives were to “support production of nutritious food within rural and urban homestead gardens, meeting immediate needs while strengthening household livelihoods and laying foundation for the livelihood diversification and enhancement of economic

exchange” (Eastern Cape Provincial Growth and Development Plan 2004:16). Participants of the groups reported that they now interact primarily as a knowledge sharing resource, and in some cases as a form of limited income generator for the women. In addition members expressed the role the groups play in providing food support to the wider community at large that benefits from increased access to local produce.

This shift in the role that the SHFPP group provides is a reaction to the needs of the participants. They have shaped the organization into a form that fulfills the requirements that they see necessary. Culture plays a large role in how the groups operate and the successes and challenges that they face. In the following section, four key contributing cultural elements are identified and their relationship to the functioning of the SHFPP is discussed.

3.5.1 Power

They don't have tanks, wheelbarrow, watering can, those things; I hope in the future we can get those things. We don't have enough material to do a garden [Member of a SHFPP]

Lewis (1984) discusses the structure of the agricultural production in pre-capitalist times in the Eastern Cape and suggests that social classes and class conflict are a missing area of exploration for multiple authors writing on production, labor and agriculture. Lewis argues that in the later part of the 19th century there was a large degree of polarization in amaXhosa society in the Eastern Cape and that the role of kinship, chief and the *homestead (umzi)* played a central role to agricultural wealth. Lewis discusses the idea of favoritism and gifting between Chiefs and those favored by them particularly in the redistribution of goods.

Interview discussions identified the influence of power in the SHFPP groups at Gatyana in different ways. A clear example is within the relationships between positions of power such as chiefs, headmen or principles of schools and varying SHFPP groups. From interviews it was evident that these relationships (or lack of relationships) had an impact in the different groups' ability to access markets for the sale of their produce. Further, there was an expressed difference by interview participants from different SHFPP groups in who is able to benefit from support and resources from the DoA. (See Photo 3-3)

But lately we have got something that the Department of Education has introduced, nutrition in the schools, oh that's wonderful, because we go to the schools and tell them we have extra vegetables and they will take an order from us [Chiefs Wife who runs a SHFPP]

The schools have gardens, and also the principals at the schools around here, they know them and so they don't want to buy the food, or maybe they buy from their friends. [Member of a SHFPP not connected to a person in a position of power]

Photo 3-3: Community Agriculture Day Organized by Department of Agriculture (Food was purchased from only the SHFPP whose membership included the chief's wife was provided to all attendees)



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

The pressures and dynamics of power within the community was also revealed in the individual, more intimate relationships within the community and can be seen between neighbors, family members and friends. An example of this is between those who have large gardens, particularly corn crops, calling on the help of their friends or neighbors to assist in harvesting and planting of corn.

In an interview with three women who were harvesting corn it was described that two of them were friends of the owner of the corn and who in payment for the assistance in the corn harvest would be loaned cattle by the family they were assisting for plowing of their own fields as they did not have the resources themselves (See Photo 3-4). This suggests that although the homestead system as an aspect of amaXhosa culture may not be as prevalent in today's society as it was in the past, it still maintains a role in food security and that wealth, and access to resources for agriculture are closely linked. It also illustrates a positive expression of power in that there is an expectation that those with resources will assist those without means.

[Interviewee]: Those who can afford to plant their gardens, they plant those big gardens, but the other people can't afford. It is difficult to the other people because they don't have the money for the tractor and the others don't have the cattle. It depends on what they have. And others don't have money for the fertilizer; you can not plant the garden without fertilizer

[Interviewer]: And are you all part of one family [referring to all three ladies working] do you all plant one field?

[Interviewee]: They are friends. They are just helping. I don't know about other people, but we, we help each other, even for hoeing.

Photo 3-4: Women with Limited Agricultural Resources Assisting in Corn Harvest of a Larger Farm in Return for use of Cattle



Photo Credit Kevin Morrison

Examples such as this may be evidence of the homestead system Lewis (1984) describes as still being seen and the dynamics of power that are established within it being an influence in the food security experiences of the community.

Power also influences the rules and norms that dictate largely the success of the organizations. Power plays out on multiple levels, between government organizations such as the DoA, positions of authority and power within the community hierarchy namely chiefs, headmen and school administration, as well as between community members based on accumulated resources and wealth. Advantages of being within this circle of power result in greater success for those SHFPP's with members connected to it. However those that fall outside the relationships of power expressed disadvantages that their group experienced.

The theories of both Lappe (1973, 1977) and Lukes (2005) resonate strongly with the power dynamics seen influencing the success of the SHFPP. The dimensions of power from Lukes theory help identify and define degrees of power and the ways in which institutions support those structures of imbalance contributing towards greater food insecurity for some and not others. For example the unwritten rules governing the distribution of agricultural assistance from the DoA that results in members connected to positions of greater power such as traditional governance structures being rewarded with greater resources. Most clear are the first and second dimensions of power (i.e. policies or political action and censorship of discussion topics) such as government involvement in inequality that Lappe's identifies as contributing to food insecurity. The third dimension (i.e. people's false consciousness.) is the least tangible to observe directly and explore in detail through these research activities and is not taken up in this paper, however poses an area of necessary further research.

3.5.2 Cultural Identity

Because we blacks, all blacks, are farmers! [Leader of a SHFPP Group]

The purpose of viewing the SHFPP as a possible contributor to cultural identity is not to define a set ‘traditional culture’ or a ‘true cultural identity’ as these concepts are ambiguous and subjective at best, but rather to examine the connection between the agricultural practices undertaken by the participants in the SHFPPs and how those actions provide them with a structure of identity in some way. This focus on identity is taken up in a similar study examining the role of subsistence agriculture as not only a food security measure but also as an element of identity amongst female gardeners in the Amazon Basin (Perrault 2005). The study linked the production of *chacra* [traditional crop] by women to their sense of self. “Chacra production is, in this sense, a symbolic as well as material practice, and though its importance for household food security is paramount, it plays a vital role in cultural reproduction as well” (Perrault 2005:337).

Some interview respondents expressed that they feel the act of gardening and farming supports their sense of identity and self. During interviews with members of SHFPP’s the idea of gardening as part of their culture was emphasized as a guiding principal for their participation.

Our culture is to teach the young ones you see, how useful the land is, the productivity of the land you see? Each and every child must know that the money is on the land, you see? It is our culture. [Agriculture Teacher]

I think that it [farming] has been lost and I don’t know how to bring it back. Because in our culture we depend on farming, you know black people depend on farming and it is being lost and I don’t know how to bring it back. [Member of a SHFPP Group]

The group can be understood as a support and builder of cultural identity for its participants, particularly in the face of significant cultural change that the community is experiencing. Gardening becomes a statement of cultural expression for those who participate in it and a way of connecting with what they feel is an element of identity. In his study of *ngoma* (the practice of divination in South Africa) Janzen (1995) identified this institutional structure to be one that was not subject to ethnic or racial barriers and that contributed to a sense of cultural cohesiveness amongst participants. Likewise, the SHFPP groups may act as a link to cultural identity. This may create a greater chance of success and continuation of the groups as the institutions created by the shared sense of cultural identity create a purpose and fulfillment beyond the practical service of food production for the women participating in it.

3.5.3 Gender and the Role of Women

As women we do all that, we plant, dig harvest, everything [Member of a SHFPP]

Women play a key role in the continuation of cultural practices and norms surrounding food not only in its cultivation but also in its harvest, preparation and serving. Of nine interviewees asked about the source of their knowledge about agriculture and food, five of them responded that they had learnt from their mothers and grandmothers. This suggests that gender role division plays an important role in the sphere of food. However as livelihood shifts have occurred in the community with a decrease in use and ownership of livestock and large cultivated fields and an increase in reliance on homestead gardens, these gendered roles have shifted. In part there is a greater demand on women as they take on a larger portion of responsibility for food provision. However, with this increased responsibility there may also be an increase in decision-making powers and household income.

Now it is only the mama who goes to the garden, but in the olden days it used to be all the people in the household used to go to the garden, children go and play soccer and their husband does not want to go to the garden, but in the olden days everyone used to go to the garden. [Focus group response of four SHFPP members]

The majority of the institutional structures within the study community are founded, initiated and participated in largely by women and the SHFPP groups are entirely made up of women. The work of women to meet the needs of their communities is often unrecognized and under valued as a strong element in building culture and identity or as a contributing element in coping with stressors and challenges that communities face (Abrahams 1996). The SHFPP groups provide an opportunity for the marginalized population of female, rural, poor to establish a sense of identity and agency in the space around them. The network of women who take part in the organizations appears strong within the village and their scope of influence on the community has the potential to be one of empowerment.

There appears to be limited agricultural activity in the villages in which men are the primary participants or instigators. According to respondents, the role of animal husbandry, which has been the domain of men traditionally, has declined as the use of animals has been reduced due to illness amongst the animals, climate change impacts on agriculture, and out migration of youth to find jobs. There are also key social factors such as alcohol abuse and social grants that limit the participation of men in institutions. One of the Headmen interviewed in Gatyana stated that the combination of the grant system and easy access to inexpensive alcohol has resulted in a loss of motivation amongst men to work their fields or care for animals.

But the people have food, only not enough because of the grants, they just wait for the money and don't want to work or garden. My biggest challenge [as Headman] is when people fight and I have to take them to

the police, they fight at the bars and they stab each other because they are drunk. They need to close all of these places that sell alcohol so that the men can come out and work again. [Headman in Gatyana]

The tendency for women to be the key participants in community groups is not unique to this community (Jolly 2006, Abrahms 1996). When women were asked about this trend of female action in food security initiatives they indicated that there is a continued role of responsibility on behalf of the women to run the house and feed the family. It was reported that this change has occurred despite the change in role that men have had in which they no longer participate in agriculture or animal husbandry as their contribution to the homestead.

The women do everything. If someone wants to help they can help, you can ask someone to help, but the women have the responsibility. The men are into sport and drink beers and the children only playing ball and school. This has been a big change from our parents' generation. [Focus group response of four SHFPP members]

This raises the question of whether these roles women take on act primarily as an opportunity for empowerment and agency or as an added imbalance to the gender roles in the community power structures as Abrahms (1996) suggest. Although there is no clear answer to this question, there are possible indicators that the shift in responsibility has created a degree of independence for women and that the SHFPP system has contributed to this shift. For example, during a focus group held with four of the SHFPP members the role and importance of the income generation from selling produce was discussed. The group, all of whom indicated they have children, outlined one area of importance of that financial contribution to their lives (See Photo 3-5).

December we sell the most [vegetables]. It is important to our overall income because we sell in December and in January we have to take our kids to school, January is uniform time. [Focus Group of SHFPP Members]

The money that the women make selling produce, although limited, is outside the other household income and expenditure. With statements surrounding the misuse of grants for the purchase of drugs and alcohol, or the simple lack of sufficient income, it is possible that the women are able to use the profit from sales for much needed areas such as their children's education.

Photo 3-5: Leader of a *Cretch* (daycare) Who Receives Financial Relief Through the Donation of Food from a SHFPP Garden.



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

There is also possible independence and empowerment for women through the SHFPP's in that they are creating their own commodity that they then sell without the involvement of men. During our focus group discussion involving four members of a SHFPP, a photo of a local food shop was shown to the participants to gain insight into their interpretation of local food access and supply (See Photo 3-6). However, as a group the collective response was their goals to own a shop as a group through which they could sell their produce in a more accessible manner. They focused on how to gather sufficient resources to purchase a building and the necessity to have a refrigerator in it to keep their products fresh. Their response of entrepreneurship and desire to have independent employment and income through their gardening activities possibly shows the positive effects that the group has on gender relations and female equity in the community. These gender roles are examples of institutions operating within the context of the group as well as the community's culture in a larger sense. They are the underlying rules that govern the behavior and responsibilities of both men and women and determine their role and expectations in relation to food security. The cultural lens highlights this element by bringing gender roles, an important element of culture, into the foreground. In this way the institutions that reinforce those roles and the ways in which they influence food security are seen perhaps more prominently than might be the case from other analytical perspectives.

Photo 3-6: Focus Group Discussing Photo of Local Store



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

It is possible that through growing their own food the SHFPP's are responding to the shifting traditional role of men as the main providers and challenging the norm that only the wealthy or those with significant assets can have food security. The groups are holding forth a strong example in the community of the importance of their cultural roots in agriculture and the role women play in that act. They are producing not only a nutritional safety net but also a way of adapting to changes and challenges in the community in a direction that has potentially positive implications for women's status.

3.5.4 Cultural Change

I think that when we die, this generation, parents of this generation, when they die, there will be no children planting their garden. [Member of a SHFPP]

The emphasis on cultural change (Swidler 1986, and Dolby 2001) is an important theme in understanding the relationships formed between the actions of the SHFPP groups, and the cultural shifts influencing their behavior. It also provides a more specific cultural framework through which to view contributions from the youth in the community and their views towards the group and agriculture as a way of life in general.

For the SHFPP members, the changes occurring are noticed most significantly in the decline of people participating in agricultural production.

I think that it has been lost and I don't know how to bring it back. Because in our culture we depend on farming, know black people depend on farming and it is being lost and I don't know how to bring it back [Leader of a SHFPP]

Three areas were highlighted during interviews as key reasons for the change being seen and expressed as negative challenges to the community's ability to provide for itself. These issues are interrelated and it is evident that all three respond to and interact with the others creating a complex system of impact and response.

The South Africa social grant system has been applauded for its contribution to increasing livelihood security for those considered most vulnerable in South Africa society (SouthAfrica.info). However, an area of concern expressed by respondents is the increased dependence on social grants acting as a detriment to the motivation and ambition people have to provide for themselves. Sentiments that the grants are sometimes misused and that they have resulted in 'laziness' from many who no longer see the benefit of working if they are assured support from the government were expressed.

There are few [young gardeners] yes. Because the people they are lazy these days. I think because they get social grants and child support grants and they don't have to work. [Elderly man who gardens]

I think the government, though he was trying to help people with this social grant, people are just abusing this social grant, they use it for unimportant things like they buy nice cloths instead of buying vegetables! Nice clothes, drinking alcohol, drugs, buying drugs, especially the youth! [SHFPP Member]

The concern for many appeared in the feeling that the grant system, although helpful for some, was cause for many people to stop working in their gardens to feed themselves and their families or to work to gain resources beyond what the grant system provides for them. There is awareness of the lack of job opportunities and high unemployment rates within the community, which attributes in part to the high number of individuals receiving grants, but the idea that still providing food for oneself regardless of job opportunities was clear.

There are no jobs, there are no jobs and we are suffering from ehhe, poverty, recession, everything! We are no longer rich in this country, but if we can just use the soil and the land! I think there can be a better life for everyone. There will be no one who will talk about hunger now, because we will produce food ourselves, plowing, there will be no hunger, no

poverty, no one who is waiting for a social grant anymore! People will just be eating! [Agriculture Teacher]

The contradicting results of the grant system are only one of the influences the group members see as contributing to the changes in participation in gardening. Challenging the success and continuation of the SHFPP groups work and encouragement of food growing is also a shift in values of the youth away from a rural, agrarian lifestyle. Education, urban lifestyles and employment, financial status, collection of consumer goods and aversion to physical labor outdoors are all expressions of a movement away from what the older generation feels is their traditional lifestyle. While this is often seen as a negative change by the older generation there are mixed sentiments from others.

I am trying to say that! (laughs) you know, you whites (laughs) you don't have gardens, you have small gardens, but us, we have big lands, but we don't use them, so I think we don't want to feel dirt now, these days, in the olden days there was no, all these things were not here in our sight, everything, so now even, especially young people, they don't have any time to work hard, they have time to go to town, parties, boozing, they don't have time to do important things like growing food for them. [Agriculture Teacher]

There is a change. There is a change because there is young men they don't do what they [the elderly men] do when they were young. In the olden days there were no schools like there is these days and the kids in these olden days were not usually going to school. They used to take care of their fathers cattle and go to the garden and do all the work. They didn't go much to schools and the kids now, they go to school and after school they go and play ball. But I couldn't say that the olden days are good or bad and that these days are good or bad because in the olden days you would be depending on planting your garden, to have food in your garden. And these days the kids for these days have to go to school and get educated to have certificate for grade 12. Grade 12 certificates and then they could get a job if they have those certificates. In the olden days you didn't have to go to school [Elderly Man whose wife has deceased but was a member of a Siyazondla and he now maintains her gardens outside of the group, one of only two male gardeners identified and interviewed in the community]

In response to these sentiments by the older generations a focus group of grade 12 students was held to understand the youth perspective on possible shifts in values that their demographic is experiencing (See Photo 3-7). Their future goals and aspirations primarily focus outside of the community and on material possession or high profile careers (See Table 3-1). They also expressed that the most important thing in life was to gain an education and that teachers were some of the most influential people for them.

Photo 3-7: Grade 12 Focus Group Discussion



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

Teachers are important because we gain more knowledge from them.

It is the key to my life, it is easy to get a job if you are educated.

A teacher is the foundation to education and all jobs come from education

Education lets you have further knowledge that will lead to more education which will allow for jobs

Without education we are nothing.

[Responses from Grade 12 Agriculture Students]

Table 3-1: Youth Future Aspirations

Boys and Girls	Career Aspiration
Working in Durban as a doctor and driving an expensive car	Medical Doctor
In any big city in a big house with a BMW	Policeman
In Cape Town as a police officer	Policeman
Overseas as a scientist, maybe in New York	Scientist
In Canada to get information to build bridges and go to a technical school	Civil Engineer
Living in the Eastern Cape teaching people how to care for Vet animals	
In Knysna because there are so many different kinds of animals there.	Vet
Living in Canada	Radio Announcer
Living in New York	Actress

The value and emphasis placed on education and its fundamental link with finding a job highlights the uncertainty and instability that the youth see in continuing with the livelihoods that their grandparents or parents' generation was rooted in and that their parents' generation is struggling with as social, political, economic and environmental changes beyond their control shape their opportunities and resource access. The sentiments from the adults in the community that the youth are 'lazy' and do not want to work hard is not echoed by the youth themselves who simply see a lack of opportunity to thrive in the role of a farmer.

However, adding to the complexity of the shifts occurring that impact the culture and food security of the community is the increase in alcohol and drug abuse. In September 2011, Minister of Social Development Bathabile Damini addressed the concern of alcohol abuse, particularly amongst youth in the rural communities of South Africa and in a current update in June 2012 the Minister reported the progress of a bill restricting the advertisement of alcohol and marketing to combat the issue (<http://www.southafrica.info>). It appears well known within the village that use of alcohol has increased and that its impact has been a negative one resulting in social and family break down, decrease in participation in household activities and support, and even the feeling that there is a loss of cultural identity because of the excessiveness of alcohol use (See Photo 3-8).

Ahh, I am going to talk about a bad thing now. On thing I can say, our children are drunkards. They like to use a drink a lot. So that is why their head does not work properly. You cannot drink today and sleep drunk and go to school. I don't know how the government can stop this things, stop the liquor to the people! That is the thing I can say everything is so difficult to ask. Because we know where we come from, but they don't know. Ahhh [Leader of a SHFPP Group]

Photo 3-8: Local *Shebeen* Selling Alcohol



Photo Credit: Kevin Morrison

The statements surrounding these changes reflect a struggle between a past way of living in which livelihoods revolved around self-sufficient food production and the increasingly western influence of modernization that is reaching into the community. This has been combined with the residual political and economic ramifications of South Africa's history as people experience possible "learned helplessness" from the grant system, which is further aggravated by the use of alcohol and drugs. All four of these areas, power, gender, cultural identity and cultural change interact in a complex reciprocal cycle creating an atmosphere that many research participants felt is irreversible and that their hope within that change is that agriculture and growing your own food not be lost entirely.

3.6 Discussion

The intent of this chapter is to examine how culture presents itself within the SHFPP and explore how those cultural elements impact the food security abilities of this particular local institutional structure. Four key contributing cultural elements were identified inductively from data analysis of interviews and focus groups with participants and community members: power, cultural identity, gender and cultural change.

The impact of power as a cultural construct is seen in the data as impacting the success of the SHFPP based on the connections members have with people in positions of influence or affluence, either through an increase or decrease in their access to resources or market options. Power also expressed itself in the relationships and wealth seen in those families with larger agricultural asset or resource bases providing assistance to those families or individuals with less. In these examples the impact of power is seen as an important determining force in food security experiences and can be seen to manifest as rules and norms that influence behavior.

Culture provides a cyclical view that lets us see the relationships on both a very intimate level amongst individuals but also how those relationships then feed into larger scale institutions and governance and also how those channels are constructed and reconstructed iteratively between multiple agents of change. For example, this perspective highlighted the relationship between the schools and the SHFPP's. From an institutional perspective it might be understood that the purchase of produce by the school nutrition program from the SHFPP was restricted because of formal rules that the purchasing group must obtain receipts in order to comply with government funding requirements which the SHFPP group is not able to provide. However this relationship is fundamentally tied to underlying power differentials seen between people as well as manifested in the informal rules that guide those relationships. Indeed, the access that certain groups had to the schools was based on their relationship to members of the traditional leaders within the community. However, the cultural lens shows us that on an individual level there is a degree of influence through direct family relationship between a member of a SHFPP that sold their groups vegetables to a school and the principal of that school. This level of kinship contributes to the power/hierarchy in the community and the success of the SHFPP groups that is

not observed at an institutional structure level but impacts them nonetheless. Without a cultural lens we may have stopped at one of the earlier explanations and missed the increasingly individual relationships that are underlying contributors to the situation. Culture acts as both an individual element in that it impacts people on a personal level but is also present within a group/community element. This translates to the need for researchers to look at all of these levels, and a cultural lens provides a means to achieve this.

Participation in the SHFPP was reported as promoting a sense of cultural identity grounded in agricultural practices. This may translate as a contributor to the continuation of the SHFPP programs as participation provides not only food security but also the social element of identity. Du Gay and Hall (1996) express cultural identities as changing on a continual basis; the SHFPP provides grounding for those who participate and a sense of belonging and continuity. This may indicate that there is an expression of people wanting a sense of stability and continuity in their cultural identity and the SHFPP's provide that to a degree. Participation in the SHFPP provides a framework of institutions that allow members to place themselves in relation to it as a stable and understood element of their identity. In this connection with identity, the cultural view allows us to understand why some institutions, such as agricultural activities in the form of the SHFPP, persist, despite changing socio-economic contexts while other institutions disappear or change such as the shift in role that women have in food production.

Women in this study are revealed as key players in food security and local initiatives. As the dominant demographic participating in institutional structures based around food security and through interview reports of female prominence in the continuation of agricultural knowledge it is clear that the role of women is significant to the food security of families and communities. This involvement and responsibility can be seen as a positive contribution to food security. However, the increased role that women now play in food production as the community experiences a shift in male activities away from animal husbandry and agriculture, there may be negative feedback to food security. The burden of primary food producer in a household that women report increasingly having to hold may be too great for them to be able to provide adequate food security. Institutional structures such as the SHFPP provide support for this increasing gender role inequality. The SHFPP's in turn may influence the cultural institutions of gender as they provide avenues for women's increased economic independence through food sales. As explored by Smith (1990, 1987) and Collins (2000) elements of a societies culture contribute to its inequalities. Food and food responsibilities as aspects of a group's culture manifest the roles of men and women with the result of both inequalities and possibilities for increased equality.

Interview participants cited cultural changes that they felt impacted the success of the SHFPP's. The social grant system was critiqued for decreasing motivation, ambition and increasing dependence on its support. Youth expressed disinterest in an agrarian livelihood with increased exposure to western values and ideals, and an increase in drug and alcohol abuse. Substance use was reported by all demographics as negatively impacting participation in agricultural activities

and local organizations. The community appears to be at an intersection, looking back at past way of living and looking forward at an unclear picture of the future. Using Swidler's language, the community is in and "unsettled" state and people are re-establishing what 'tool kits' they have in order to renegotiate elements of their culture and in particular their relationship to agricultural livelihoods. Participants expressed these changes as a challenge and a negative influence on the success of the SHFPP.

The relationship between complex systems like the politics of a community, the cultural shifts taking place, and gender dynamics is seemingly impossible to disconnect from one another or study as stand alone topics. Culture offers a way to explore some of the links and interactions between the multi-influencing forces that all contribute to the food security experiences of a population. It focuses on the relationships that these different factors have with food security and how they positively or negatively interact with the challenges of ensuring food security into the future.

3.7 Conclusion

Looking at the SHFPP program from a strictly institutional, policy or political view or even from just a food security view, by many objective measures it is not a success story. It lacks the coordination, funding and human resources to provide support for all of the groups and many of them have lost members or quit altogether. However, through a cultural lens we can see that the SHFPP program has had a positive effect and a degree of success in a different way. It has brought more knowledge sharing and awareness and discussion of gardening and agriculture, it has contributed to participants' sense of identity and self in a community experiencing dramatic cultural change and it has created forums and opportunities for challenges to be faced in a more communal way, for dialogue between generations, and empowerment of women in their ability to provide for themselves and their families. The relationship between culture and the SHFPP is reciprocal, with one influencing the other.

In some common understandings of culture and development, culture is viewed as a barrier to adaptation and modernization. If one asks why a community does not develop in the way that others have in order to successfully cope with change, the answer is often defined in terms of cultural difference. However if we look at the case study presented and draw on Swidler's (1986) concept of the cultural 'tool-kit' our perception of culture's role in adaptation and change is shifted. The idea of the 'tool-kit' invites us to look at cultural changes as a form of adaption, not as a barrier by emphasizing the cultural aspects or 'tools' that a community has access to in order to cope with a challenge. The tool kit that the community has to cope with food insecurity determines what action they can take to adapt. The members of the SHFPP use selective elements of their culture to create a set of tools, skills, styles and habits such as knowledge of agricultural practices, organizational abilities to form a supportive gardening groups, a sense of self as farmers and agriculturalists. From this tool kit a strategy of action to cope with food security is created in the form of the gardening group.

The community being in an unsettled period of change means that only those beliefs or principles, which have a resulting impact on structural action, will be successful and the SHFPP is an example of this. From this view of culture we can see how it can influence action as a positive contributor to adaptation or coping.

All of the gardeners who participated in a SHFPP said that they gardened in order to grow fresh food, save money and simply because they loved to garden. However, as Baker (2004) identified there is also a political aspect to gardening although those involved may not be intentionally aware of it. There is a resistance statement from those who need to have access to fresh, culturally appropriate, affordable and nutritious food in the communities – a source of food that is increasingly not available. Although it may be limited in some ways, the SHFPP gardening initiative is part of a wider movement of people that are making a statement for the inclusion of culture to be considered in resource and agriculture planning.

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Chapter 4 Conclusion and Future Developments

4.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study on a broad level was to explore the relationships between culture and food security. Local institutional structures and initiatives and the institutions present in them were used as a focal point for the research and an area through which to identify culture acting within the community to influence food security.

A surprising number of local initiatives working towards addressing food insecurity were identified in both communities. In the early stages of research it was uncertain whether organizations or activities that focused on food insecurity would be present at the local level. It quickly became evident however that both communities are not only aware of the food insecurity challenges they are facing, but have members actively working to attempt to cope with their situation from a local perspective. The challenge in this research was not so much in locating and describing these institutional structures as originally expected, but in identifying how culture could be seen acting in relationship with them. The further task was to establish whether this study supported the increasing call in food security research for a greater inclusion of culture as a focal point and identify specific ways in which that could be exemplified.

In the support of integrating culture into food security and other development studies, it is important to recognize and avoid the risk of focusing too much on issues of culture at the expense of other factors or dimensions of food security. The potential to attribute a community's response, or lack of, to a stressor as determined solely by its culture opens the possibility that those cultures perceived to be not succeeding or modernizing are simply the "wrong" cultures (Rao and Walton 2004). Culture only contributes to the different structures of coping mechanisms a community employs. Multiple other circumstances, however, undoubtedly affect their response and must also be considered in any development programming. Employing multiple views of a community may prevent falling into research focus that is too narrow for meaningful and insightful analysis. Toward this end, the use of both an institutional approach and a cultural lens in this study provided some diversity in views on the topic of food insecurity. Moreover, the large project funded by IDRC offers additional insights into food security from economic and ecological perspectives whereby this study on culture provides additional insight.

A culture focus and an institutional view highlight different elements that contribute to a community's food insecurity. A cultural lens lets us look at cultural shifts and cultural identity as contributors to food security. It highlights elements such as the role of the individual and the significance of changes in systems of sharing, access to markets, and gender roles. However, using an institutional view highlighted the role of elements such as government structures, and rules surrounding resource access. There is

overlap between these two perspectives and rather than compete, they can provide complimentary views of food insecurity with the benefit of bringing into consideration a greater range of contributing factors. Using culture in conjunction with an institutional approach also allowed for a degree of comparison between the two communities studied. Researchers of culture have been critiqued for their assumption that as extremely complex systems, cultures cannot be compared (Rao and Walton 2004). However there may be an opportunity to find degrees of comparison through supportive lenses like institutions. Further, using culture in integration with other existing frameworks may provide an avenue not only for comparison but provide it with structure and opportunities for measurable indicators that authors like Woodley et. al.(2006) suggest are missing.

This thesis contributes to a number of areas in Woodley et. al.(2006) ten cultural indicators for measuring Indigenous Peoples Food and Agro-ecological Systems, Rights to Food, Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development. Through exploring local institutional structures from a cultural lens the study provides information on indicator areas such as the development of local food and local food markets, people's coping mechanisms for changes in environmental or ecological conditions, the shifts in what a community can produce and changes in their diets, and the use and form of traditional exchange systems of support. These experiences of culture are visible entities, which allow for observation and measurement. Using local institutional structures and institutions may provide a partial avenue through which to fulfill Woodley et. al. (2006) recommendation for the need to develop measureable indices of culture influencing food security. This may have the positive effect of bringing culture into being a more commonplace consideration in development work.

Initial perceptions of how culture might be seen to interact with food security proved to be limited in not only degree but also the scope and level of complexity that was later revealed. Although four cultural elements were highlighted for the purpose of the study, power, gender, cultural identity and cultural change, an intricate web of cultural nuances and relationships slowly came forward as data collection and analysis progress in the field. The degree that culture is embedded in experiences of food security and the coping abilities of community members cannot be emphasized enough. Within the SHFPP case study, cultural elements presented as key determinants in the success of the initiative. Who participates in food security activities, what the purpose and scope of an initiative is, the degree of acceptance within the community of an initiative, what resources a group has access to and the institutions that guide and structure an activity are all impacted by cultural elements. Gender inequality, power relationships and hierarchies, and individual cultural identity are all aspects of culture that act within the spaces between individuals, organizations, communities and governments to influence the ways people think, feel and act in regards to food security and food security initiatives.

It is perhaps within the almost endless realm that culture can encompass that lays the greatest challenge to those wishing to include it in the study of food

security. Acting as an element that influences how people think, feel, act, speak, or relate to one another and their environment, culture becomes an ambiguous and seemingly un-measurable entity to grapple with as a researcher. However, it is the permeation that culture has into so many aspects of an individual, group or community's existence that make it such a crucial aspect of consideration. Culture is neither static nor confined by borders and its impact on food security is just as fluid. This study manages only to provide a snapshot of the influence of culture in one historical moment, in one geographical area, but to truly understand its importance we must grapple with understanding not only those snapshots but also comprehend its role as an ever changing element that is both impacting and impacted by the things around it. We must be able to consider culture's influence as it is seen in the here and present, as well as its historical context, and possible future impacts. If this can be accomplished we are able to not only understand how and why challenges such as food insecurity were formed within a community, but also understand how that challenge is currently influencing the population, how they are attempting to cope with it and perhaps most importantly, the ways in which that challenge will interact with a population in the future and how they will impact it in return. In this way we can understand food insecurity not only in a reactive manner, but also project into the future proactive solutions that individuals within a community will support, integrate and succeed with because they are informed by cultural elements of that community.

4.2 Future Developments of this Research

Together, Chapters Two and Three support a greater incorporation of culture into the social sciences on food security and suggest that it is an aspect in need of further research. Culture remains a challenging entity to study, particularly in conjunction with large-scale issues that intersect multiple social systems. Additional work aimed at understanding specific ways in which culture interacts with and impacts social, political or environmental challenges is needed in order to gain a full understanding of its influence and scope. However, a greater ability to identify when culture is influencing food security and when alternate elements such as environmental, political and global conditions are playing a role also needs to be acquired. Further, I would suggest that the use of a cultural lens is in need of a more clearly defined method of analysis, measurable indices and definition of terms, in order to provide consistency and the possibility for comparison between studies across disciplines and topics. However, I would caution those pursuing this to simultaneously account for the fluid and dynamic state of culture, and that the method of analysis and measurement must reflect this.

We need to also move into not only identifying and measuring the impact of culture but working towards being able to support those cultural elements that are positively influencing food security. This is an area I believe is perhaps least understood, not the identification of whether culture is significant, or even the measurement and description of how it plays a role, but the actions associated with that understanding once we have it. How can cultural elements supportive of

food security be encouraged and supported in policy and practice and how can those that are detrimental to food security be changed? These are the kinds of questions we must start to ask as we move towards not only incorporating culture into field research studies, but also utilizing the information that we gained from that knowledge to create better methods of support and development in communities struggling with food insecurity.

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4.3 Reference

Rao, Vijayendra and Michael Walton, eds. 2004. *Culture and Public Action*. CA: Stanford University Press.

Woodley, Ellen, Eve Crowley, Jennie Dey de Pryck and Andrea Carmen. 2006. "Cultural Indicators of Indigenous Peoples' Food and Agro-Ecological Systems." SARD Initiative commissioned by FAO and the International India Treaty Council. Pp. 1-104.

Chapter 5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix A. Summary of Organizations/Activities Potentially Related to Food Security in Willowvale and Lesseyton

1. School Feeding Program – Gatyana/Lesseyton
 - a. All of the schools in both communities have government funded feeding programs where the children receive one snack (usually fruit) and one hot meal a day (at lunch) which usually consists of *pap* and soup.
 - b. In Gatyana the school did not have a third party source for their program and ran it themselves through hired women from the community, where as Lesseyton used a service provider
 - c. Consensus at both communities was that there is a lack of nutritious food – mainly meat and vegetables due to financial constraints.
 - d. Both communities felt that the program was essential to the health of the children and reported that many of the school age children do not receive food at home and the feeding program provides their only full meal for the day.
2. Tractor/Cow Sharing – Gatyana
 - a. The issue of not being able to plow fields was prevalent in many of the interviews in Gatyana regarding the growing of gardens and crops. Tics were said to be killing or weakening the cattle beyond usability for labor (which was confirmable by visual observation of cattle during a cattle round up the community organized)
 - b. There appears to be limited sharing of cattle that can be used for plowing fields, although the comment on how widespread this is was mixed.
 - c. There is also seems to be a great deal of controversy regarding government provided tractors with complaints that the use of the machinery is limited to the chiefs family members only.
3. Poultry Association – Gatyana/Lesseyton
 - a. The poultry project in Lesseyton has just been initiated and the group is just forming – there is supposed to be a large poultry barn built by the community centre but meetings are still in the planning stages

- b. The poultry project in Gatyana was formed and ran for a few years however it has ceased recently and reportedly they are trying to get it running again. It was made up of five women who applied for money from the Department of Agriculture for a poultry barn, they pooled their money and purchased chickens and then sold them either as young or as full-grown meat birds. The project failed because they could only sell to their local community and many people purchased on IOU's and subsequently were never able to pay. They women are trying to find a way to 'export' their chickens to a market in a town where they would be purchased for cash. The project was done as an income generating activity.

4. Burial Groups – Gatyana/Lesseyton

- a. These are one of the two most frequent community organizations in both study sites (the other being Stockvel's). They are initiated by any member of the community and can vary dramatically in the number of people who participate in each one. Both men and women can participate (however, it was not seen that any men were involved.)
- b. The purpose of the Burial groups has the same basic principle between groups and study sites. Each member contributes a set amount of money every month (the contributions were reported as varying between 50R and 500R a month). When one of the members has a death in their family they are given a certain amount of money to help cover the costs of the funeral. These costs can include anything from food and drink for guests on the day of, to the tent and chair rentals to the cost of the funeral parlor. The amount that the person receives varies from group to group (often depending on how many members it has) but seems to average around 2000R. Some of the burial groups also have tents and chairs that they have purchased as a group and which members can use for funerals.
- c. It is important to note that although it is unclear as to what other services the burial groups may play, there does seem consensus from most women interviewed that they also serve as a form of support during times of grief and that the meetings held monthly to collect money also allow the members to talk about "women's problems". Some interviewees said that if a member experienced other shocks such as ceremonies the group could decide to give them a one time monetary support. It was also said by one person that their group helped in the collection of wood and water for funeral days (all of the food is cooked over fire requiring a lot of wood).

5. Agricultural Group – Gatyana

- a. The group has formed locally by farmers who were experiencing shared problems and felt they needed to come together to be able to approach the Department of Agriculture as a united group. They have one member who goes to report their grievances to the Department of Agriculture. Currently they are concerned about the ticks and the cost of medication for them as well as the need for government assistance in the removal of large trees from new lands they are trying to plant.
6. Siyazondla – Gatyana
 - a. Originally a government initiated program to encourage home gardens. Groups of 45 women were instructed to create 3 groups of 15. Each group of 15 was to have individual gardens, a group bank account and an organizational structure and the Department of Agriculture was then going to support them with tools, seeds and supplies.
 - b. However, lack of funding for the program has seen it breakdown to a degree. Groups have continued to work together to share information on agriculture and support one another in home food production.
 7. Churches – Gatyana /Lesseyton
 - a. Both communities abound in religious organizations, only a limited number were explored through interviews of their members and leaders. Those interviewed are for spiritual assistance only and many of them pointed out the lack of resources of their members and the church as a whole as to why they do not have programming to help feed or support their vulnerable members.
 - b. However, one of the key roles that they churches do play is in creating support networks for community members, which arguably is as important in many aspects as physical resources. Most of those interviewed said that if a member was going through a hard time (especially death in the family) the church members would try and donate a little bit of food or money to that person.
 8. Stockvels – Gatyana /Lesseyton
 - a. Both communities were abundant with Stockvels (as with the burial groups). They are started by any member of the community and can have any number of members. The purpose of them seems to be consistent between groups and communities in that they act as a form of savings group with each member putting in a require amount (varies between 50R to 500R a month) every month. However, there are some differences in the distribution of that money. Some distribute that collective amount monthly, some annually (although monthly seems most common), but all on a

rotation basis so that each member receives the group savings at some point.

- b. When a person receives the money for their month or year, they are welcome to spend it on what every they want – those interviewed were very vague about what it was spent on other than to say food and household items.
- c. Outside of its monetary savings there was mention of emotional support between members through food sharing if they knew a member was struggling, however, these reports were extremely limited and did not come readily when interviewees were asked about additional roles of the Stockvels.

9. Home Based Care – Gatyana /Lesseyton

- a. Both communities have volunteers who do home-based care work which is organized by local clinics. The member from Gatyana also discussed an HIV/AIDS education aspect to the work that she does in conjunction with care for vulnerable people in their homes. This involved going to a minimum of five homes a day to talk to people about HIV/AIDS and how to care for family members that are ill with it. The care that volunteers at both sites give includes administering treatments, cleaning homes, washing the patients and their bedding, cooking in their homes and often providing food for them as well.
- b. At both study sites the volunteers received training and support from a number of organizations including social workers, the clinics and the health department.
- c. At both study sites the volunteers were engaged in a number of other community activities

10. Kinship Ties (Family Support) – Gatyana

- a. No one was interviewed in Lesseyton regarding the impact of Kinship ties on food security and community based organizations, as it was only through reflection of data in the field that it was noted that discussion of Kinship was not included (which includes extended family in amaXhosa culture) and an interview was set up to discuss this possible institutional structure in Gatyana
- b. Family support was reported to be extremely important in the event of a death; ones siblings would contribute food and drink (brandy or beer) for the funeral. Children are also an important aspect of creating security for parents because they send money home when they are old enough to have jobs. The relationships between the role of grandparents in looking after grandchildren, or even young children that are not directly related to them, often taking full responsibility of the care for them was also discussed as a significant Kinship role.

11. Veterinary Care – Gatyana

- a. The individual interviewed had received basic large animal care education and some rudimentary vaccination and care equipment from the Department of Agriculture. He reported examining approximately 600 animals a week and treats mostly for ticks and liver flukes.
- b. There are a number of challenges from need of further education and resources to transportation, but regardless he feels that the work he is doing has a large impact on the health of the community animals that are used for food, ceremony and labor.

12. Headman/Chief - Gatyana

- a. The Chief in Lesseyton was not available for interview however potentially plays a similar role in the community based on community member's reports.
- b. The importance of the headman/chief to this project is both his role in the community as well as his knowledge of challenges that his villages are facing. He is also the individual that the Department of Agriculture goes through for their assistance (example being the community tractor they provided). He also deals with the challenges of the community such as drinking, crime and decreasing agricultural practices (these are challenges he indicated) and part of his job is to try and overcome these challenges.

13. Community Garden Project - Lesseyton

- a. Lesseyton used to have an active community gardening project that was started and run by a community member. The gardens were started as attempts to increase peoples access to food due to the drought as well their knowledge of how to grow food. A number of gardens were active for about 5 years and then were discontinued reportedly because of the drought and because people did not value working to grow their own food nor to do so collectively and instead value has shifted to being able to purchase food.

14. Government Food Parcels – Lesseyton

- a. There is a Social Development group in Lesseyton that with the assistance of the Ward Councilor did an assessment of vulnerable people in the community. People were registered based on their grant status (you can not receive a package if you are also getting a grant) and given a food package on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

15. HIV/AIDS Group and Victims Against Crime – Lesseyton

- a. There is little to know about this project as of right now as it has only been initiated this year and participants were receiving their

first training at the time of the interview with the Ward Councilor who informed me about it. The two groups will be focused on education and support about HIV/AIDS and crime in the community. The hope is to increase testing in the community for HIV/AIDS as well as assist those who have been targeted by crime.

16. Cattle Project – Lesseyton

- a. This is a new project and with limited information about it as of now. However, the purpose of it is to increase the number of *nguni* cows in Lesseyton. The group is working to bring 75 of these cows into the community and members of the Farmers Association will own them.

17. Individual Projects – Lesseyton

- a. There are individuals within the community who have made it their responsibility to assist as their communities or neighborhoods outside of a group or organization. This individual activity was not identified in Gatyana.
- b. In Lesseyton a traditional healer and her son hand out donated food to over 100 vulnerable children every day, 6 days a week and have been doing so since 1988 with the assistance of a private individual in Queenstown who gathers donated food for them to distribute.
- c. There is also a home care worker who saves her grants with the help of a few others and purchase private food packages for those who are the most vulnerable that she provides home based care for. She has also taken in 6 orphan children and is raising them in her home; they have been there since 2007.

18. Elderly Care Home – Gatyana

- a. One of the SLG members is running this organization; they have an actual structure (home) that they use to provide care for at least two elderly residents. This is a very new project no one was available/willing to participate in an interview so there are few details known about it. However we did visit the site and it is evident that they are feeding, cleaning and clothing the elderly that were there at the time.

19. Vaccination Cooperation – Gatyana

- a. There may also be something like this in Lesseyton, as it was on chance that it was discovered in Gatyana. It is not an organization of any kind, however the community has a semi-organized event for the vaccination, dipping and general vet care of their cattle. All of the men of the village gather, regardless of ownership of the cattle, and the younger generations (young boys and men) provide the labor for the event while the older generation sits and observes.

- b. This is evidently not an organization of any kind, but a community activity none the less which provides not only a service for animal husbandry but also clearly fulfilled a community engagement and socializing role.

5.2 Appendix B. Participant Information and Consent Form

Project Information and Consent Form

Impact of Cultural Organizations on Food Security in South Africa

(Information will be narrated to participants orally in the local language)

Research Description

This research explores the relationship between cultural activities like rituals or community gatherings, and group activities related to food production and distribution in the village. Culture could include some combination of things like local practices, values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions about food in the village. The purpose of this research is to identify and describe local cultural organizations and practices that are linked to local food access. To conduct this research we are interested in exploring the perspectives of local community members about food and culture through interviews with village members, observations and photographs of village activities.

Interviews

The interviews will involve one session and should take no more than 2 hours. In the interview, we are seeking permission to record the discussion with an audio recording device as well as note taking. This will allow us to keep an accurate record of interview discussions and ensure appropriate transcripts and translations of what is discussed.

Photographs

Photographs are intended to record daily activities in the village that relate to food and the activities of cultural organizations. Photos can help to prompt further discussions with people who are interviewed and can illustrate cultural and food related activities in the research. Some of these photos may be used in published reports from this research.

Confidentiality

All interview information will be kept confidential. There will be no publication of names or to the best of our ability identifying characteristics through which a participant could be recognized. All transcripts, notes and voice recordings will be stored within a password protected electronic archive or a securely locked filing cabinet in our office at the University of Alberta. Only we, the research team, will have access to the information, and we will analyze the information and

present the findings in a way that ensures anonymity of participants. Any direct quotes will remain without participant names.

The identity of any person in the photographs will remain anonymous in written descriptions of them or visual publication. However anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the interview process. Similar procedures in the interviews discussed above will be used to protect and store these images.

Rights as a Participant

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you agree to participate in the interviews and / or photographs you are free to withdraw at any time during the process and can do so without any consequences. If this occurs none of the information or images related to you will be used in the research.

Benefit and Risks

Benefits of this research may include the opportunity for community members to express their opinions towards food and cultural activities and how to improve production and access to food in the village. It also may provide tangible information to the village of what aspects of culture and involvement are helpful in enhancing local food security.

We do not anticipate any risks to the participants in this research. However, if you ever feel any discomfort in any matter you have the freedom to leave the interview without consequence as well as make the research team aware of your discomfort.

Research Team

The members of the research team are as follows:

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Dr. John Parkins (Principal investigator), Associate Professor, Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Email: jparkins@ualberta.ca, Phone: 7804923610.

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If you have any comments or questions regarding the research or consent form please ask one of our representative members in South Africa.

Also, if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the University of Alberta's

Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigators.

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS AND / OR PHOTOGRAPHS

Have you received a copy of the attached information sheet? YES NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the research? YES NO

Do you agree to participate in an interview for this research? YES NO

Do you agree to me using a digital audio recorder during interview? YES NO

Do you agree to be photographed for this research YES NO

Do you agree to allow the researcher to use the selected photos for research purposes?

Date

Signature of Participant
(print)

Name (please

Signature of Researcher
(print)

Name (please

Amy Trefry (Research assistant), Masters of Science Student, Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Email: ttrefry@ualberta.ca phone. 7804234914 (Canada)