SECTION 2

FINDINGS ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS AND EVERYDAY FOOD PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

This first section on the findings contains Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4 the external environments of the participants are described. This includes not only an account of the geographical location and physical environment of Mmotla but also refers to important aspects of the socio-cultural environment of the participants. In Chapter 5 the everyday food practices of the participants are contextualised by giving a description of how they view and use food. The contemporary eating patterns as they are followed on weekdays and over weekends are reported on and interpreted.

This section comprises two chapters entitled:

Chapter 4: External environments of the participants

Chapter 5: Everyday food practices

CHAPTER 4

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Human food choice always takes place within the boundaries of what food is available, accessible and acceptable to people and is primarily determined by the external environments in which they live as described in Chapter 2 (see 2.2.1). Each of these environments, namely the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural, provides both opportunities and constraints for human food consumption (Bryant *et al.,* 2003:10). This exemplifies the contention that where people live contributes to their potential food choices (Kittler & Sucher, 2008:12; Bryant *et al.,* 2003:11).

In this first chapter on the findings of the study, the external environments of the participants are sketched to contextualise the contemporary food practices of the Mmotla community. The purpose is twofold: not only to comprehend the contemporary food practices, but also to provide a background to understanding the changes and developments in food practices that occurred over the past four decades, as reported on by the participants. The geographic location of the village, including a description of the physical environment, together with a brief historical overview of the community, is given. The socio-cultural environment is briefly described including an overview of the cultural groups residing in the community, together with aspects that relate to their world view, ideology and social organisation.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The study involved selected members of a black South African community residing in Mmotla, also known as Mmotle or Ga-Motle, a densely populated village 55 km northwest of Pretoria, in the vicinity of the Tswaing Meteorite Crater. The village falls under the Moretele Municipal Council, part of the Eastern District Region of the North West province. See Figure 4.1 for a map showing the location of Mmotla.

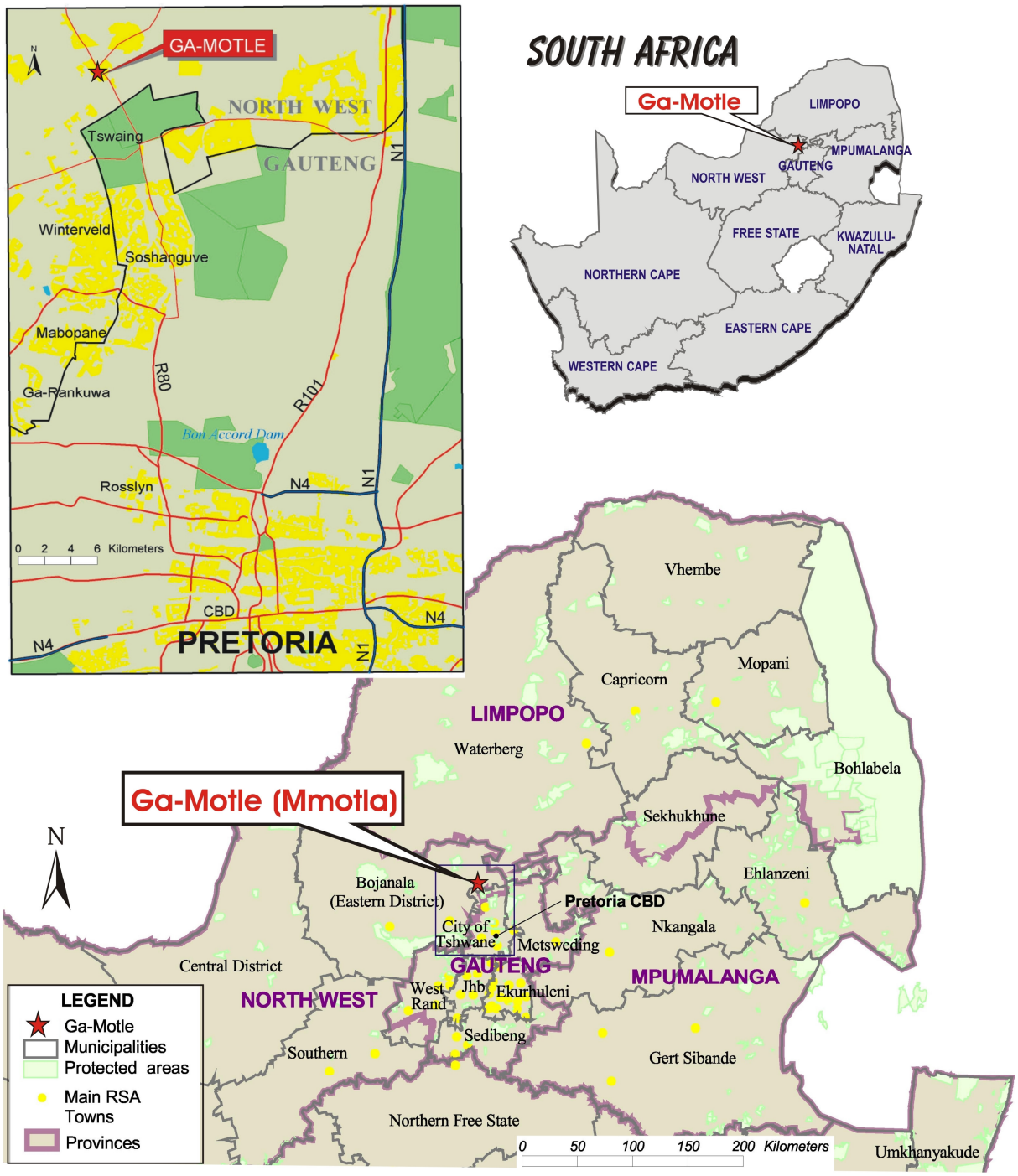

FIGURE 4.1: LOCATION OF MMOTLA VILLAGE

Mmotla was established during the early 1960s at the time when selected reserves around Tswaing (which formed part of the then Bantu Development Trust), were consolidated with some of the surrounding farms that were obtained by the Bantu Development Trust (Reimold, Brandt, De Jong & Hancox, 1999:113), to be proclaimed as a Trust area. The older participants said that they chose to come and live here, instead of staying on and working as farm labourers on white farms in areas such as Bronkhorstspruit, Witbank and Middelburg. Other participants could also recall when they moved from other nearby areas to Mmotla with

their parents and or relatives. In a publication that describes the natural and cultural history of the Tswaing area, Reimold *et al.* (1999:115) confirm that this happened. Many evicted farm workers, people living on mission stations or other 'Black Spots' in White South Africa as well as Black people residing in areas that were demarcated for either Whites, Coloureds or Indians were relocated in villages such as Ga-Motle or neighbouring villages such as Kromkuil or Kwa-Ratsiepane during the early 1960s. Most of the participants were thus able to describe the village life they experienced when they first moved to Mmotla and could compare it with the current situation.

When distinguishing between modern urban and traditional rural communities in South Africa, the Mmotla community could be described, as being somewhere in-between these two extremely different ways of life. The participants also mentioned that some of them still have close contact with relatives living in more rural areas and that close family members such as children or spouses, are employed in several of the nearby larger urban areas in Gauteng. It could thus be concluded that the residents of Mmotla have contact with the South African reality of people living poles apart, either following a rural or more traditional way of life or adopting a modern urban or Western-oriented lifestyle depending on where they live.

4.3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment as described in Chapter 2 (see 2.3.1.1), consists of the natural environment and all the built structures found in it. This environment primarily contributes to what food is available and accessible for consumption. The physical environment of Mmotla is presented by first sketching the natural environment, followed by a brief description of the infrastructure of the village.

4.3.1 Natural environment

Mmotla is located in the summer rainfall region of South Africa and receives 80% of its annual rainfall between September and April. The average recorded rainfall is 633 mm per annum. The average annual temperature of this area is 18.5° C. February is the hottest month, with daily temperatures ranging between 16° C and 28° C, and June is the coldest month. A probability of frost occurrence is calculated at 100% during the frost season during June up to mid-August. The evaporative demand is quantified as 2009 mm per annum (Agrometeorology Personnel, 2006).

Two land types dominate. To the north, land type Ae20, characterised by plains dominates whereas land type Bb18 to the south comprises slightly undulating plains. With regard to soil and terrain composition, both land types indicate average to good agricultural potential depending on the soil depth and natural fertility. However, a major limiting factor is the availability of water to sustain diversified crop production on a dry land agronomic system (Landtype Surveying Personnel, 1972-2004). Crop production in the village is thus severely hampered by the semi-arid climate and most of all the lack of water. Most of the residents are therefore not in the position to cultivate any crops for their own consumption – this was confirmed by the older participants. They indicated that they could not engage to the same degree of subsistence farming as they were used to when they worked and lived on white farms, before they came to settle here in Mmotla. At the time of the study, a small group of residents were involved in crop cultivation, on a limited scale, in communal fields on the outskirts of the village. This was, however, not regarded as very successful due to the lack of water and the continuous drought. In times of drought, *morogo* (collective name for indigenous leafy vegetables) is also not readily available for gathering in the veld or from household gardens. The natural environment is therefore not conducive to food production that would provide for or even supplement the food needs of the Mmotla community. The community is therefore largely dependent on the local commercial food markets to meet its basic food requirements.

4.3.2 Infrastructure of the village

Tarred roads make it easily accessible from Pretoria and Johannesburg as well as to the nearby big townships of Soshanguve, Mabopane and Hammanskraal. The village can be reached within one hour from the city centre of Pretoria by car, taxi or bus.

The village has two primary schools, one middle school and one high school. Medical services are inadequate and the only clinic is situated on the outskirts of the village. Various church groups are active in the community and the church seems to play a central role in the social organisation of this community. The buildings of eight Christian church denominations are found in the residential areas of the village.

Basic food commodities can be obtained from the village shops. Two general dealers, a butchery, a bakery, greengrocer and filling station with a convenience store are centrally situated where basic food items can be purchased. A number of small *spaza* shops and street vendors are scattered throughout the village. A *spaza* shop is usually found in a suburb, sometimes in the yard of the owner (it could even be part of the house), and can be described as a small-scale “convenience store” where a limited number of basic food items

such as bread, coffee, tea, sugar, condiments, toiletries and cleaning aids are sold. Most of the *spaza* shops sell fresh brown bread that is delivered on a daily basis early in the morning from big bakeries in Pretoria. The informal street vendors, on the other hand, engage in informal trade, offering a wide range of products, anything from electrical appliances to jewellery, sweets, potato crisps, fruit, vegetables or meat.

FIGURE 4.2: SPAZA SHOP

Most residents live in brick houses in the residential areas of the village. With the exception of one or two streets, most of the roads in the residential areas are not tarred. Although water is supplied to most of the residential areas, there are some areas without piped water. Running water is accessible to most households in the form of an outside tap in the yard. In the areas without piped water, water has to be fetched from communal taps by some, while others purchase it from those who have boreholes. In some instances, this is sold to those not having access to piped water at 50c per 25 litres of water. Sanitation facilities were recently installed or upgraded, and all the houses in the residential areas have outside toilets.

The stands are of medium size and some residents even keep livestock such as pigs, goats and fowls in their yards. Although vegetable gardening is not possible due to the limited supply of water, those who have boreholes occasionally engage in vegetable gardening. Those who own cattle keep them outside the village in camps.

Electricity has been available in the residential areas since 1994. Access to electricity led to the subsequent ownership of electrical household appliances such as stoves, refrigerators and deep freezers. Those who do not own refrigerators and deep freezers often store some

of their perishable commodities at the homes of relatives or neighbours who have refrigeration facilities. However, in the areas where electricity is not available, or in cases where it is not affordable, some people still collect firewood from outside the village to serve as fuel for food preparation. Alternatively, if they can afford paraffin, a paraffin primus stove is used for cooking. Technological advancement, made possible because of the availability of electricity, and specifically the acquisition of refrigerators and electric stoves, has considerably facilitated food provision and changed culinary practices in the village.

FIGURE 4.3: TYPICAL STREET SCENE

4.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

To fully understand the behaviour of people, their cultural background has to be known, understood and appreciated. Not only knowledge of their ethnicity, but other aspects that relate to their culture, such as, the ideological and social organisational components, too are significant. A sketch of the cultural profile of the residents of Mmotla community is given together with a brief description of specific aspects that relate to ideology and the social organisation as observed in the community.

4.4.1 Cultural profile of the Mmotla community

As a direct result of the Groups Areas Act of 1950 and other *apartheid* legislation, large numbers of black people were removed from the Pretoria-Witwatersrand area, during 1953 and 1968, and resettled in towns northwest of Pretoria such as Mabopane, Garankuwa, Temba and Hammanskraal. Initially many non-Tswana people were located in what was then known as Mabopane-East. Mabopane-East was later to become Soshanguve. The name

Soshanguve was derived from the acronym to indicate the main residential groups in that area (*So*tho, *Sha*ngaan, *Ngu*ni and *Ve*nda people). Different cultural groups were thus forced to take up residence in the towns and larger residential areas neighbouring Mmotla (Reimold *et al*., 1999:114-116).

According to Reimold *et al*. (1999: 115) Mmotla was established in the early 1960s to accommodate evicted farm workers and other unwanted people from nearby urban areas. This serves as an explanation as to why, apart from the Tswana group, various other ethnic groups such as the Ndebele, North Sotho, Swazi and Tsonga-Shangaan still reside in Mmotla.

The different cultural and ethnic groups in this community, similar to other black South African communities in urban and semi-urban areas, have lived and worked together and have intermarried, a phenomenon also mentioned in the work of Schapera (1962:380-387). In this way they came into close contact with each other as well as with the white population and Western culture. As people observed and attended each other's celebrations, through the process of acculturation, adoption and assimilation of traditional traditions and customs[16] gradually took place. Although certain customs and traditions of the different cultural groups represented in this study are still observed, particularly those related to initiation and marriage, others have fallen into disuse or have been adapted to fit in with the lifestyle of the modern black educated person to which many aspire or often imitate.

As pointed out, the modern urbanised black South African's customs can be described as neither those of the traditional black ethnic groups nor those of the Westerner. Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:400) aptly summarise this situation in the following statement: "What African people want is the freedom to live partially according to the Eurocentric culture, while at the same time retaining their own Afro-centric cultures and speaking their own languages."

4.4.2 Ideology

Apart from values, norms and knowledge, ideology includes, amongst other traits, the particular religious beliefs, world views and ethic principles of a group. A brief description of the study group's religious beliefs and world views is given as background to understanding specific aspects of their food practices.

[16] This is even noticed in the language usage of the various cultural groups in Mmotla.The different groups seemed to freely borrow and use words and terminology from each other's language with the result that linguistic purity is not observed anymore. This is for example noticed in the names of dishes and food items, where the Sotho, Tswana and isiNdebele names were often interchanged.

4.4.2.1 Christianity

Most of the participants indicated that they are Christians and members of church groups represented in the community. The influence of the church on the daily lives and food practices of some of the participants often emerged during the focus groups and individual interviews. Some churches seemed to dictate the extent to which their members could follow certain traditions and customs. This was also the case when the early missionaries started to engage in mission work in the rural areas of South Africa (Pauw, 1974:423). Comaroff (1996:21-26), for example, described their role in changing the Tswana people's traditional clothing practices to that of a Western-oriented style. Trollip (1991:110-111) also reported on the role of the church in influencing, and thus expecting, their members to abandon their traditional mode of dress. One may therefore assume that the same happened with food practices. The influence of the church on discarding practices such as initiation, traditional marriage and funeral rites are well documented (Jansen Van Rensburg, 1987:85; Pauw, 1974:431). Some church groups prescribed to their members in which customs they were allowed to engage. The following quotations, coming directly from the participants, illustrate the point.

"At the first church we got [belonged to], *they did not allow you, if you belonged to the church, to go again to those things* [initiation]".

"It [initiation] *is still the same, some they follow it but some have changed and they don't follow them any more, because of modern churches".*

"… it [modern weddings] *mostly started through the white churches, Dutch* [Dutch Reformed] *Roman* [Roman Catholic] *and Lutheran Churches. … the churches said people must be married in church, so that is when they started to adopt it* [modern weddings]".

"*The ceremony is done a week after the funeral by some families depending on the church to which they belong".*

Some churches also forbid their members to participate in certain traditional food practices especially those associated with customs in which ancestral communication is involved. Members from these churches are, for example, not allowed to brew or drink traditional beer and some even prohibit consumption of any form of fermented food. Others do not allow their members to eat from the meat of a beast that was slaughtered for ancestral veneration, as is the case, for example, during certain initiation and wedding celebrations and funerals. This was explained as follows:

"… based on her church beliefs a cow [beast] *is no longer slaughtered but the meat is bought from the butcher to cook a stew for the funeral".*

"Ja, some of the churches advise people what they must eat or must not eat. M's church, the Christian Assembly, if they tell people not to eat something, they read from the Bible".

On the other hand, some churches seemed to allow these practices as they have incorporated ancestral veneration in their liturgy. In this regard Pauw, (1974:431) mentions the syncretism of certain African traditions with those of the Baptist and Pentecostalism beliefs and practices, as is the case in some of the Zionist type of churches who make exceptions to some food practice rules enforced by them in the case of ancestral veneration, as is illustrated in the following quotation:

"Pork is not eaten by the Zionists [ZCC] *and the Apostolics. Traditional beer is used and drunk by the Apostolics, but the ZCC can use traditional beer to communicate to the ancestors but they are not allowed to drink it".*

Apart from its influence on food practices, the church was also seen as enhancing the close relationship that members have with one another, and the supportive and sharing role in the joys and sorrows of each other's lives, that they fulfil. Some of the participants always mentioned that members of the church are invited to personal celebrations and they are then included as family and friends at these celebrations. Similar to the findings by Pauw (1974:426) and Dubb (1974:461, 467), the impression was given that the church members have in certain instances replaced the kinship group. The church also influences the manner in which certain occasions are celebrated. In some churches, the church members play a central role in specific ceremonies, for example, marking the end of the mourning period after a year of the death of a loved-one, the unveiling of the tombstone or a birthday celebration. This was indicated by comments such as:

"The church people will come and other people will also be invited, and they will come and they will bring presents. The church women will be responsible for taking off the black clothes, then they will give her new church clothes".

"The people are invited to this event and members of the church are also there. The night before the unveiling there will be a church service in the tent at the family's house. Several morutis and priests will lead the service through the night".

"There is the party where the church members are invited, this party can start at lunch time, in the afternoon or in the evenings at 8 pm. Friends, neighbours, family and church members are invited. The priest from the church will also be present and during the course of the celebrations a special prayer will be said for the child, and the child will be blessed. No liquor is served at the church celebration".

4.4.2.2 Ancestral veneration

Opposed to, but also side-by-side with Christianity, ancestral veneration is still practised by a large section of the community. Belief in ancestors and the importance of keeping the ancestors happy and satisfied by adhering to traditional customs and practices were often mentioned, as demonstrated in the following quotations:

"The traditional beer is prepared in some families to inform the ancestors that there is the other one coming to them as ancestor".

"You can also show the ancestors that you remember them by just taking the traditional beer – you pour [the traditional beer] *at that special place".*

"… each and every year they do this traditional beer for the ancestors, to show them they remember. They will do it at the special place".

"… this is the traditional prayer, everything they do, they must tell the ancestors everything. Maybe they bought a car, or a child is born, or you tell the ancestors about the deceased".

Some participants spontaneously admitted that they still follow these practices, while others who belonged to certain church groups were opposed to ancestral veneration and had abandoned these practices long ago. One of the older participants, aged 72 years, indicated that her parents were Christians and that when she was growing up her family did not engage in these practices. In some of the churches, such as the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC), the power of the ancestors and the importance of obeying their wishes are recognised and combined with the religious practices of the church. This is in accordance with the view of Pauw (1974:431,439) that traditional rituals are often combined with Christianity, and in other instances these could be maintained and practised as separate identities.

In every culture, ideology expresses the beliefs of the people and how they ought to behave or conduct themselves as members of a social group (Bryant *et al.,* 2003:89; Fieldhouse,

1995:30). It became clear that the traditional belief and value system was still adhered to by a large number of the participants. Traditional ideology continues to influence the lives of some. In most of these cases, certain traditional customs were faithfully practised. On the other hand, the influence of the church is also strong and the majority of Christian churches require their members to abandon or distance themselves from the traditional beliefs. Christianity and the traditional belief system sometimes seem to stand in contradiction to each other, and in other instances, they tend to operate in accord with each other.

4.4.3 Social organisation

Various social organisations or groups are active in the community such as the women's groups of the different churches, support groups and groups formed by members who belong to a specific burial society. All participants indicated that they belong to, or were involved in one or more of these associations or social groups.

The church, and specifically the women's groups of the different churches, seemed to play a pivotal role in the social organisation of this community and to fulfil an important social function. These groups usually meet once a week. The impression given was that to belong to a women's group, not only provides an opportunity for social interaction, but also brings prestige. Those who belonged to such a group were extremely proud of their membership. To identify to which church they belong, the members of many of these groups wear special *"church clothes*" with a uniform dress code, giving a sense of belonging and good standing, over and above mere group identification and allegiance as a respected member.

4.4.3.1 Support groups

Other important social associations come from the support groups. A support group is formed by a group of female friends, family and or neighbours. Hellmann (1962:411) and Dubb (1974: 466-467) point out that these groups play an important supportive and friendship role in the social lives of black females in South African communities. These women's groups render mutual support and companionship to their group members, in a comparable manner to kinship groups in traditional communities. Pauw (1974:426) and Dubb (1974:461,467) describe this as a replacement function for the loss of kinship relations due to delocalisation and urbanisation.

The participants explained that a support group could function on the same principle as a

stokvel[17]. However, the way it is structured and operates could differ according to the constitution or rules that were formulated when the group was formed. The support groups in this community appeared to be more than a *stokvel* with the supportive role being the most important and central function as their name, 'support group', implies. This view was endorsed during group discussions when they were asked to explain the support group system. One response was:

"Support groups, also called "thusanang", are meant to be giving hands when there is a occasion for members [function or celebration hosted by one of the members of the support group]*. It is only the group that has money and can assist in cooking and catering activities for women".*

It was suggested that a support group could also function as a *stokvel.* In most cases the group members decide how they would work and what would be expected from each member in terms of contributions such as money, ingredients for functions or celebrations, skill or labour in food preparation or the borrowing or supplying of equipment, utensils or crockery. They could, for example, decide that part of the monthly contributions would be set aside to buy items for individual members that they needed or wished to have. Items mentioned were household items, food preparation equipment and small utensils, crockery, cutlery and household linen such as blankets and tablecloths. These items could then be used when they assisted each other at functions and big celebrations. The following quotations clarify the role played by these support groups.

"Each member has to donate money every month. This money can then be used as agreed by the group when the group is formed. They agree what, when and how they are going to support".

"That money is going to be used for burial [funerals]*, weddings, parties - whatever the members of the group have agreed".*

"*Some groups will donate money, others will donate ingredients, others will donate their effort* [skills and labour]".

[17] A *stokvel* according to Du Plessis, Rousseau and Blem (1990:155) "is a means of saving or raising funds. Groups of people get together and pool their financial resources. On a rotating basis each member will benefit from the pool. For a small monthly contribution, a *stokvel* member will at some stage have access to the whole pool."

4.4.3.2 Burial societies

Burial societies could be regarded as formal organisations with the main objective of providing insurance for covering the cost of a funeral. A burial society also assists with funeral arrangements and helps with the catering for the funeral meal. According to Du Plessis *et al.* (1990:155) the membership scheme of a burial society is similar to that of a *stokvel*. Most people belong to a burial society and the importance of belonging to one was emphasised. The majority of burial societies function on the same principle - they all have a constitution and operate in conjunction with the owner of a mortuary. Some burial societies are organised and run by the community in liaison with the owner of the mortuary, or sometimes the owner of the mortuary takes the initiative to form a burial society. People can then join the burial society. They usually pay a monthly subscription fee. It was explained that it would be difficult to arrange a funeral without belonging to a burial society as a family might not have sufficient funds to meet the costs involved. Belonging to a burial society is convenient and saves money. When a member of the immediate family passes away, all one needs to do is to inform the burial society of the death and they then organise the funeral and all the related aspects attached to it.

The society would, for example, arrange for the corpse to be taken to the mortuary and also be responsible for the rest of the funeral procedures. In consultation with the bereaved family, a date for the funeral would be set. The marquee for the *tebello*[18] and all the equipment needed food preparation, such as the tables and chairs, the crockery and cutlery are all supplied by the society. A hearse and the car to transport the family to the cemetery are in most cases also provided. According to their constitution, the society would be actively involved in the purchase and preparation of the food for the funeral meal. In some instances the burial society appoints a group of women to buy the ingredients and organise the preparation of the food. Other societies give a sum of money to the bereaved family who would then decide how much money to spend on the food.

The socio-cultural environment represents the complex interrelationship and interactions that exist among individuals, their culture and society. It thus reflects the behaviour of its society as governed by culture. This applies to the peoples of Mmotla as well. Ideology and social organisation as components of culture are prominent in shaping cultural traditions. They guide, or sometimes even dictate, behaviour in a society or within a specific group, as could happen when either adhering to or abandoning of cultural traditions including the embedded food practices.

[18] The *tebello* is a memorial service and wake held for the deceased during the night before the burial the following morning.

4.5 ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

From the focus groups it was established that a large number of adults were unemployed and those who were employed either travel to Pretoria on a daily basis or other nearby areas, or live near their place of employment during the week and only return home over weekends. It is more often the employed male members of households who live away from home during the week although this is also the case with employed females. Similar to other studies (Walker & Charlton, 2001:39) the older females, mostly the grandmothers in the households, contribute substantially to the financial resources of the household using their old-age pension grants. These elderly females also fulfil the roles of child minders and household mangers in the three-generation households in which they usually live. In the households of their adult working children, in most cases, they are responsible for purchasing the food and sometimes even for its preparation. Some of the participants earned an income or supplemented their pension through the income-generating project mentioned in Chapter 3 (see 3.4.1.2).

4.6 ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES AND FOOD PRACTICES

Where people live has a direct influence on the food they consume (Kittler & Sucher, 2008:12; Bryant *et al*., 2003:11) particularly with regard to aspects such as the availability, accessibility and affordability of food, factors mainly determined by external environmental forces. In this community the physical (natural and man-made) environment has a direct effect on the availability and even the accessibility of food, whilst its affordability is partly due to forces associated with the economic and political spheres and to a lesser degree the socio-cultural environment.

Availability Availability seemed to play a major role in the type of food that could be gathered, cultivated or purchased which, in turn, had a direct influence on the food chosen for consumption. The limited availability of indigenous vegetables and grain products was often mentioned as a reason for not eating these as often as had been the traditional custom. The phrases below illustrate that the lack of water was a big obstacle and the main reason why these crops were not cultivated. The poor soil condition also contributes to the limited availability of indigenous vegetables.

"Then that thing with struggling with the water, because they saw there is no water here to plant the traditional foods".

However, when the rainfall was good, indigenous green leafy vegetables were in abundance in the veld and the gardens, and these would then be gathered in spring and summer, and the excess dried and stored for winter months.

[19] "*Yes you see there is a drought this year, I always make at my place here, my place is very small, but it has always made a lot of morogo".*

It was also mentioned that, when the circumstances are favourable, some people cultivate indigenous crops and these are sold to the community when available:

"… *they sell these things and we eat as in the olden days".*

At times, indigenous vegetables, especially legumes, are available from street vendors or at markets and sometimes these are bought in bulk from farms where they are still cultivated. The participants purchase these with great enthusiasm when they have the opportunity as illustrated below.

"O*ther people bring these things here, you can bring legumes here and we buy it. One, two, three, finish!"*

"Nowadays they buy these, there are some people who will go to the farm to buy in bulk and when they come here they sell to everyone".

The natural environment of the village severely hampers crop production largely due to the state of the soil, the semi-arid climate and lack of water. At the time of the study some households did not even have piped water so water had to be transported in large plastic containers on wheelbarrows from central water points or from neighbours who had boreholes. Moreover, in times of drought wild greens were also not readily available in the veld and could not be gathered. Therefore most of the participants said that they had to rely on what the local food markets had to offer, as illustrated in the following quote:

"The reason why there are more modern foods than in the olden days is because most of the traditional foods that they have eaten in the olden days are scarce".

It became clear that indigenous vegetables are still popular in this community, as is the case in the rest of South Africa and the African continent (Jansen van Rensburg, Van Averbeke,

[19] * Refers to Afrikaans quotations directly translated into English. The interpreter translated quotations in the third person from Tswana to English during the focus groups.

Slabbert, Faber, Van Jaarsveld, Van Heerden, Wenhold & Oelofse, 2007; Weinberger & Swai, 2006; Gockowski *et al.,* 2003; Ogoye-Ndegwa & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003). The restricted consumption of some of these items is mainly due to their unavailability. When people came to live in Mmotla they became dependent on what the stores in the area had to offer. They therefore had no option but to adapt their diet and to include the *"modern food items*" that are available in the local stores.

Accessibility Although the basic food commodities were obtainable through these shops and vendors, they were expensive in comparison with the prices asked by shops in Pretoria and the nearby big centre of Mabopane. Some of the participants indicated that they had the means to travel by taxi or with their own transport to purchase some of the non-perishable foods in bulk on a monthly basis at hypermarkets and big supermarkets in either Pretoria or Mabopane. The only items purchased locally were the heavy items such as bags of flour, maize-meal and sugar, and perishable items such as fresh meat, fruit and vegetables. However, those who were not able to travel to the larger shopping centres, had no option but rely solely on the more expensive items offered by the local shops and vendors. D'Haese and Van Huylenbroeck (2005), in their study on the changing expenditure patterns in the Transkei, reported a similar tendency of increased purchasing at supermarkets.

Affordability Another important theme that emerged from the discussions was money and the high food prices. Available money not only determined the kinds of foods that could be bought but also the frequency of purchase. This largely accounted for the fact that the current food pattern on weekend days differed from that of weekdays. During the week, for example, meat was not eaten on a daily basis with the participants indicating that they ate it at the most two to three times a week, because it was too expensive to eat everyday. The less expensive cuts of meat and more often offal products of chicken and beef (that is, of course, reasonably priced), were thus the main items of choice. Crous and Borchardt (1984) and Ladzani *et al.* (1992) report similar trends with regard to meat consumption. Another reason why more bread-based meals were consumed was related to the affordability of relishes. Food prices determined what was eaten with the stiff maize-meal porridge. Bread was often consumed as a meal at lunch because no relish was needed or less expensive accompaniments could be served with it than would be the case when stiff maize-meal porridge was prepared. An elderly informant explained this as follows:

"As now when the things go up [in price] *and become a little bit expensive, we don't have any more money to buy something to eat with the porridge in the morning or in the day* [lunch] *and again in the evening. Then we start to eat bread in the morning and during the day* [lunch]*, and then in the evening we will eat a full meal".*

The reason for the different food and meal patterns over weekends was attributed to the fact that more money was available to spend on food purchases over weekends as most labourers were paid weekly on Fridays.

4.7 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

What people eat is primarily determined by where they live, which implies that the external environments, as part of the context in which food practices take place, have to be taken into account. In this chapter, the external environments of the participants were described to contextualise their food practices. In the case of Mmotla, its geographic location is singularly significant in that, due to a lack of water and intermittent droughts in the area, crop cultivation for household use is severely restricted, with the result that the participants depend on retail outlets as a source of supply for their basic food needs.

Furthermore, to understand and appreciate their food-related behaviour, it was equally important to describe their socio-cultural environment. A noteworthy aspect regarding this environment is the multi-cultural composition of the village which has inevitably come about as a result of continuous first-hand intermingling of the different cultural groups. This, together with close contact with Western-oriented culture, through employment in neighbouring urban and industrial centres, has led to migration, urbanisation, modernisation and acculturation. Other aspects of significance in this environment relate to the religious beliefs of the participants and the nature of the community's social organisation.

The majority of the participants indicated that they were Christians and members of Christian churches. Apart from this, but often side-by-side, ancestral veneration continues to be practised by some. The influence of the church and ancestral veneration on the lives and food practices of some participants emerged as a strong force that either allowed or prohibited the adherence to certain traditions and customs. Some church groups forbid their members to participate in initiation practices, traditional marriage and funeral rites, and some even totally disallow certain traditional food practices such as the brewing or drinking of traditional beer, and eating from the meat of an animal slaughtered for ancestral veneration. On the other hand, ancestral veneration is still practised in the community and belief in ancestors and the importance of obeying and keeping them happy and satisfied, is an essential part of the lives of those who retain these traditional beliefs. Traditional ideology was seen to continue influencing the lives of some participants, those who devotedly follow certain traditional customs.

Both formal and informal organisations, such as the women's groups of the different churches and other support groups, are active in the community. These groups are a vital part of the social life of the participants, as they not only fulfil important supportive and friendship functions but, in many cases, also provide financial security. Membership to such group, depending on its constitution, can, for example, provide financial assistance when members have to host a big social event such as initiation and wedding celebrations or funerals. Apart from financial assistance, other group members also render their services in the form of help and food preparation skills to fellow members, and this enables them to host these big social events.

In the next chapter the everyday food practices of the participants are described.

CHAPTER 5

EVERYDAY FOOD PRACTICES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This second chapter on the findings of the study sets out to give a description of how the participants view and use food. This includes brief reference to the type of foods used in different contexts and serves as background to comprehending and appreciating the food practice characteristics of the study group. Information on everyday food practices includes weekday and weekend food practices, and emphasises the eating patterns (meal patterns and composition) of the participants in these contexts. Attention is also given to other aspects related to food practices such as the acquisition, preparation and storage of food. How these everyday food practices have evolved and changed over time and the factors that have contributed to this development, are explicated. The underlying reasons for and values attached to the contemporary food practices are then placed on record.

5.2 FOOD CATEGORIES

A simple dichotomy emerged during the focus group discussions as the participants spontaneously categorised food as *"traditional foods"* or *"modern foods"*. To the participants *'modern'* meant Western-oriented food that was not part of their accustomed food pattern before the 1960s, and should not be regarded as the period after the Industrial Revolution. This is the participants' perception of how they view, understand and give meaning to foods other than what they regard as "*traditional foods"*.

5.2.1 Traditional foods

It emerged that "*traditional or olden days foods"*, were foods the older participants associated with as familiar to them when they were growing up. These foods were similar to those mentioned as part of traditional eating patterns and represent the food items regularly consumed by the black South African population up to the 1960s (Walker, 1966; Oudkerk, 1965; Ashton, 1939; Bryant, 1939; Osborn & Noriskin, 1937; Turner, 1909). The older participants revealed that, before they came to live in Mmotla, they were able to engage in

agricultural activities on a subsistence level and cultivated their own indigenous and other vegetables, and to a lesser extent, some grain products such as maize and sorghum. They had limited access to commercial products and therefore the range was restricted as was the frequency and quantity of consumption, as the information given in Table 5.1 suggests,.

As described in Chapter 3 (see 3.4.2.4) the South African Sugar Association's nutrition education flash cards as well as pictures of indigenous vegetables were used to identify the food items and dishes prepared from the different items on the cards and pictures. These were then grouped as either "*traditional foods*" or *"modern foods*". In Table 5.1 the food items and associated dishes that were regarded as *"traditional foods"* are listed.

Table 5.1 is supplemented by Addendum C containing the recipes of the traditional dishes that were still being prepared by the participants at the time of the study. To contextualise the use of the dishes, additional information such as the occasions when these dishes were prepared, is also included. The inclusion of the recipes and accompanying descriptions serves a threefold purpose. First, it gives a perspective of the cuisine and the cuisine heritage of the participants which is also regarded as an important aspect of food practices. Second, it portrays part of the material culture; and third, as explained by Leach and Inglis (2003:142), recipes supplied by community groups also reflect "aspects of identity and group formation, and the lives and values of women who are otherwise invisible". Except for a few publications, such as those by Coetzee (1982), Quin (1959) and Bryant (1939), no detailed publication or record of recipes of the South African black groups' traditional dishes could be found. However, two recently published recipe books, the one by Basemzansi (2004) and the other by Dora Sitole (1999), contain recipes of traditional dishes from various South and southern African groups but most of these could be better described as contemporary adaptations or versions of the traditional fare. Even though some of the items listed in Table 5.1 are, strictly speaking, not traditional foods, those participants who associate them with their own childhood food experiences, categorise them as traditional as they feel they come from a bygone era. This view is in accordance with Trichopoulo, Soukara and Vasilopoulou (2007) and other scholars (Ogoye-Ndegwa & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003) who regard traditional foods, as foods that have been an integral part of culture for some time, which is usually more than one generation. Quin (1959:59) mentions that some of the vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, beetroot and carrots, were already becoming popular with some of the participants in the study he conducted in the late 1950s. This offers an explanation why these vegetables and other food items were categorised as traditional by some.

TABLE 5.1: TRADITIONAL FOODS AND DISHES

*See photographs and recipes in Addendum C

FOOD GROUP	TRADITIONAL FOODS/ DISHES	DESCRIPTION AND USE
Cultivated grains		
Maize (*Zea mays*) **Maize fresh**	*Lephotlho**	Cooked fresh green maize on the cob / Fresh green mealies Fresh just-ripe maize on the cob boiled in salted water Popular as snack also roasted after cooked
Dried maize kernels	*Dikgobe ** *Lekokoro ** *Umphohlo / Inkobe**	Dried whole maize kernels boiled in salted water
	*Imbasha**	Cooked dried maize kernels roasted after cooking
	Samp * *Stampa / Setampa*	Dried, whole or coarsely broken maize kernels. Boiled in salted water
	Xibaswa (Tsonga dish)*	Prepared from soaked, ground dried maize kernels (samp). Boiled in salted water. The consistency of the dish resembles a soft porridge
Maize meal porridges	*Bogobe / Umratha**	Stiff porridge. Usually served for lunch and/or supper Maize-meal boiled in water. Ratio water to meal 1:2 (Coetzee, 1982:133)
	*Puthu / Iphuthu **	Stiff crumbly porridge. Favourite of the Nguni people, served with *amasi.** Ratio water to meal. 1-2:4 (Coetzee, 1982:134)
	*Mdogo / Motogo / Umdoko **	Soft porridge prepared with water as liquid. Usually served for breakfast Ratio water to meal 3-6:1 (Coetzee, 1982:132)
	*Ting **	Soft fermented maize-meal porridge Ratio water to maize-meal 4:1(Coetzee, 1982:140)
	*Isidudu **	Soft maize-meal porridge prepared from sour / fermented water obtained during the beer-making process. Often served as breakfast food (Coetzee, 1982:142). According to McAllister (2003) this was often given as reward to those who helped with the preparation of the beer
	*Mageu**	Non-alcoholic beverage drunk during the day. Prepared from very thin maize-meal porridge fermented for up to 24 hours (Coetzee, 1982:172)
Sorghum (*Sorghum vulgarea*) **Sorghum grains**	Boiled sorghum grains	Traditional staple food served at main meal of the day (Coetzee, 1982:149)
Sorghum beer	*Tlhotlha**	Traditional strong fermented beer. Prepared from malted sorghum and maize-meal
	*Thabalala / Bojalwajwa**	Traditional strong fermented beer. Prepared from malted sorghum
Sorghum meal porridges	*Mabele*	Both thick and thin porridges were traditionally prepared with sorghum meal. Sorghum porridges have an attractive brownish colour (Coetzee, 1982:136). See *Bohobe ba mabele**, *Ting ya mabele** and *Umtsikitlane**
	*Bohobe ba mabele**	Thick sorghum meal porridge
	*Ting ya mabele**	Soft fermented sorghum meal porridge. Coetzee (1982:136) refers to this as a Tswana dish
	*Umtsikitlana / Ingqwangqwa** (Ndebele*), Tlhowa (Pedi)*	Sour porridge prepared from sorghum meal and whey as liquid
Legumes		The two most common legumes used were the *njugo* bean and cowpeas. A variety of dishes prepared from these legumes formed part of the traditional diet (Coetzee, 1982:158; Bryant, 1967:273; Quin, 1959:44,47) and these were often prepared by combining them with cereals to form a number of interesting dishes
Njugo beans (*Vigna subterranea*)	*Ditloo*	Also known as the Bambara nut
	Ditloo marapo	Cooked dried *njugo* beans boiled in water. Salt added to taste (Quin, 1959:44)
	*Irhayi**	Cooked dried bean and maize kernels. According to Coetzee (1982:158), the proportions of maize and beans depended on the occasion
	*Sekgotho**	*Ditloo* and *mabele* (sorghum meal) porridge Similar description given by (Coetzee 1982;160; Quin 1959:47)

TABLE 5.1: TRADITIONAL FOODS AND DISHES – *continued*

FOOD GROUP	TRADITIONAL FOODS/ DISHES	DESCRIPTION AND USE
Cowpeas *(Vigna unguiculata)*	*Dinawa* *Umkhupha** (isiNdebele*)* *Isishwala* (Swazi)	Cowpeas are relatively scarce and commercial dried legumes such as sugar beans are often used as a substitute *Dinawa* cooked to a soft pulp. Maize-meal is added to form a thick porridge-like dish with a firm consistency
Peanuts *(Arachis hypogea)*	*Tokomane*	As ingredient in dishes or as flavouring. See *xigugu**, *tihove** , *timbabe** and *morogo**
	*Xigugu** (Tsonga*)*	Roasted peanut and maize-meal finely sifted. A similar description is given by Coetzee (1982:164)
	*Timbabe** (Swazi)	Roasted peanuts and maize-meal grinded together and flavoured with salt
	*Tihove**	Cooked samp, *njugo* beans and/or cowpeas mixed with cooked peanuts
Cultivated indigenous and other vegetables **Wild melon** *(Citrillus lanatis)*	*Lerotse* *Kgodu*	Cooked as such in salted water (Quin, 1959:52) Melon boiled in water, maize-meal added and flavoured with salt and sugar Basemzansi (2004:63)
Gourd	*Maraka**	Boiled in water with skin on. Served with milk. According to Quin (1959:54), the pear shaped fruit with a warted outer skin is used as vegetable by the Pedi
Pumpkin *(Cucurbita pepo)*		The hard-shelled pumpkin was used extensively by all groups in Africa (Quin, 1959:55). Every part of the pumpkin plant is used. The flowers, young tender leaves, tendrils and pumpkin fruits are cooked together to form a favourite relish (Coetzee, 1982:154-156; Quin, 1959:55 A popular way to prepare pumpkin is to remove only the inner parts and seeds, then cut it into large slices and cooked with the peel on. The pumpkin slices are then served whole (Coetzee, 1982:155).Pumpkin is peeled when prepared with cereal meals. See *isijeza* *and s*emphemphe**
	Isijeza / Semphemphe - pumpkin *mdogo**	Soft pumpkin and maize meal porridge. Used during the first few days of the *ingoma* and *iqude*
	*Tshopi ra makwembe**	Soft pumpkin and maize meal porridge
	*Dithotse**	Roasted pumpkin seeds. Popular snack, also used as relish (Coetzee, 1982:156)
Wild indigenous leafy vegetables	*Morogo / Moroho* *Moroho imbuya** *Moroho thepe** *Moroho mbixama** *Moroho mbolowa**	Collective name for indigenous green leafy vegetables Young tender leaves are used as an ingredient in relishes. Leaves of specific indigenous plants and indigenous legumes, either fresh or dried, are cooked by boiling them in water. Salt and other flavourings are often added During spring and summer the abundant leaves are sun-dried and stored for later use
	Isijabane	Maize-meal is sometimes added to the *moroho* (Coetzee, 1982:153)
Other vegetables Tomato Onion Potato Cabbage Spinach (Swiss chard) Sweet potato		Strictly these were not part of the traditional eating pattern (Quin, 1959:59). It seems as if they have been introduced gradually over the past century. Tomatoes, onions and potatoes are nowadays often added in the preparation of some of the traditional relishes
Fruit Apricot Apple Orange Naartjie Peach		Enjoyed as fresh fruit between meals as snack

TABLE 5.1: TRADITIONAL FOODS AND DISHES – *continued*

FOOD GROUP	TRADITIONAL FOODS/ DISHES	DESCRIPTION AND USE
Meat **Beef** *Bos Taurus*		Traditionally the whole carcass of the animal was used. This includes the stomach, intestines, head and feet. Cattle were only slaughtered for festivities and all the meat was usually eaten on such occasions (Coetzee, 1982:165) The general cooking method was by boiling the meat in water with limited salt, if any, added as flavouring. Roasting was also a popular cooking method
	*Umqwebu**	Dried meat. Meat was preserved by sun-drying strips of meat
	*Seswayi**	Meat relish prepared from cooked, finely ground meat flavoured with peanuts
	*Nyama shikaya**	Traditional boiled meat, served at home
	Braised brisket	Traditional braised meat dish
	*Idombolo Mathambo**	Dumplings and meat bones. Dumplings prepared from flour steamed on boiled shin (soup meat) bones
	*Mogodu **	Boiled ox tripe. Prepared on weekdays
Mutton		Whole carcass used as meat including intestines, head and feet Slaughtered for festivities
Cevon	*Pudi*	Whole carcass used as meat including intestines, head and feet Sacrificial animal slaughtered for special occasions
Chicken		Whole carcass used as meat including giblets, intestines, head and feet
Caterpillars	*Masonja**	Dried whole, rehydrated mopani worms are boiled in water and flavoured with ground peanuts
Milk and products Fresh milk		Served with soft porridge at breakfast. Used in tea and coffee
	*Amasi**	Sour milk. Curds used as relish with *phutu** or as such. Whey can be used to prepare dishes such as *umtsikitlana**
Butter		Used in food preparation when available
Breads	*Dombolo**	Steamed bread. Bread dough steamed in container or plastic bag in a pot of water. Popular everyday dish and on special occasions
	*Isiphaphathi**	Fried flat bread
	*Borotho**	Pot bread or home-baked bread
	*#Amaskons**	Home-baked scones. See baked products Table 5.2
	#Vetkoek*	See baked products Table 5.2
Purchased / commercial items # Cake flour # Bread flour # Sugar # Salt # Yeast # Jam # Syrup # Tea / coffee # Tinned fish # Dried legumes e.g. sugar beans, butter beans		

Items regarded as traditional by some of the informants as these items have been part of their eating patterns since childhood.

5.2.2 Modern foods

Modern foods, on the other hand, are foods and dishes associated with a Western-oriented eating pattern, similar to the food items and dishes consumed by white South Africans. The food items identified as *"modern foods"* are given in Table 5.2

TABLE 5.2: MODERN FOODS AND ASSOCIATED DISHES

*See photographs and recipes in Addendum D

FOOD GROUP	FOOD ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND USE
Cereal, grain and pasta products	Corn flakes	As breakfast cereal
	Mealie rice*	This is regarded as a new addition to African food sources (Coetzee, 1982:129). Commercially available finely ground dried maize kernels the size of rice grains is cooked in salted water. Ratio mealie rice to water 1:2
	Samp*	Regarded by some as a modern dish as samp is now commercially processed and readily available. The whole or coarsely ground dried maize kernels are cooked in salted water. Ratio of samp to water 1:2
	Oats	Served as soft porridge for breakfast mostly over weekends
	Rice (white and brown)*	Popular starch dish. Served at main meal on Sundays or during the week and for special occasions
	Macaroni	Cooked as salad ingredient or in soups See macaroni salad*
	Spaghetti Tinned spaghetti in tomato sauce	Cooked as ingredient in soup and *Spikos** Ingredient in *Spikos**
	Popcorn	Popular snack eaten by school children
Meat, processed meat and texturised vegetable protein products	Minced meat	Savoury mince and as ingredient in meat-based relishes
	Vienna sausages	Ingredient in *Spikos**
	Russian sausage	Purchased from fast food outlets with French fries or b*ogobe*
	Boerewors	Popular South African sausage. A coarse, loose textured beef and pork sausage flavoured with spices such as coriander, cloves, nutmeg and all spice (Van Wyk & Barton, 2007:54; Smit & Fulton, 1983:47)
	French polony	As such or on bread. Ingredient in *Spatlho** and *Spikos**
	Corned beef tinned	Ingredient in gravy-type relishes
	Knorrox, Soya mince	Ingredient in gravy-type relishes. See gravy*
Offal products Chicken offal (feet, head, liver, intestines and giblets)	Chicken *Malana**	Chicken intestines. Served at lunch or for supper on weekdays
	*Maotwana**	Chicken feet. Popular dish served at lunch or supper on weekdays
	*Walkie talkies**	Chicken feet and heads. Popular dish served at lunch and supper on weekdays
Beef offal (head, lungs, liver, heart, spleen, intestines and stomach)	*Mogodu**	Boiled ox tripe. Popular dish at lunch or supper on weekdays
	*Mala mogodu**	Boiled small intestines. Popular dish at lunch or supper on weekdays
Fish	Frozen hake fillets	Fried fish in batter
	Tinned pilchards	Used as accompaniment to bread or as ingredient in fish cakes or salads. See macaroni salad*
	Fried fish and chips	Purchased at fast food outlets
Dairy products	Fresh milk	Tea, coffee, breakfast cereals and porridge
	Long-life milk (UHT)	As above or when travelling
	Condensed milk	Used in tea and coffee
	Powdered milk	Food preparation
	Butter	Ingredient in baking
	Cream	Food preparation and baking
	Cheese	As accompaniment to bread mostly over weekends
	Yoghurt	As snack food
	Yogisip	A popular commercial dairy beverage
	Dairy fruit beverages	Popular commercial beverages also for special occasions
	Ice cream	Dessert on Sundays and on special occasions
	Processed cheese	Used as bread spread

TABLE 5.2: MODERN FOODS AND ASSOCIATED DISHES – *continued*

FOOD GROUP	FOOD ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND USE
Vegetables	Beetroot	Popular vegetable and salad ingredient. Served at main meal on Sundays and on special occasions. See various beetroot recipes* and photos
	Cabbage	Popular ingredient in salads, relishes, stews and stir-fries. See coleslaw* and fried cabbage* recipes and photos*
	Carrots	Ingredient in salads, relishes and stews. See coleslaw*, green bean salad*, stew* and *chakalaka**
	Cucumber	Ingredient in mixed salad
	Green beans	Ingredient in stews, salads and relishes. See green bean salad*
	Green peas	Ingredient in salads, stews
	Green pepper	Ingredient in salads, relishes and stews. See chutney beetroot*, stew meat* and fried cabbage*
	Lettuce	Ingredient in mixed salad
	Tinned mixed vegetables	Ingredient in salads. See mixed vegetable salad*
	Onions	Ingredient in salads, relishes and stews
	Potatoes	Ingredient in salads, relishes and stews. Also popular as French fries and mashed potatoes. See potato salad*
	Pumpkin	Cooked as vegetable and ingredient in traditional porridges.
	Spinach	*Morogo* spinach. Substitute for indigenous green leafy vegetables. Ingredient in relishes and stir-fries
	Sweet corn, tinned	Ingredient in salads, stews and breads
	Tomatoes	Ingredient in salads, relishes and stews. Also sliced on bread
Legumes	Tinned beans (baked beans, butter beans)	Ingredient in salads and relishes. See three bean salad*
	Commercially dried sugar, kidney, butter beans	Ingredients in salads and relishes. Substitute for indigenous legumes in traditional dishes. See *umkhupha**
Fruit	Apples	Eaten as such
	Bananas	Eaten as such. Ingredient in baked products. See Banana bread*
	Figs	Eaten as such
	Granadilla	Eaten as such
	Grapes	Eaten as such
	Guava(fresh and tinned)	Eaten as such or tinned as popular dessert
	Lemon	Eaten as such. Ingredient in food preparation
	Naartjie (Mandarin)	Eaten as such
	Oranges	Eaten as such
	Paw-paw	Eaten as such
	Peaches (fresh and tinned)	Eaten fresh or tinned as popular dessert
	Pears (fresh and tinned)	Eaten fresh or tinned as popular dessert
	Pineapple	Eaten as such. Ingredient in salads
	Quinces	Eaten as such
Baked products	Biscuits	Served on special occasions
	Bread, commercially baked	Popular menu item at breakfast and lunch. Served with spreads such as jam, peanut butter or relishes
	Bread, home-baked	Baked as special treat over weekends. See *borotho** and *dombola**
	Buns and bread rolls	Popular as snack and for lunch
	Cakes	Served on special occasions
	*Dikuku**	Baked biscuits. Served on special occasions
	*Dombola**	Steamed bread. Served on special occasions and over weekends or a special treat
	Pies	Popular as snack and for lunch
	Queen cakes*	Served on special occasions
	Scones*	Served on special occasions and over weekends or as a special treat
	*Vetkoek**	Deep fat fried bread dough. Served on special occasions and over weekends or as a special treat

TABLE 5.2: MODERN FOODS AND ASSOCIATED DISHES – *continued*

Desserts and sweets	Candies	Served on special occasions. Used as decoration for traditional dishes such as s*dudu** and *timbabe**
	Custard powder	Ingredient for custard sauce and baked products
	Custard sauce	Served with tinned fruit and /or jelly
	Chocolates	Served on special occasions
	Jelly powder	Ingredient to prepare jelly
Fats and oils	Salad/cooking oil	Used in food preparation
	Margarine (brick and tub)	Used as bread spread and in baking
	Mayonnaise	Ingredient in salads. See various salad recipes*
	Salad dressing	Ingredient in salads
	Holsum	Hydrogenated vegetable fat. Used in food preparation and baking
Flavourings	Aromat	Food flavouring
	Beef stock cubes	Flavouring in stews, relishes and meat dishes
	Salt, fine	Food flavouring
	Flavoured salts	Food flavouring
	Powdered instant soups	Flavouring in stews, relishes and meat dishes
	Curry powder	Flavouring in stews, relishes and meat dishes
	Spices	Food flavouring
Bread spreads	Achaar	Bread spread or relish with *bogobe**. Ingredient in *spatlho**
	Anchovette	Bread spread
	Cheese spread	Bread spread
	Jam	Bread spread
	Marmite	Bread spread
	Peanut butter	Bread spread and flavouring in some relishes. See spinach*
Other	Instant dried yeast	Ingredient in baking
	Commercial malt	Ingredient in traditional beer brewing
	Vanilla essence	Ingredient in baking
	Cream of tartar	Ingredient in baking
	Tartaric acid	Ingredient in baking
	Food colours	Ingredient in baking
	Baking powder	Ingredient in baking
Beverages	Tea	Popular beverage at breakfast and in-between meals
	Coffee	Beverage at breakfast and in-between meals
	Cordials	Beverage in-between meals over weekends and on special occasions
	Concentrated juice mixtures	Beverage in-between meals over weekends and on special occasions
	Soft fizzy drinks	Popular beverage in-between meals when affordable

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 portray how the participants categorised their foods and reflect how they understand the cultural meaning in terms of traditional and modern food. It is such an understanding that guides people in their decisions on food, because people base their decisions on what they know from their own cultural experience. Furthermore, it helps them to simplify and make sense of the world (Blake *et al.,* 2007; Anderson, 2005:113; Fieldhouse, 1995:37, 49). At the same time it also shows how values are assigned to food.

Elements of fusion[20] cuisine is reflected in some of the modern recipes (see Addendum D). For example, some recipes portray new ways in which traditional ingredients are used, while others indicate new and innovative ways in which the participants use and often substitute

[20] Fusion cuisine refers to a "style of cooking that combines the traditions of two or more regions, such as French and Chinese (in Cambodian cuisine, for example)" (Riely, 2003:118). This tends to happen when people become familiar with the ingredients and food preparation techniques from different parts of the world or other cultures and begin to combine them in their own culinary heritage.

commercially available ingredients in traditional recipes. Satia-Abouta *et al*. (2002) indicated similar findings in their study on Korean-Americans.

5.3 EATING PATTERNS

An eating pattern is the recurring practice in which individuals or groups of individuals choose, prepare and consume food from that which is available and acceptable for a specific meal or snack and how these activities are distributed through the day. Eating patterns therefore describe the composition or specific combination of foods that are used as a meal or snack, and include the pattern or distribution of the meals or snacks consumed by an individual or a group (Meiselman, 2008; Mäkelä, 2000:7-10; Oltersdorf *et al*., 1999; Diehl & Leitzman, 1985:8). To appreciate and understand the existing eating patterns of the study group and to contextualise them, a review of the traditional eating patterns (meal patterns and composition) of the black South African population and how they have tended to change over the last century, as gleaned from existing literature sources, is given.

The reason for relying on the available literature to provide this background is ascribed to the fact that the older participants were only able to recall the eating patterns which applied at the time when they were growing up. However, their accounts of the traditional eating patterns during the 1950s and 1960s correspond to the documentation consulted. During this time indications of the process of dietary acculturation was already evident (Walker, 1966; Quin, 1959).

5.3.1 Traditional eating patterns

The available literature on the eating patterns reveals that the meal patterns and the type of food consumed were very similar for all the different ethnic groups, although minor or subtle local traditional differences were noted. People lived on what the environment had to offer. The most important staple cereals were sorghum (*Andropogon sorghum*), together with millet (*Pennissetum spicatum*) and later maize (*Zea mays*). Sugar cane (*Sorghum vulgarus)*, peas, beans and groundnuts, sweet potatoes and different species of the cucurbit (melon and pumpkin) family were also cultivated. Although cattle, goats and sheep were kept, these animals were only slaughtered on ceremonial occasions and for ancestral veneration purposes. Cattle were considered a symbol of wealth and not a food resource. Meat was therefore not part of the daily diet (Coetzee, 1982:67-88; Bryant, 1939:2-3).

The general pattern followed by all the groups reported in publications up to 1939 was that two meals a day were the norm (Ashton, 1939; Bryant, 1939; Osborn & Noriskin, 1937;

Turner, 1909:6). The first meal was enjoyed late morning between 11:00 and 12:00, while the second meal of the day was served after sunset from 17:00 to 20:00. These meals consisted of the ground staple grain maize, prepared as a stiff porridge served with a relish or side-dish. Researchers are not certain when exactly maize became the principal staple food, but it can be assumed that it must have been after the early 1900s, by which time Turner (1909:6) was already mentioning it as an important staple grain. Other grain sources such as sorghum and millet were, however, still eaten extensively (Bryant, 1967:271-272; Schapera & Goodwin, 1962:131). The type of relish eaten with the stiff porridge was either milk (fresh or sour), or a vegetable relish or legume serving. The meal pattern and composition of these meals during the week and over weekends were similar.

The same meal pattern and composition seems to have continued up to the mid-1950s among most groups after which period changes were beginning to be reported (White, s.a.; Oudkerk, 1965; Walker, 1966). However, there was some evidence that the traditional pattern was still being followed (Leary, 1969; Mönnig, 1967:188-192; Quin, 1964; Bruwer, 1963:108-111). Reasons for the changes were given as industrialisation and urbanisation, together with increased contact with the Western-oriented ways through missionaries, in schools, through the employment of women as domestic workers in white households and the increased employment opportunities for males in the manufacturing industries in towns and cities (Houghton, 1974: 404-408; White, s.a.; Walker, 1966). The opening of stores in the African reserves was another influencing factor and led to the introduction of Western food items in these remote areas. In this regard, White (s.a.) observed that the Zulu people in the Valley of a Thousand Hills in KwaZulu-Natal opted for three meals a day and that food preparation methods also changed, as spices and more fat were now used in prepared dishes. Moreover, food items such as white flour, white bread, sugar, sweetened condensed milk, sweets, cordials, tea, biscuits, buns and cakes, curry powder and chillies were introduced and there was increased availability of machine ground maize products such as samp, mealie-rice and maize-meal (White, s.a.).

Walker (1966) observed similar trends and admitted that, although information on the dietary aspects of the black population was “relatively scanty” during this time period, some modifications to the traditional diet were noted. The modifications were partly attributed to climatic and agricultural conditions that were often unfavourable as a result of intermittent periods of drought, but were most of all due to increased employment and cash earnings that enabled the people in the reserves and rural areas to purchase Western-type food products. Those residing in urban areas had adapted to a partly Western diet and enjoyed three meals a day. With regard to the composition of these meals, it was reported that, although maize-meal was still very popular, bread had now become one of the major sources of energy in the

diet of the urban black person. An increased consumption of sugar, meat and milk was also noted. Meat was now included in at least one meal a day, if not more. In this comparison between rural and urban people's food consumption practice, Walker (1966) reported that the urban populations consumed more tea, coffee, soft drinks, fat and tinned foods than those in the rural areas.

The influence of urbanisation continued during the next four decades and became more prominent, as recorded in various studies that were done amongst the different ethnic groups. Oudkerk (1965), in a study on the dietary habits of urban black school children in Pretoria, also observed a Western eating pattern during the week, where the consumption of three meals a day was the norm with a different eating pattern over weekends. He recorded that on Saturdays fish and chips were popular for lunch, but on Sundays, some did not have breakfast but indulged in a lunch consisting of meat (usually beef), potatoes, samp or mealie-rice, accompanied by three or four vegetable dishes and a dessert of jelly and custard that was enjoyed. Oudkerk (1965) noted, as did Walker (1966), an increased consumption of milk, the inclusion of meat at least once a day and that brown bread and maize products as well as beverages such as tea and soft drinks were popular. The use of fats and oils in food preparation was indicated as low (Oudkerk, 1965). Manning *et al.* (1974) conducted a study in Guguletu near Cape Town and found similar tendencies with regard to the meal patterns and the kinds of food items included in meals.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the differences in the dietary pattern between the rural and the urban population groups were still noticeable – as reported in the studies by Lubbe (1971) and Crous and Borchardt (1982, 1984, 1986). In the studies of Lubbe (1971) and Crous and Borchardt (1986), it was observed that, in the rural Venda communities, the traditional pattern of two meals a day was still followed. The urban groups' food consumption patterns in the above studies by Lubbe (1971) and Crous and Borchardt (1984), could already be described as "semi-Western". Lubbe reported that two and three meals a day were consumed, while Crous and Borchardt (1984) found that three meals a day was the general norm in Atteridgeville near Pretoria for those who were employed, while those who stayed at home had two meals a day. In both these studies, it was stated that maize-meal was still the staple grain and that meat consumption was considerably higher in comparison to what had previously been the case in rural communities. Although a vegetable-based relish was still enjoyed daily, it now formed a minor part of the meal.

In other rural communities changes were also taking place largely due to the effect of broad environmental changes such as improved infrastructure and different socio-economic circumstances due to expanding employment opportunities in urban areas. The study by

Walker, Walker and Walker (1992) evaluating and comparing the consumption patterns of elderly black women in a community in the Magaliesburg region in the former Western Transvaal (now North West province) in 1969, and again 20 years later in 1989, is probably a good reflection of what was typically happening in other South African black communities. Unfortunately, only the type of food consumed was given in this study and no mention was made of the meal patterns. The diet consisted of maize products as staple grain, brown bread, vegetables and fruit in season, and legumes. Dairy produce was consumed only occasionally and meat was included once or twice a week mainly in the form of intestines, chicken and polony. In comparison to 20 years earlier, it was observed that the consumption of maize products had declined and that there was an increase in bread consumption due to the improved distribution of bread to rural areas and its convenience factor. An increase in fruit and vegetable consumption was noted with, however, the unfortunate decline in the consumption of wild greens and legumes. No reason was given for this decline. Also noted was the increased consumption of sugar and fat. However, the diet of the rural poor blacks seemed to vary little from day to day and everyone ate similar foods. The improved infrastructure and transport system probably contributed to the observed changes, as it became possible to shop more frequently in nearby rural towns.

During the 1990s, a number of studies reported on the dietary intake patterns of the black population in South Africa. Unfortunately, the majority of these studies did not give detailed information on the meal patterns and in most cases revealed only the overall impressions with regard to the consumption of certain food items. The trend of an increase in brown bread consumption, however, came strongly to the fore in a number of independent studies (Jooste, Langenhoven, Wolmarans & Benadè, 1994; Steyn, Badenhorst & Nel,1993; Ladzani, Steyn & Nel, 1992; Steyn, Wicht, Rossouw, Kotze & Laubscher,1990). The conclusion drawn by most researchers is that there was a move towards accepting the Western-oriented diet, characterised by an increased consumption of meat, refined cereal and fat (Labadarios *et al.,* 1996; Van Eeden & Gericke, 1996; Bourne *et al.,* 1994; Walker, 1992)

It is clear from the above review that major changes have taken place in the food practices of both the rural and urban black South Africans over the past century largely due to the adoption of Western-oriented food practices, and the trend continues. The influence of social structural changes associated with modernisation, urbanisation and migration is clearly apparent. In an overview of the risk factors related to non-communicable diseases, Bourne *et al.* (2002) confirm that the shift towards Western-oriented food practices among black South Africans has definitely gathered momentum the past half century.

It is concluded from the literature reviewed that, over the past hundred years, the black South African population group has moved from being producers of food to being mostly consumers today. This has resulted not only from changes in the natural environment, such as drought and other limitations to cultivating enough food for their own consumption, but is also mainly due to forced resettlement formalised under *apartheid* rule. In search of employment opportunities in industry, men migrated to large industrial areas, and in later years, large-scale urbanisation followed. The increased contact with the Western-oriented culture and modern technological developments, as well as increased exposure to commercial food products, has enhanced the process of acculturation and stimulated associated changes in food practices.

5.3.2 Contemporary eating patterns

The eating patterns of the participants as manifested at the beginning of the twenty-first century are referred to as contemporary. In juxtaposing the described traditional eating patterns with the eating patterns followed on weekdays and over weekends, the fluidity and ease of moving between of the eating patterns indicates that the patterns are not fixed. This fluidity and ease of moving between a traditional-oriented and a Western-oriented eating pattern seems to be context specific. The changeability between the two types of eating patterns also signifies their dynamic and evolving nature. A description of meal patterns and composition as followed by the Mmotla participants on weekdays and over weekends is given.

5.3.2.1 Weekday meal pattern and composition

The participants revealed that on weekdays they ate three meals a day with in-between meal snacking. The following meal pattern and composition was indicated.

Breakfast This meal could be described as a bread-based meal for most of the participants. Tea and brown bread seemed to be popular. The brown bread was consumed as such or with either margarine, peanut butter, jam, egg or tomato-and-onion relish as spread or accompaniment. Alternatively, a soft porridge prepared from either maize-meal or sorghum meal was enjoyed. This was served with milk and/or sugar.

In-between meals Beverages such as tea, cordials, milk or water were often drunk, and fruit such as oranges and apples were also enjoyed as a snack.

Lunch Some participants indicated that they would again only have bread with an accompaniment, the same pattern as for breakfast. It was explained that most people who work, as well as some of those who stayed at home, had bread for lunch. However, some of those who work, as well as some of those who stayed at home, ate stiff maize-meal porridge with some kind of relish. The relish was either vegetable-based or protein-based. The following vegetable-based relishes were given as examples: *Morogo*[21] (prepared from indigenous or wild greens), spinach, cabbage and potatoes or tomato-and-onion relish or *achaar*[22]. Summer crops, when available, such as *maraka* (an indigenous kind of summer squash) and maize on the cob were also mentioned as items on the summer menu. The most popular protein-based relish was *maotwana* also known as "chicken runners" (a stew prepared from chicken feet). Other relishes prepared from indigenous beans were also mentioned, however, these were only used when available.

Supper Stiff maize-meal porridge, *bogobe,* with either a vegetable and or protein-based relish was served at supper, the main meal of the day. The vegetable-based relishes were similar to those prepared for lunch and this seemed to be the general practice. Offal products from either chicken or beef, mostly intestines, were frequently served on weekdays at this meal. It was reported that meat such as beef or chicken as well as rice or potatoes could be included, although this only happened occasionally on weekdays as this was usually served over weekends. Tea as a beverage was often enjoyed after supper.

5.3.2.2 Weekend meal pattern and composition

Weekends were described as times when families had the opportunity to be together and to relax. This was then celebrated by preparing special meals. Noticeable differences between the meals served on Saturdays and Sundays and those served on weekdays showed a larger variety and inclusion of some more expensive food items. Breakfasts on Saturdays were reported to be similar to those served during the week and were either a bread-based breakfast or a soft porridge prepared from either maize or sorghum meal or oats served with milk and/or sugar. The accompaniments with the bread, however, often included more expensive foods such as cheese and French polony. One participant said that she often baked scones for breakfast on Saturdays as more time was available.

[21] A terminology list containing a description of the indigenous terms used in each chapter is given at the end of each chapter for the convenience of the reader

[22] *Achaar* or Atjar is a hot pickle or relish probably introduced to this country by the Malays. It is made from sliced green fruit and/or vegetables preserved in vegetable oil with red hot chillies and other curry spices (Kittler & Sucher, 2008:215; Van Wyk & Barton, 2007:136; Smit & Fulton, 1983: 6).

Saturdays The kinds of foods served for other meals on Saturdays were different from those consumed on weekdays. The move seemed to be more towards Western-oriented, easy-to-prepare, convenient food items. Some participants said that lighter-type meals were prepared while others included more meat for lunch and/or supper. Others indicated that food that was easier to prepare, such as *pap*[23] and *boerewors*[24], rice and minced meat were regular choices and that often only two meals were prepared instead of three. Chips (French fries) were popular on Saturdays and served with fish or formed part of the popular S*patlho*, a combination of bread, cheese, French polony and *achaar*.

Sundays Sundays were regarded as very special days and this was also reflected in the meals that were served. A similar pattern as indicated for Saturdays and weekdays was followed for breakfast by those who ate breakfast. However, some participants said they did not eat breakfast because of church prescriptions. The elaborate Sunday midday meal could be described as the culinary highlight of the week and this meal received much attention. In most households, rice and or stiff maize-meal porridge was served with chicken or meat, generally beef. At least three different types of vegetables and/or salads were prepared to accompany these. A dessert of either jelly or tinned fruit served with custard sauce or ice cream was usually served. Cold drinks such as cordials were enjoyed after lunch. In some households enough food was prepared for both the midday and evening meals and the leftovers of the midday meal were then served for supper. In other cases a light meal of bread and tea was served.

The limited studies on the eating patterns of the black South African population groups indicated similar trends with regard to the difference in meal pattern and composition on weekdays and over weekends (Viljoen & Gericke, 2001; Walker & Charlton, 2001; Labadarios *et al*., 1996). At present the eating pattern common in the study area could be described as Western-oriented and resembles those reported in other South African studies (Bourne *et al*., 2002; Viljoen & Gericke, 2001; Van Eeden & Gericke, 1996; Bourne *et al.,* 1994).

Food intake studies conducted during the latter part of the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, offer evidence of signs that people's food consumption habits, in both rural and urban areas, are becoming markedly influenced by the affordability and availability of food. The socio-economic status of the family or household was identified as the key determinant of this development (Vorster *et al.,* 2005b; MacIntyre *et al.,* 2002). The eating patterns of the

[23] *Pap* - Afrikaans for stiff maize-meal porridge.
[24] *Boerewors* – A coarse, loose textured beef and pork sausage flavoured with spices such as coriander, cloves, nutmeg and all spice (Van Wyk & Barton, 2007:54; Smit & Fulton, 1983: 47).

Mmotla participants resembled those of the middle class and poor groups as reported by Vorster *et al*. (2005b) and MacIntyre *et al*. (2002).

The descriptions and reasons for the change in food practices as given by the participants, as compared to those reported in the literature reviewed, similarly implied that changes in the physical, economic and socio-cultural environments contributed to the adaptation of food practices. When asked to compare their current eating pattern with that followed when they were children, most of the participants reported that, as children, they also followed a three meal a day meal pattern. A few, however, mentioned that they did have the traditional two meals a day pattern similar to that described by Franz (1971), Quin (1964) and Lestrade (1962) when they were growing up.

Previously meal composition seems to have been far less complicated compared to that which was being practised at the time of collecting the data for this study. The general pattern appeared to be that, at all three meals, maize-meal porridge was consumed. The majority of the participants mentioned a breakfast that contained soft maize-meal porridge and fresh or sour milk. Stiff maize-meal porridge was served at lunch and supper with a relish. Relishes for lunch were either milk or *morogo*, while *morogo* or any other vegetable-based relish, and occasionally meat, was included for supper. The meal patterns and composition over weekends were the same as on weekdays. An elderly participant pertinently expressed this by stating: "… [there was] *no difference if it was Monday, Wednesday or Sunday".*

One of the characteristics of culture is that it involves change, therefore food practices that are regarded as part of culture, are also subject to change. The dynamic nature of food practices is often referred to in literature (Devine, 2005; Bryant *et al.,* 2003:12; Fieldhouse, 1995:2). Researchers attribute the continuous change to changing environments and lifestyles due to new information and technology (Bisogni *et al*., 2007; Anderson, 2005: 165-168; Devine, 2005; Furst *et al.,* 1996). As Fieldhouse (1995:2) explains, these then lead to increased availability, discovery or innovation of food types and also to the diffusion or borrowing of food habits from others. Some changes like those in eating patterns can even appear over a relative short period of time, such as one generation, according to Meiselman (2008).

5.4 ENVIRONMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO CONTEMPORARY FOOD PRACTICES

Participants were prompted to propose reasons why food practices had changed. Important themes that emerged from the transcripts with regard to the reported changes related to the immediate availability and accessibility of food. The availability and accessibility of food is in turn largely controlled by resources pertaining to the physical and economic environments (Bryant *et al*., 2003:11). These emerged as salient contributing factors to the food practices of the study group. Other themes related to the socio-cultural environment. Interaction with white people, convenience, health, social status and education emerged as contributing to the contemporary food practices. The identified themes are presented in accordance with the environmental level they relate to.

5.4.1 Physical environment

The natural environment of Mmotla as part of the physical environment was described in Chapter 4 (see 4.3.1) and the restrictions it posed on crop cultivation explained.

Food chosen for consumption depended, in the first instance, on what was **available** to gather, cultivate or purchase and this directly affected the choices associated with food consumption. The limited availability of indigenous vegetables and grain products were often mentioned as reasons for not consuming these as often as was the traditional custom. It was often stated that the lack of water was a big hurdle to overcome and the main reason why these crops were not cultivated. Statements such as the following were often made: *"Then that thing with struggling with the water, because they saw there is no water here to plant the traditional foods".* Other contributing factors were attributed to ecological factors such as the impoverished soil condition and dry climate. However, when the rainfall was good, indigenous green leafy vegetables would be abundant in the *veld* and the gardens and these would then be gathered in spring and summer and the excess dried and stored for use in the winter months.

When circumstances were favourable, some people cultivated indigenous crops and these would then become available for the community to purchase. At times, indigenous vegetables, especially legumes, were accessed from street vendors or at markets and sometimes these were bought in bulk from farms where they were still being grown. It was explained that these were bought with great enthusiasm when they had the opportunity.

"O*ther people bring these things here, you can bring legumes here and we buy it. One, two, three, finish!"*

"Nowadays they buy these, there are some people who will go to the farm to buy in bulk and when they come here they sell to everyone".

The infrastructure of Mmotla as part of the physical environment was presented in Chapter 4 (see 4.3.2) and the issue of electricity highlighted. In the course of the last decade access to electricity and the subsequent ownership of electrical household appliances appears to have brought about change in the food preparation and preservation methods of the study group. All households in the Mmotla village have access to electricity and the majority have electric stoves. Refrigerators, on the other hand, were owned by some and there were others who did not own one but then often stored some of their perishable commodities at the homes of relatives or neighbours who had refrigerators or deep freezers.

Increased access to electricity makes it possible for more households in previously disadvantaged South African communities to use electricity in food preparation. This tendency was also evident in the studies of both Holtz (1998) and Van Eeden and Gericke (1996). In recent research on young adults' assessment of major household appliances in an urban area, Kachale (2005) confirms this tendency as she found that 95% of the respondents in her investigation owned refrigerators and 98% electrical stoves. Makgopa (2005), who conducted a related study on major household appliances in a newly developed residential area of Temba, a township near Mmotla, reported that all the respondents in her study owned a refrigerator while only 55 % indicated that they owned a stove.

As is the case in other South African communities, food preparation methods used by these research participants have also changed from the traditional to a more modern Western–oriented way. They indicated that previously, before they had electricity, food was cooked on an open fire, coal stove or primus stove. It was explained that the lack of firewood and coal forced people to mainly rely on the paraffin primus as their only cooking appliance. Manning *et al*. (1974) also found that the Guguletu community in the Western Cape had to rely on the primus stove for cooking purposes. Thus restrictive cooking facilities were given as the reason why only two dishes could be prepared for lunch and supper.

When compared to the traditional cooking method of boiling meat and vegetable dishes, many other preparation methods became common practice for those who owned an electric stove. Meat was fried in oil or grilled in the oven and more spices were added. Baked products such as scones, queen cakes, and a small biscuit-type of cake called *"dikuku"* were standard items that were baked and served at all special events and celebrations.

Current food preservation methods fell into two categories. The indigenous and more traditional food items are still preserved according to the traditional methods, whereas the other more modern Western-type food items are prepared, preserved or stored by way of available modern technology.

Although indigenous vegetables were not always readily available due to drought or some other obstacle precluding them from being cultivated, they were still preserved by using the traditional method of sun-drying when they were in abundance. Other vegetables were stored in the refrigerator by those who had access to one. Meat was no longer preserved by drying as was the custom, but was frozen if they had large surplus quantities. However, this was seldom the case.

Ongoing changes taking place in the physical, natural and technological environment, and their impact on the availability and accessibility of food, together with their interconnectedness with the socio-cultural environment, have led to the features of current everyday food practices typical of the Mmotla community.

5.4.2 Economic environment

Another important theme that emerged from the discussions was money and high food prices. The amount of money available not only determined what foods could be purchased, but also the frequency of purchase, hence the fact that the current weekday food pattern differed from that of weekend days, as adjustments had to be made. During the week meat, for example, was not eaten on a daily basis. The participants intimated that they ate it at the most only two to three times a week, because it was too expensive to eat every day. In addition, the less expensive cuts of meat and more often offal products of chicken and beef (that are of course more reasonably priced) were the main items of choice. Various other independent studies reported similar trends with regard to meat consumption (Mbhenyane *et al., 2005.* Vorster *et al.,* 2005a; MacIntyre *et al*., 2002; Walker & Charlton, 2001). Another reason why more bread-based meals were the order of the day related to the affordability of relishes. Food prices determined what was eaten with the stiff maize-meal porridge. Bread was often consumed as a meal at lunch-time, because a relish was not needed or less expensive accompaniments could serve the same purpose as would be the case when stiff maize-meal porridge was prepared. This was explained as follows by one of the participants who happened to be a pensioner:

"As now when the things go up [in price] *and become a little bit expensive, we don't have any more money to buy something to eat with the porridge in the morning or in the day*

[lunch] *and again in the evening. Then we start to eat bread in the morning and during the day* [lunch] *and then in the evening we will eat a full meal".*

The reason given for different food and meal patterns over weekends was that more money was available. Most labourers were paid weekly, on Fridays, with the result that more money was available to spend on food purchases over weekends. The following expressions explained the general trend in most households:

"… *even Fridays are special because people get salary and they are happy because they got money and then they can buy anything they want to make them happy".*

"Over weekends people come from work and then they have pay. So that is why they buy more food".

The relationship between availability of money and food purchase is further illustrated in these quotations that refer to more money generally being spent on food over weekends:

"… *even Fridays are special because people get salary and they are happy because they got money and then they can buy anything they want to make them happy".*

"Over weekends people come from work and then they have pay. So that is why they buy more food".

Expensive items such as cheese and French polony were only eaten at breakfast when money was available and in most cases this would be over weekends. Others, who received a monthly pension, or in cases where the breadwinner(s) in the household earned a monthly salary, said that money was purposely set aside to buy extra and/or special food items as weekend treats. They gave the following explanation: "… *during the course of the week there is not enough money, … most of the people who are working, get paid on Fridays. And those who get paid monthly they don't want to waste it on food in the week".*

The number of dishes prepared for the Sunday midday meal was thus determined by the amount of money available to purchase a larger variety of food items. This was confirmed by a number of participants:

"Then on Sundays if I have money left I will buy all the vegetables".

"… *the number of dishes will depend on the available money".*

"… if money is scarce bogobe and morogo will be eaten for Sunday lunch".

Certain items were only prepared and served when they could afford them, such as meat, dessert and cooldrinks. The reason why most special occasions were celebrated over weekends, and why even children's birthday parties were postponed to weekends, was because more money was available to purchase extras and the special foods needed for such events. The trend noted by Manning *et al.* (1974) from information gathered for their study in Cape Town, that weekends were associated with feasts, also seemed to be the case in Mmotla.

Furthermore, it became clear in this study that high food prices severely limited food choice and consumption. Other South African researchers (Mbhenyane, Venter, Vorster & Steyn, 2005; Vorster *et al.,* 2005b; MacIntyre *et al.,* 2002) also mention that what people consume seems to be influenced by the socio-economic status of the household. In this regard, Van Eeden and Gericke (1996) felt strongly that the high cost of certain food items either restricted or even prohibited their consumption in some black South African communities. They concluded that non-consumption of certain food items was explained by their excessive cost, not necessarily because of disliking them or that only preferred items were bought.

5.4.3 Socio-cultural environment

Themes associated with the socio-cultural environment that emerged were contact with white people, convenience, the role of the church, cultural identity, health-related aspects, education and social interaction.

5.4.3.1 Interaction with white people

Another prominent contribution to the observed changes in food practices related to food preparation techniques and this was attributed to women who were employed as domestic workers in white households. In their employment situation they had the opportunity of close interaction with whites. Here they were taught and/or observed certain food preparation techniques and were also introduced to the food eaten by white people. They admitted that they learnt new ways of food preparation as domestic workers in the white households and then copied the food preparation techniques and even taught other relatives and friends the European way of food preparation. Preparation techniques for meat, vegetables, and salads were mentioned as well as the baking of cakes, scones and bread. In this regard, Walker (1992) also mentions the influence of the white employers on the eating habits of black domestic workers. One of the participants who frequently referred to her preparation of

Western-type of dishes admitted that: "… *she was working as a domestic* [worker]. *An old white lady taught her to cook* [the Western way]*".* This elderly lady could recall all the food preparation techniques she was taught while being employed as a domestic worker. She knew how to can fruit, cook jam and make butter and *boerewors*. She was taught how to bake and mentioned that she baked bread, scones and cakes.

Another 71-year-old informant who worked as a domestic worker for more than 35 years, explained how her employment experience influenced her food preparation in her own home.

"… *Changes started when she began working, because she saw how the white people prepared their food on Sundays and then when she was home for weekends once a month she bought some of the food they* [the whites] *were cooking and made it for her family".*

A younger informant, who had never been employed, was taught by her sister how to cook and serve certain dishes. She gave the following account of how she was introduced to the Western-oriented cuisine:

"*… but her sister learnt* [taught] *her a lot, because she used to work as a domestic* [worker]. *Then she learnt how to cook from her in the weekends when she came home. Then in the weekends she* [the sister] *will cook for them and serve the food at the table, and then she said the family must come and sit at the table, and the sister taught them how to use fork and knife".*

Consequently the preparation methods of indigenous vegetables have also been altered to suit the modern palate. In accord with what Bourne *et al.* (1994) and Manning *et al.* (1974) report, increased quantities of oil, spices, tomatoes and onions were also added to dishes prepared from indigenous vegetables. Peanut butter has replaced ground legumes as flavouring in some traditional dishes. The European-type of vegetables are often served raw or cold as vegetable salads with generous quantities of mayonnaise added to some of them (see Addendum D for examples of recipes).

5.4.3.2 Convenience

Certain items have been adopted as an integral part of the Mmotla community's diet for reasons of convenience and especially ready availability. Particularly notable is the high consumption of bread, a finding also reported on in other studies (MacIntyre *et al.,* 2002; Jooste *et al.,* 1994; Steyn *et al.,* 1993; Ladzani *et al.,* 1992). It was regarded an acceptable alternative to the staple grain porridge that was otherwise served for either breakfast or

lunch. It was quick and easy to prepare and especially when only a few members of a household were present because it was considered too much of an effort to prepare stiff maize-meal porridge for only a small number of household members. The participants stressed the importance that has been placed on convenience due to time constraints with remarks such as:

"Bread and eggs are easier to prepare and quicker as when you have to cook pap".

"If you have things to go with bread you need not make pap".

"… it is easier to prepare [serve] *bread".*

Certain traditional beverages such as *mageu* and ginger beer were not prepared as often or have been replaced by more convenient alternatives such as concentrated fruit drinks or cordials.

"… they change, they prepare things that are quick to prepare".

The preparation methods for meat and vegetables have also changed and it was explained that the traditional preparation method of boiling was too time consuming. Most of the participants therefore fried meat in oil or grilled it in the oven. The same applied to some vegetables where the boiling of vegetables was replaced by stir frying vegetables such as cabbage and spinach and serving others as salads.

5.4.3.3 Role of the church

Apart from the well-known prescriptions and proscriptions with regard to food that were imposed on members of certain religious groups, there were also some churches that strictly prohibited their members from consuming certain traditional foods if they wished to follow the Christian faith. This aspect was described in Chapter 4 (see 4.4.2). In this regard, Schapera and Goodwin (1962:360) as well as Pauw (1974:425), give the example of beer drinking that was strictly forbidden by some churches. The participants mentioned that the preparation and consumption specifically of fermented dishes seemed to be restricted, and gave this as the reason why some do not use traditional beer or sour porridge any more. This was explained as follows:

"There was this discussion at the church where some said that if they are not allowed to drink beer, and then they should also not be allowed to use ting [sour porridge]*".*

Some churches also influenced the meal pattern of their members on Sundays as:

"… they are not allowed to go to church when they eat breakfast because they are not allowed to eat before Holy Communion".

5.4.3.4 Health-related aspects

Some of the older participants pointed out that certain items were included or excluded from their diets for health reasons. Brown bread was an example cited as it was either in their diet if related to a specific illness they had or because it is regarded as being good for one's general health. The local clinic staff, for example, told them that it is healthier to eat brown bread. The following explanations were given for including or excluding specific food items in their diets:

"Most of the reasons are for the high blood [pressure] *where they are restricted to* [prohibited to consume] *most of the food such as sugar, white pap and fish oil".*

"… *so sometimes it is for health reasons that they eat bread".*

"Mabele [Sorghum] *is eaten regularly by some, because this is based on the person's health and own rituals".*

"Coffee is not good for people with high blood [pressure]*".*

On the other hand, certain traditional dishes and beverages were not consumed or prepared anymore by some of the older people because they no longer agreed with them health-wise. One informant told how she loved *mageu* but has stopped making it because it causes heartburn.

5.4.3.5 Education

The older participants were concerned that their children were no longer adhering to traditions. On the other hand, the younger adult participants revealed that they followed the more modern ways as a result of education and social aspirations.

"*Then the other thing we, … new* [younger] *generation, we are educated enough that is why we want to eat more food* [larger variety] *and fancy ones".*

"*The other thing is that our new* [younger] *generation learn a lot about food, there are also schools* [cooking schools] *that teach you how to prepare modern food".*

5.4.3.6 Social interaction

Similar to other cultures, certain foods were also associated with joyous and special occasions (Long, 2000:151; Charles & Kerr, 1988:17). Weekends were regarded as very special, because this was often the only time that a family or members of a household were together. This was emphasised by phrases such as: "*Sundays … it is special, because everybody is at home, that is why they cook this special food".* Over weekends friends and families visit each other and almost all celebrations were scheduled for a weekend. As already noted, more and special foods were purchased and prepared over the weekend than during the week.

The younger adults associated social prestige with following the modern Western-oriented food practices. It seemed to be important to go along with the professional people such as teachers, lawyers and health care workers in the community. This was expressed by explanations such as: *"The changes are because we are now mixed together* [rich and poor, educated and less educated] *so when the rich start to buy rice, vegetables, and the poor then come around, and they will start to buy the same stuff, even if they don't have money".*

Children then often dictated to their parents after they observed how other people behaved. One informant explained that her children told her that to sit on the floor during meal times was not appropriate anymore, and they told her *"… this is an olden days thing, you can't do it anymore".*

Another explained how the manner in which food was served changed because her children wanted it that way.

"Since her children grew up they see the other people, [how] *they serve food and then it changed. But when her husband was still there* [alive] *they used to dish up in two plates".*

The consequences of secondary socialising of the younger generation affect the behaviour of the older generation or parents as portrayed here. Bryant *et al*. (2003:194) also refer to the persuasive efforts of children in introducing new ideas from outside the family unit to the family.

The participants in the Mmotla study indicated that the Western-oriented way of serving all the menu items on one plate and using cutlery to eat the food was the practice followed in most households. This custom is quite different from the traditional way of serving the staple grain in one dish and the side dish or relish in another and eating with fingers. Household members now sit at a table during meals and eat together as a group. The traditional way of serving meals seems to have fallen away, although some still follow the old custom where different age and gender groups enjoy their meals together.

The older generation were seen as more conservative and still valued the traditional customs. They were, for example, trying to preserve the traditional ways of serving and eating meals where the different age and gender groups were served and ate in separate groups. To them the serving of meals to different age and gender groups was a sign of showing respect especially to the older males. The younger more educated group, however, do not want to follow this custom any longer as for them it is associated with uneducated people and low social status.

5.5 VALUES ATTACHED TO FOOD PRACTICES ON WEEKDAYS AND OVER WEEKENDS

The interpretation of contemporary food practices on weekdays and weekends revealed that certain values, norms and standards are attached to each of these two contexts.

5.5.1 Food practices on weekdays

The food practices reported for weekdays revealed a tendency that demonstrated that a less complicated eating pattern was being followed by most households. The weekday meal composition (as described under 5.3.2.1) seemed to offer limited variety and consisted of less expensive items. The impression was given that the type of food served on weekdays and its preparation, was not regarded as important. The food prepared was merely seen as sustenance and associated with being part of the routine during the course of the week although time constraints and convenience (see 5.4.3.2) were also relevant.

A general trend seemed to be to fall back on less expensive food items. Some of these do not require long or involved preparation methods such as relishes prepared from economical types of vegetables such as tomatoes, onions, cabbage, potatoes and spinach. Others consisted mostly of offal products such as *maotwana* (chicken feet stew), *mala mohodu* (small intestines), *chicken malana* (chicken intestines). These affordable and readily

available items were included due to the tight or limited food budget. The reason given for the bread-based lunch was that less expensive accompaniments were required as opposed to those needed for stiff maize-meal porridge. When stiff maize-meal porridge was served for lunch it required a relish as an accompaniment. These relishes prepared with vegetables or offal products, were more expensive and/or took much time and effort to prepare, especially when only a few household members were present for lunch, than was the case with those accompaniments that could be served with bread, such as *achaar*, peanut butter or jam. Thus, apart from being convenient to serve, bread is also more economical in the sense that the accompaniment or spreads are less expensive than some of the relishes that stiff maize-meal porridge would require.

The explanation for this pattern was that the limited food budget forced them to follow this frugal pattern and to consume lower priced food items to make ends meet. Apart from the limited choice, the general tendency was also to fall back on affordable more traditional-type food. Apart from being convenient and less expensive, most of these food items were described as more “traditional”, and included items that were not regarded as food items with a high prestige value. With the exception of maize-meal porridge, these were never mentioned as appropriate food to be served to guests or at celebrations. This association with a tight budget, or the weekly routine could provide an explanation why some of the food items consumed on weekdays were regarded as low prestige foods.

Most households experience time-constraints on weekdays due to the work and school schedules of the different household members. The type of food consumed was therefore adjusted to fit the limited food budget as well as the work and school commitments on weekdays. This explains why convenience was also an important consideration or determining factor in the choice and preparation of certain food items on weekdays.

Except for school for the children and the weekly meetings of the women’s groups at various churches, other social activities taking place outside the household and family circle on weekdays were limited. A large number of employed adults either worked in the nearby towns and returned home late in the evenings or only came home over weekends. Consequently not much attention was given to food and food preparation on weekdays.

5.5.2 Food practices over weekends

The majority of people did not work over weekends and so were then at home. In most households this was the only time that family and household members could be together and spend time with each other. Weekends were therefore regarded as special and were

associated with time for relaxation, being together and to visit family, friends and neighbours. This was given as the reason why a larger variety of dishes and more food was prepared and consumed over weekends. That special and often more expensive foods were consumed during weekends shows the important role that food plays during social interaction.
In contrast to weekdays, the eating patterns over weekends seemed to be closely associated with more money being available to spend on food. Most labourers were remunerated on a weekly basis and paid on Fridays with the result that in most households, money was available for food purchases over weekends. This practice of buying more expensive foods over weekends was also followed by those who earned a monthly salary and by pensioners, who indicated that they deliberately tried to put money aside for special food items over weekends. This clearly reflects the general attitude that this was the time for special mealtime treats respective of expense and a larger variety and more *"modern food"* was prepared and consumed.

The eating patterns on Saturdays were the most varied with some reporting that more Western-oriented fast food was eaten for the sake of convenience. Others used the opportunity to prepare more time-consuming traditional and/or modern dishes such as certain legume dishes, *dombola,* scones or other baked products since doing this was just not possible during the week. Yet there were those who chose to prepare quick and easy menus such as *boerewors* and *pap* or savoury mince or *spatlho* or offer popular menu items, associated with Saturdays, like fish and chips (French fries), either prepared or purchased ready-to-eat, and other fast foods. The meal pattern could also vary, and in some households it changed to two meals. The overall impression given was that the eating pattern on a Saturday was more relaxed and included special treats that were not part of everyday fare because of lack of money and or time.

Emphasis was placed on the Sunday midday meal, a time to offer food in a setting that could be associated with togetherness, joy, relaxation and celebration as explained by one of the participants: *" … and the other thing is, on Sundays it is special, because everybody is at home, this is why we cook this special food".* Family values are reflected here in the importance attached to the strengthening and maintaining of family ties over weekends. Similar findings were reported by Charles and Kerr (1988:18, 25) in their classic study on the food practices of British families. Sundays were associated with the "day of the family" and a great deal of trouble and effort was involved in the preparation of the Sunday midday meal, even in low-income families to celebrate the closeness of families. The most important reason given by the participants as to why this meal was so special, related to family members being together to share a meal, often the only one with all family members present. Bryant *et al*. (2003: 196-197) and Mäkelä (2000:11) also refer to the role of special meals in

"strengthening family ties" and being a symbol of the social unity a family represents. Another reason given was that money was available to purchase and serve out of the ordinary food.

In the Mmotla community, the Sunday midday meal and the preparation of modern food, have become the norm or standard for food provided for special occasions. The description of food suitable for a special celebration was always referred to as *"like on a Sunday"*. The type of food prepared for a Sunday has become the "ideal" food or "gold standard" to serve for special events. This also reflects the value attached to the Sunday midday meal.

The contrast in the food consumption patterns of weekdays and weekend days emphasised that, when there was limited social activity and food was only consumed in the intimate household circle, the less expensive and the more traditional type of food item was included more often. Examples of such dishes were relishes prepared from vegetables and offal products that are less expensive and had a lower prestige value. Modern food items were seen as having more prestige and were regarded as high status food and were then frequently reserved for weekends when most of the social interaction and activities took place.

5.6 CONCLUDING SUMMARY

Insight into how the participants viewed, used and valued food was given. People tend to categorise the objects in their daily lives in an attempt to make sense of their world. Likewise, the people of Mmotla categorised food as part of their material culture as dichotomised groups, traditional and modern. This dichotomy represented, to a large extent, not only how food was perceived and used, but also the two worlds with which they came into contact, and reflected the ease with which the participants moved or switched between these two different worlds.

Traditional foods were those foods that the older participants (older than 50 years of age), associated as the familiar foods that were readily available and consumed when they were growing up. These foods were similar to those reported on in the literature (Coetzee, 1982; Bryant, 1967; Oudkerk, 1965; Quin, 1959) as the most common food items consumed by the South African black population up to the 1960s.The food items regarded as modern food, on the other hand, were those associated with a Western-oriented food pattern. With the exception of the staple grains maize and sorghum, and the indigenous vegetables and legumes, all other foods were classified by the participants as modern food. In most

instances it seemed as if what they regarded as modern food had been introduced, accepted and assimilated into their food practices in the recent past (since the 1960s until the time of the study). This was partly ascribed to what was available and offered by local stores, but more specifically, this trend emerged as a direct result of the exposure of women who were employed as domestic workers in white households where they were introduced to these food items and learnt how to prepare them. When analysing the recipes of the modern dishes (see Addendum D) a strong resemblance to the white South African cuisine is noted. This cuisine, based on influences from the 17th century Dutch, French and Malayan and later the British cuisines is generally referred to as Western-oriented (Van Wyk & Barton, 2007:7; Coetzee, 1977:39-46).

Contemporary food practices, as indulged in on weekdays and over the weekend, were outlined, and the context in which the two food categories were used in the everyday eating patterns of the participants was highlighted, and shed further light on how food was viewed, used and valued. During weekdays the food pattern was governed by the food budget as well as work and school schedules. Although the participants have moved away from the traditional two meals a day pattern, and have adopted the pattern of three meals, the composition of these meals cannot be described as modern or Western-oriented. They seemed to resort to less expensive and more traditional-type of food items as part of their meal composition during weekdays. In comparison to earlier publications, breakfast and lunch have changed for the majority of the participants, and became less complicated bread-based meals instead of meals containing the staple food in the form of maize-meal porridge. This was mainly ascribed to the availability and affordability of suitable relishes to serve with the staple starch and/or time constraints. Supper, the main meal of the day continued to include stiff maize-meal porridge, although rice as alternative starch was occasionally prepared by some. This was served with either vegetable-based or meat-based relishes. Meat-based relishes were included, at most two to three times a week due to budgetary restrictions, therefore less expensive cuts and more often offal products of chicken or beef were used. Supper on weekdays thus resembled a more traditional type of main meal, similar to those reported on in the earlier literature (Crous & Borchardt, 1984; 1982; Oudkerk, 1965). In agreement with other studies (Anderson, 2005:204; Satia-Abouta *et al.*, 2002; Lee, Sobal & Frongillo, 1999a; Pan, Dixon, Himburg & Huffman, 1999) these findings similarly confirm that the nature of the main meal seemed to take longer to change in the process of acculturation of meal patterns, and that a Westernised pattern was more likely to be followed for breakfast and lunch.

The meal pattern and composition over weekends, in comparison, differed from those of weekdays, and appeared to have a more modern and contemporary slant, a feature ascribed

to the fact that more money was then available for most households to spend on food. On Saturdays more convenient and easy-to-prepare foods were included by most of the participants. Sundays were regarded as very special, and although breakfast on Sundays followed a similar pattern to Saturdays and weekdays, the main meal prepared for the midday meal reflected that it was the most important meal and culinary highlight of the week, a finding similar to that documented in studies done in other cultures (Charles & Kerr, 1988: 24-25; Goode, Theophano & Curtis, 1984:76). It received a great deal of attention and consisted mainly of Western or modern foods and resembled the typical cooked Sunday main meal of white South Africans.

Once again, the dynamic nature of food practices, attributable to the unwavering and continual interaction between the different environmental levels, was substantiated. The interrelatedness of, and the interaction between, the physical, economic and socio-cultural environments, and how constant changes in each of these impinged on the availability, accessibility and affordability of food, and how this shaped the food practices of the participants at the time of the study, stood out. Changes taking place in the socio-cultural environment and how they enhanced the development and alteration of the food practices within this community, specifically the effect of the ongoing, first-hand contact and interaction with a Western-oriented culture, education and Christianity, as well as the effects of urbanisation and modernisation, emerged. The underlying reasons, values and meanings attached to the varying food practices as followed on weekdays and weekends were interpreted and discussed in the context of these ongoing changes.

In the second section on the findings, the food practices at special occasions are presented. The traditional initiation rites and their celebration, as part of the traditional special occasions, follow in the next chapter.

TERMINOLOGY LIST

achaar	Hot pickle or relish probably introduced to this country by the Malays. It is prepared from sliced green fruit and/or vegetables, preserved in vegetable oil with red chillies and other curry spices
boerewors	A coarse loose textured beef and pork sausage flavoured with spices such as coriander, cloves, nutmeg and all spice
bogobe	Stiff maize-meal porridge
chicken malana	Chicken intestines
dikuku	Popular biscuit type of baked product. See Addendum D
idombolo	Steamed bread
mala mohodu	Intestines and tripe
maotwana	Chicken feet
maraka	Indigenous summer squash
morogo	Collective name for indigenous green leafy vegetables
pap	Afrikaans for stiff maize-meal porridge
spatlho	Popular bread item for lunch, consisting of ¼ loaf of brown bread, cheese, French polony and achaar. See Addendum D.