Women, home gardening and food sovereignty in the Limpopo Province, South Africa

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To Julie and Han – your desire to live will always be an inspiration

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List of abbreviations

ANC  African National Congress
CLRA (also CLaRA)  Communal Land Rights Act
CEDAW  Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CONTRALESa  Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
DLA  Department of Land Affairs
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FS  Food sovereignty
HFP  Homestead food production
IFAD  IFAD, the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development
KIT  Formely known as The Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen) the institute is nowadays called KIT
LRAD  Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
LVC  La Via Campesina
NTFP  Non-timber forest products
SSA  Sub-Saharan Africa
UvA  University of Amsterdam
VCC  Value-chain collaboration
WFP  World Food Programme

List of local terms

Atjar  Pickles, in this case made from mangoes in spiced oil
Boers  Afrikaner farmers
Bottle store  Bar, mostly only frequented by men
Butternut  Butternut squash (Dutch: flespompoen)
Chief  Local traditional leader who is often the one who gives people land
Delele  Indigenous green vegetable
Mielie meal  Maize meal used to make porridge
Muxe  Indigenous green vegetable
Naartjie  Mandarin
Pawpaw  Papaya
Piri piri  Red chilli peppers
Spaza  Small, informal shop alongside the road

Other terms

Extension officer  Agricultural advisor employed by the government
Smallholder  Someone who farms on a limited amount of land
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

Global food demand is expected to be doubled by 2050 (UN, 2011). It is therefore relevant to investigate different ways of ensuring access to food. Based on a neoliberal belief in the regulating power of the market, the main focus on food production has long been, and still primarily is, on commercial agriculture (Van der Ploeg, 2014; McMichael, 2014). However today a lot of scholars as well as NGOs debate that it is not the large farms that contribute most to food security of people in developing countries. On the contrary: in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia smallholders are estimated to account for 70 to 80 per cent of the food production (IFAD, 2013; Van der Ploeg, 2014; McMichael, 2014).

South Africa’s agricultural structure deviates from this general picture as a result of its settler’s legacy and by apartheid. Since the Natives’ Land Act in 1913 deprived black farmers of their land in favour of large-scale, highly commercial farms, the South African food supply chain is dominated by commercial agriculture (Groenmeyer, 2013; O’Laughlin et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2013). Although the democratic shift in 1994 promised to address the Land Question as well as reform the existing landownership structures, the situation is pretty much unchanged today. Moreover, globalisation and the neoliberal attitude of the democratic ANC government that rules since 1994 reinforced the dominance of large commercial farms in the agrarian structure (Aliber et al., 2013; O’Laughlin et al., 2013; Walker, 2005).

That the commercial agricultural orientation of South Africa did not deliver on its promises is underpinned by the fact that poverty and food insecurity is still prevalent in South Africa in all rural areas, and especially in the former homelands or Bantustans (O’Laughlin et al., 2013). The role of smallholders is still small and there is even a further decrease signalled in the cultivation of the arable land in the Bantustans as well as in the proportion of households that are in one way or the other engaged in farming (O’Laughlin et al., 2013).

One of the main answers to the dominant, neoliberal agricultural regime is the food sovereignty movement that has it roots in international agrarian movements like La Via Campesina (LVC). Food sovereignty seeks to combine access to good quality food and dietary diversity with autonomy over the production and marketing of food, thereby
keeping a close look on the sustainability regarding access as well as production processes (see Section 2.1) (Altieri, 2012; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Within this concept the role smallholders play, or can play, in the global food production is essential. This research focuses on a particular aspect of small agricultural activity, namely on home gardening.

The food sovereignty discussion has not paid much attention to home gardening as a strategy until now, although the process of home gardening largely fits into what Van der Ploeg (2010) considers a self-controlled resource base where farmers autonomously decide what, how and for what purpose they produce. There is some academic literature that indicates the potential of home gardening for food security and dietary diversity (Ogundiran et al., 2014; Paumgarten, 2005; Terry & Ryder, 2007), but much more research is needed to get to the bottom of the impact of what Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a, p. 142) refer to as ‘alternative agricultural development strategies’. Paumgarten et al. (2005) signal a lack of knowledge of the role home gardening plays in livelihood strategies. As a result, home gardening is not included in land reform policies or in agricultural development.

Home gardening might play an important role in food sovereignty strategies, especially in the former homelands that are, as mentioned above, facing more poverty and food insecurity, and were access to additional agricultural land is often problematic. Almost always in rural Africa there is at least a small piece of land available around the house. This study therefore looks into the contribution made by these home- or backyard gardens to the food sovereignty of the households. Moreover, the focus is on how women contribute to food sovereignty through home gardening, because it is mostly women who maintain the home garden, while at the same time little is known about the possible restrictions they face in doing so. The FAO (2011) estimates that in Sub-Saharan Africa women carry out half of the work done in food production. Most of the time, however, the women are not engaged in the formal production process, but contribute to food production by maintaining crops, trees or small livestock on plots of land around the homesteads; in this research viewed as home gardening. According to IFAD, the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development, (2008) the availability of land for women to grow their food crops has decreased steadily as a result of globalisation and free trade policies in favour of the cultivation of commercial cash crops. If home gardens contribute to food security and dietary diversity secure access to
land is important. Moreover women’s access to resources, decision-making power in labour patterns as well as decisions regarding the production and use of the harvest are then to be strengthened. Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a) are convinced that strengthening the position of women will have a positive influence on the health and nutritional situation of the household (see Chapter 2).

The undervaluation of home gardening might be related to the fact that home gardening is predominantly seen as a women’s issue (Ogundiran et al., 2014; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a). To my knowledge, the influence of gender relations on the contribution of women to food sovereignty through home gardening has not been researched in a former homeland before.

A 4-year research programme carried out by the University of Amsterdam (UvA), KIT1 and local partners in South Africa and Ghana that started in October 2014, aims to contribute to the strengthening of smallholders positions by analysing the feasibility and desirability of inclusive value-chain collaboration (VCC), enlarged farmer autonomy and sustainable landscapes (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015).

Within this broader perspective, this study examines the contribution of women to food security and dietary diversity through home gardening, and thereby delivers knowledge about the different ways in which people organise their livelihood in this specific area.

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1 Formely known as The Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen). The institute is nowadays called KIT.
1.2 Research objectives and research questions

Against the background outlined above, this thesis aims to contribute insights into the influence of gender patterns that occur in the division of labour as well as in the decision-making power over what will be produced, how the harvest will be used (consumed/marketed) and who within the household will benefit from it. The following question was leading in carrying out the research:

**How do gender relations influence the role of women in creating food sovereignty through home gardening in Limpopo, South Africa?**

Sub-questions to contribute to answering the main research question are:

1. What role does home gardening play in creating and sustaining food sovereignty of households in Limpopo, South Africa?

2. How does the gender division of (a) labour, and (b) access to land and (c) access to resources affect women’s contribution to home gardening within the household?

3. Who makes the decisions regarding crop choice, food distribution within the household, and subsistence/market orientation and how does this affect women’s autonomy in the production and consumption of food?
1.3 Study area

The Limpopo province is one of the poorest in South Africa (Hall et al., 2013; Paumgarten & Shackleton, 2011). 45.9 per cent of households in Limpopo are involved in agricultural activities (the highest percentage in the country). For 81 per cent of the households the main reason behind these activities is to have an extra source of food; only 7.4 per cent of the activities were mainly carried out to generate income (General household survey, 2012). According to these numbers there is a lot of home gardening going on in this province, while at the same time poverty is still severe. This fits into the view sketched above that rural people are at the same time the largest contributors to food production and the poorest and least food secure.

Within the Limpopo province the research has been carried out in the Vhembe District, which includes the former Venda homeland. More precisely, fieldwork was conducted in the village of Tshakhuma (Makhado District) and in various small villages in the municipality of Mutale (see Section 4.6). As stated above, the former homelands are particularly vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity (O’Laughlin et al., 2013). General characteristics of the study area are addressed in Chapter 4.
1.4 Thesis outline

After this introduction, Chapter 2 elaborates the theoretical framework and overarching concepts of food sovereignty and gender and the linkages of both to home gardening. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the research. Chapter 4 puts the empirical study into a wider context, paying attention to South Africa’s agrarian land history, land and smallholder policies and women’s position therein, and the situation of South Africa’s poor. Chapter 5 and 6 describe the role of home gardening in creating food security in Tshakhuma and Mutale respectively. In the following two chapters (7 and 8) the gender patterns in home gardening and in the decision-making processes regarding home gardening in both research areas are analysed. Chapter 9 draws conclusions, reflects on the theory, and gives some suggestions for further research as well as recommendations for policy and practice.
Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study builds on the concepts of food sovereignty and gender. It starts with an introduction to the theoretical background of food sovereignty and the current debates around the theme. The chapter then turns to the gender issues in agricultural processes and home gardening in particular and explores the influence of gender patterns on the potential contribution of home gardening to food sovereignty.

2.1 Food sovereignty, history and current debates

Although there are different views on where exactly the term ‘food sovereignty’ was coined, there is not much discussion on the fact that its origins have a strong link with international agrarian movements like La Via Campesina (LVC) and their struggle against the dominant, neoliberal agricultural regime. According to many scholars, food sovereignty is a ‘work in progress’ or a movement rather than a clearly defined concept (Edelman et al., 2014; Van der Ploeg, 2014; McMichael, 2014).

The recently formed South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and alliance underpins this notion. Formed by more than 50 organisations that represent the poor and excluded the campaign adopted a declaration on the 1st of March 2015 in which they aim to ‘Break the power of food corporations. Establish a constitutional right to food. Build food sovereignty from below, based on small scale farming and agroecology, not industrial agriculture.’ In their declaration they refer to international movements like La Via Campesina and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (“Declaration of South African Food Sovereignty Campaign,” 2015).

Despite the fact that the definition is not always clear, food sovereignty has in the last thirty years evolved into a central notion in discussions on agricultural development. One of its general features is to mark the difference between ‘food security’ and ‘food sovereignty’. Food security generally refers to having access to enough and healthy enough food to meet one’s energy and nutritional requirements. Questions about how the food is produced or where it comes from are generally not included in the definition of food security (Edelman et al., 2014; Pimbert, 2009; Pinstrup & Anderson, 2009). Food sovereignty, as the word already indicates, has a broader perspective that besides access encircles power structures related to the production and the consumption of food as well as issues of quality of food and sustainability of food...
production. As a concept, food sovereignty comprises three dimensions, namely (a) access to good quality food and dietary diversity, (b) autonomy over the way in which food is produced and marketed, and (c) sustainability (Altieri, 2012; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). Questions like: who decides what kind of food one wants to either produce or consume, and how it is produced are then central to the concept. The latter includes the sustainability of the production process, but this aspect – although considered a key pillar of the food sovereignty concept – will largely fall beyond the scope of this research. Regarding the power structures this research will mainly focus on the gender structures within the households that influence food sovereignty.

According to McMichael (2014) the rise of the food sovereignty movement is a direct consequence of the fact that the free trade approach of the World Trade Organisation has for the past thirty years plunged the world in an agrarian crisis. In line with this, Van der Ploeg (2014) argues that food sovereignty is a response to a widespread and growing anxiety about the functioning of the market as a leading mechanism for agricultural production. For answering the big question the world is preoccupied with for some time now – how to live up to the doubling of the world food production that is foretold to be necessary by 2050 (UN, 2011) – the neoliberal economy looks exclusively at technological solutions and the investment of capital. This will inevitably lead to ‘a further industrialization of agricultural production processes’ (Van der Ploeg, 2014, p. 1001).

This fits in the dominant discourse that views agriculture as a ‘unilinear and selective process, as a ladder to modernity’ (Van der Ploeg, 2014, p. 1012) in which these industrialised, monoculture farmers are looked upon as being ‘advanced farmers’. In this system access to land and resources is concentrated in the hands of a few large farmers who are privileged with regard to their access to assets and who will push the small farmers out of the market.

One of the main features of this industrialised agriculture is the rising power of large food concerns and the capricious nature of the global markets, which is enhanced by the retreatment of government and decreasing role of government regulations following neoliberal policies. When the prices drop sharply, the large-scale, specialised mono-cropping producers are hit hardest, which can lead to elimination of their production and a decrease in food production. (see Chapter 4.3 for the South African context).
The irony of this development is that smallholder farmers seem to be more resilient to the shocks of the global agricultural market than the capitalist farms (Van der Ploeg, 2014), because they do not rely on one product and because they are not exclusively dependent on the world market. An illustration of this is the fact that, regardless of the agricultural system being in place for some decades, the lion’s share of the world’s food (70 per cent, ETC, 2009) is still produced by small farmers (McMichael, 2014).

According to Van der Ploeg (2014), this can be explained by the fact that smallholders focus on the productivity of land instead of focusing on the increased productivity of labour that is central to capitalist production and which goes hand in hand with the need for scale enlargement. Production in that case is measured in money. However, when the productivity of land is the starting point, the measurement could be for instance the nutritional value of the production. In that case not only the products sold on the market count, but also those consumed on the farm. Furthermore, the mixing of crops that is common in smallholder farming will also contribute to a larger ‘yield’ when measured in nutritional value: for each product the harvest might be smaller than if mono-cropping is applied, but when the nutritional value of all the crops is measured the production is larger (Van der Ploeg, 2014).

A component that receives little attention in the food sovereignty discussion is the contribution of home gardening to productivity, dietary diversity and the nutritional value of the farmer household, and the specific role that women play in this regard.

The food sovereignty approach advocates making better use of the knowledge and potential of smallholders because (i) it enhances the production, (ii) leads to more sustainable models (more carbon neutral because the bulk of the products are consumed locally or regionally; less land depletion; decrease in use of fertilisers; greater biodiversity, to name a few); and (iii) because it has the potential of enlarging the agency and autonomy of producers and consumers, the focus on which is another key feature of food sovereignty (Altieri et al., 2012; Van der Ploeg, 2014; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015).

The main critiques on food sovereignty are that it is romanticizing the peasantry and pleading for a return to the past (Bernstein, 2014). However food sovereignty is at the same time a concept, a discourse, and a movement (Edelman, 2014; Ros-Tonen et al., 2015) and central to all these representations is the fact that the current food regime has proved not to deliver on its promises (McMichael, 2014; Van der Ploeg, 2014).
2.2 Home gardening’s contribution to food sovereignty

One of the ways in which smallholders can achieve food sovereignty is through home gardening. In this study a smallholder is someone who grows on a limited amount of land agricultural products for both subsistence and markets (Ros-Tonen et al., 2015). I assume this to be the case because, first, it may help increase households’ access to food and dietary diversity by increasing the productivity of land and nutritional value of the production. Second, home gardening largely occurs in what Van der Ploeg (2010) calls the ‘non-commodity’ or ‘reproduction circuit’ that is oriented towards self-provisioning of the farmer’s household. Van der Ploeg considers this a self-controlled resource base where farmers autonomously decide what, how and for what purpose they produce.

Home gardening is regarded as the use of land around a homestead for the cultivation of crops and vegetables, as well as the planting or taking care of trees and small livestock, the outputs of which are largely for subsistence and can contribute substantially to a household’s food security. Ogundiran et al. (2014, p. 130), for instance, found in their research on the contribution of home gardening to food security in the Eastern Cape that ‘Home gardening remains an avenue for enhancing food security, health and social interrelation of households in the contemporary South African society’. They state that whilst in developing countries household income determines food security, home gardening can play a vital role in contributing to income as well as subsistence by ‘filling up the major gaps in food and vegetable supply’ (ibid, p. 129). Ogundiran et al. emphasize the high nutritional value of the goods produced in home gardens, like fruits, green vegetables and nuts and even call home gardening a ‘panacea’ for ensuring food security (ibid, p. 134).

Paumgarten et al. (2005) argue in their paper on growing trees in home gardens by rural households in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Provinces in South Africa that particularly for the poor home gardening can be one of the most important ways to enhance the level of food sovereignty. In the six villages in the former Bantustan regions of Ciskei and Gazankulu they found that all households had trees in their home gardens which they took good care of for different reasons like the shade they provide or for the leaves that were used for medicinal use, but mostly they were held for their fruits, which were used predominantly for their own consumption.

A sound example of how home gardening can help smallholders who produce for the world market to cope with shocks, is given by Terry and Ryder (2007). They show
how smallholder farmers in Swaziland started producing cash crops (mainly sugar cane) for the global market after their government installed the Maguga Dam to irrigate their land. One group of farmers kept a small amount of irrigated land (circa 0.5 hectare) to produce subsistence crops and were highly criticised for it, because it was assumed that commercial use would generate more income. However, even before the sugar price collapsed the farmers had a hard time earning enough income to assure their basic food needs, especially the poorest among them who had no other sources of income. The farmers who installed their home garden were much better off. The ‘home garden model’, as Terry and Ryder refer to it, in this case provided ‘significant food security safeguards in the light of continuing uncertainties over the economic return associated with sugar cane’ (Terry & Ryder, 2007, p. 271).

Despite the fact that home gardens make important contributions to the nutritional and economic basis of rural households, policymakers continue to focus on improvements in capitalist agrarian production, as stated above in the section on food sovereignty, thereby largely overlooking the contribution of home gardens to food security as well as food sovereignty. They ignore them because they view them as being too minor and trivial, and unable to make a huge difference (Paumgarten et al., 2005; Ogundiran et al., 2014). However, as showed above, there is reason to believe that the contribution of home gardening to food sovereignty might be considerable. Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a) state that what they call Homestead Food Production (HFP) has proven to have the potential to increase dietary diversity by growing fruits, vegetables and by tending small livestock. They see a clear relation between this improvement of food sovereignty and gender, on which I will elaborate in the next section.

2.3 Gender patterns in home gardening

The influence of culturally specific gender differences in agricultural systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is widely acknowledged (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012). Although there are huge differences both between and within countries, in general men have better access to land, greater decision power over agrarian production and are more engaged in producing cash crops, while women are the major producers of food crops.
The agrarian production of women is overall less than that of men. This is roughly caused by three categories of disadvantages that women are facing: restricted access to (a) land, (b) human capital and (c) technical resources. Furthermore, women often have less freedom to decide how and what they want to produce and what they want to do with it (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012). The undervaluation of home gardening might therefore also be related to the fact that home gardening is predominantly seen as a women’s issue (Ogundiran et al., 2014; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a).

Some research on home gardening is published under the label ‘non-timber forest products’ (NTFPs). These are defined as ‘all plant and animal products other than commercial timber, that come from forested landscapes including human-modified ones’ (Ros-Tonen & Wiersum, 2005, p. 147). This includes growing domesticated forest products in home gardens (Wiersum et al., 2014, p. 8). Even if home gardening is not always mentioned separately there are some general assumptions regarding gender to be made about it based on the NTFP literature. For instance that (i) home-garden products, like other NTFPs, are often seen as ‘women goods’ because of their inferior commercial value (IFAD, 2008); (ii) home gardening is predominantly a female activity because it is not fulltime and near the home and therefore fits the gender division of labour that assigns domestic chores and childcare to women (Meinzen et al., 2012a; Ogundiran et al., 2014); and (iii) it’s predominantly women who engage in home gardening because the home garden is the only land to which they have access. According to IFAD, the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development, (2008) the availability of land for women to grow their food crops has decreased steadily as a result of globalisation and free trade policies in favour of the cultivation of commercial cash crops. Owing to this women increasingly work unpaid to harvest the cash crops while the production of home-grown food crops decreases.

Notwithstanding the unequal division of land, resources and power, women contribute immensely to the food security of their families, both by providing food as well as income through the sale of surplus food on local markets. IFAD (2008) estimates their share to add up to half of national income in a lot of developing countries. This is however a rough estimate by nature because most of women’s contributions are in the informal sector, for instance through cultivating food for their families in home gardens.

Moreover Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a) emphasise that around the world men and women have other considerations regarding the spending of their money. In women’s
budgets, nutrition, health and schooling are first targeted, while men do not tend to place the households' wellbeing on the first place. In terms of food sovereignty it is therefore crucial to look at the structures of power within the household regarding income, production and distribution of food. Increasing women's power over land might be an important instrument in strengthening food sovereignty. Ogundiran et al. (2014) found in their research in the Eastern Cape in South Africa for instance that women turned out to be more important in producing vegetables than men.

To analyse these structures of power within households the household should be approached as a 'bargaining unit' (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012, p. 5) meaning that there are several subunits within the household that are managed by different members. This approach opposes the unitary model of a household in which either a man or a woman (female-headed households) makes all the decisions and thereby overlooks the fact that in a man-headed household there is most of the time also an adult women present (contrary to the female-headed households in which the husband is not present). It is assumed that other persons than the head of the household can make decisions about these subunits. Meinzen-Dick et al. refer to these systems as ‘separately managed farming systems’ (2012, p. 8).

Neglecting gender patterns in the division of labour and decision-making authority within households when designing policies or projects that aim to re-organise/improve agricultural production even carries the risk to deteriorate the position of the weakest household members. Evidence shows that programmes to enhance the proceeds of home gardening are most successful in achieving nutritional improvements if the gender division of tasks is taken into account. Women's power over assets turns out to be crucial to fulfil the needs of young children and other vulnerable family members, as is their nutritional knowledge and their ability to co-decide in decisions regarding food distribution within the household. Furthermore home gardening can be empowering to the women themselves in the sense that it could provide them with their own income (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a). In these diverse ways the expansion of women's power over resources and over decisions made about both the production and the consumption of food largely contributes to the autonomy component of food sovereignty.

Within the food sovereignty movement (see Section 2.1) the autonomy stance reflects the influence a person has on the way in which her or his food is produced and
marketed. Although female autonomy is regularly measured by comparing indirect indicators like income, education level and age of husbands and wives, a better indicator might be to look directly at the extent to which women have the power to make their own decisions (Anderson & Eswaran, 2009; Kabeer, 1999).

Regarding agricultural autonomy *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index* (Alkire et al., 2013) mentions, amongst others, the level of independency in making decisions regarding agricultural production, productive resources and the allocation of income as indicators to measure the empowerment of women in agricultural contexts.

Largely following Alkire et al. (2013), in this research autonomy is therefore operationalised as the ability of women to make their own decisions regarding: a) the use of the land available around the house, b) the labour needed to maintain the garden, c) what crops to grow, d) what to do with the products (use them for subsistence or sell them) and e) distribution of the products within the household and f) their access to resources, including the money earned by selling products from the home garden.

### 2.4 Conclusion

The theoretical foundation of this research leans on the concepts of food sovereignty and gender, and on the contribution that a gender sensitive approach of home gardening can make to the food sovereignty debate. I argued that the concept of food sovereignty consists of three major strands: a) access to good quality food and dietary diversity, (b) autonomy over the way in which food is produced and marketed, and (c) sustainability. The latter falls largely beyond the scope of this research.

I showed that there is sufficient theoretical ground to assume that home gardening is an undervalued and underexploited way of enhancing food sovereignty. The influence of an increase in home-gardening harvests on dietary diversity, nutrition and health might be much larger than the impact of a rise in income (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a). Taking into account that women are often responsible for the maintenance of the home gardens and that, if they are allowed to do so, are presumably making decisions that are more favourable to the nourishing of especially the weaker members of the household, it seems inevitable that in research that seeks to contribute to the improvement of food sovereignty through home gardening gender should be a central
concept. Figure 2.1 brings the theoretical strands and the main concepts used in this study together.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual scheme
Chapter 3 - Methodology and methods

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this study. It starts with the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher, followed by the research design and the methods used for data collection and processing. The operationalization table that guided the research can be found in Appendix A. The final section reflects on the ethical considerations and limitations to the research.

3.1 Ontological and epistemological position

This research builds on a constructivist ontological viewpoint that social reality is not a given thing but a continuously modified structure that is highly influenced by social actors. The epistemological background of the research is critical realism: through conceptualisation social scientists try to understand the reality and the structures at work but concepts are always tentative because they can be overtaken by reality. The context in which the research takes plays is therefore essential to the reading of the findings (Bryman, 2012, Clark & Creswell, 2011).

In line with this, the research is based on the conviction that the values and background of the researcher influence the way s/he interprets the social world that s/he is investigating and that his or her presence probably even changes reality while carrying out the research. The focus of the research is on understanding what is happening rather than on finding facts. The epistemological thought behind it is that it is not possible to find ‘the truth’ but that it is merely possible for the researcher to describe the reality of which s/he is a part. It is critical however to remain aware of the fact that the researcher him- or herself is part of that reality. That notion should be part of the research.

3.2 Research design

This study is a case study design. At first I planned to concentrate the research in and around the village of Tshakhuma. However during the orienting interview phase Mr. Khathutshelo Muthala from the Department of Agriculture in Thohoyandou told me that food security differed largely from municipality to municipality. According to him, food insecurity was much more prevalent in Mutale than in Makhado (the municipality in
which Tshakhuma is located). Since that fact could have implications for the role home gardening plays in the realisation of food sovereignty I decided to opt for a comparative case study approach in which a comparable number of people is interviewed in both locations.

The research followed a mixed methods approach (see 3.2.2 for details) because such an approach is better suited to capture the complexity of the social world than exclusively quantitative research. The latter, on the other hand, can contribute to generalizable outcomes in a way qualitative research mostly cannot. A combination of the two makes the analytical results stronger. In this study I used the data of the quantitative survey to verify the findings of the qualitative methods. This triangulation helps giving the findings a more solid base (Bryman, 2012).

The unit of analysis is the home gardening of households and the units of observation the households, whereby the household was approached as a ‘bargaining unit’ (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012, p. 5) (see Section 2.3).

### 3.2.1 Data collection methods

**Observations and open interviews**

The research started with getting used to the people and the environment, gathering information through observations and open interviews with people in the village who were either important in the community, such as the chief and other members of the trust, or who were just there, like my host or the people I met at the local supermarket, the central meeting point. After the first phase of getting acquainted with the villagers and giving them a chance to get used to me, I started collecting information through open interviews with officers of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, the local agricultural extension officer, staff members of Subtrop (the Subtropical Growers Association) and the manager of a plant nursery.

During this period I also developed an interview guide and found a local interpreter, Mikovhe Muthambi, to help me around and do the translations during the interviews from English to Venda and vice versa.

**Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured questionnaire encompassed questions relating to dietary diversity. The respondents were asked what contribution the home garden made to their food...
security and dietary diversity by using five food group indicators that are used often to estimate dietary diversity (Steyn et al., 2014):

1. All starch staples
2. All dairy
3. All other animal foods e.g. meat, fish, eggs
4. All legumes & nuts
5. Fruit & vegetables

Interviewees were asked to make a 24 hours recall of their dietary intake and to indicate where the food came from (home garden or elsewhere). Furthermore the guide comprehended questions related to gender divisions in labour (who works in the home garden) and decision-making power (who decides what crops/trees will be planted; who decides what is to be done with the harvest?). Also the consequences of this division of tasks and decision-making power for the contribution of home gardening to the household’s food security and women’s autonomy of production and consumption were addressed in the interviews. A total of 15 interviews were held in each of the study villages, involving 7 men and 23 women. Sampling for the semi-structured interviews was done by purposive sampling in which the unit of analysis – home gardening – was the guiding selection criterion (Bryman, 2012). The sample was taken in two different municipalities because of the assumed difference in vulnerability to food insecurity in these places as an employee of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture pointed out to me. The households were selected by walking through the villages and asking those who had some maize or fruit trees in their backyard whether they were willing to participate. I tried to differentiate between sizes of homesteads and home gardens but did not select households based on the sex of the household head or household size. It would have cost us probably too much time to select them after the often time-consuming introduction, whereas the data could reveal us how size and sex of the household head differ when randomly selected and whether this has implications for the contribution of women to food sovereignty through home gardening. We started our interviews in the first week of February only to be interrupted shortly afterwards for a week in which we carried out most of the baseline survey (see below).
**Focus group**

A focus group was realised after we conducted all the semi-structured interviews with a view to getting a more open discussion about gender relations. The group consisted of five women who were invited to talk about gender issues related to home gardening, food supply and in decision-making regarding expenditures. The focus group was established through convenience sampling: one of the respondents was found willing to organise a group of women to talk about gardening and gender.

**Baseline survey**

The quantitative part of this study comprises a baseline survey carried out within the context of the 4-year research programme of which this study is a part by an international team of students, professionals and local interpreters, carried out in February 2015. The interview guide and the survey questionnaire contain questions about food insecurity, dietary diversity, income and access to as well as use of agricultural land. The data from the survey for which 141 smallholders (85 men and 56 women) have been interviewed is therefore used to triangulate the findings of the semi-structured interviews. I participated in 17 of the interviews for the baseline survey.

For the baseline survey several strategies of sampling were used. Initially the goal was to only target tree crop farmers engaged in either macadamia or avocado farming. These farmers were found by either visiting them on their farm or trying to meet them during farmer meetings. When it turned out that it was not possible to get a large enough sample in this way, the sample was extended to all smallholder farmers in the area. This was done by going to different villages in the targeted area and simply asking everyone whether they were engaged in some sort of farming and, if so, ask them for their cooperation.
3.2.2 Data processing methods

The majority of the data collected through the semi-structured interviews is qualitative and was analysed by using Atlas.ti. All the semi-structured interviews were taped and transcribed, as was the focus group and some of the open interviews; the others were handwritten and mostly fed into the computer. The data was analysed by using thematic coding based on the indicators of the operationalisation combined with open coding. I used thirty-five codes. There were ‘access codes’ (such as access to food, access to land, access to food through home gardening); decision codes (such as decisions on which crops to grow, use of the land, destination of the products et cetera;) and there were gender codes (such as distribution of the products within the household, difference between men and women in spending money or more general ‘gender opinion’). By using the code manager I categorised and analysed the data and extracted useable quotes.

For analysing the more quantifiable data gathered through the semi-structured interviews I used SPSS. I realised two databases: one with nineteen variables such as: sex, location, age, male or female headed household, home garden size (arranged in four categories: 0-0.25 ha, 0.26-0.5 ha, 0.51-1.0 ha and 1.1-3.0 ha), destination of the products (home use, home use and selling to the neighbours, home use and selling to neighbours and commercial parties), food security (enough, not enough less than once a month, once a month or more often, enough but not always healthy), and which crops one grows (fruit trees yes / now, maize yes / no et cetera). The other database was filled with variables regarding which food groups the respondents had been eating during the past 24 hours, and if it came from the home garden.

The data of the baseline survey have been used to triangulate the findings in the qualitative methods; especially regarding the data on food security and dietary diversity.

3.3 Ethical consideration and limitations to the research

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

I tried to be as sensitive as I could towards existing customs and cultural norms and to be constantly aware of ethical tensions my presence as a researcher and as a white person raised while I was in the field and especially during the interviews. It was
obvious that people were sometimes intimidated by the fact that a white person showed up at their door without warning.

Because the majority of the respondents were poor there was always the risk of creating hope of support in one way or the other. I tried to minimise this risk by agreeing with the interpreter to always immediately when we asked them to cooperate make clear that we would not be able to arrange anything for them. Then, if they gave us permission to interview them and we entered the yard, I introduced us and repeated the message that I was only a student and would not be able to change anything in their situation. I think this worked rather well. Only once or twice (we interviewed more than thirty people) we had the impression that the respondent was disappointed in the end. In general I had the feeling that most of the people liked talking to us about their home gardens and about themselves. For most of them it seemed to be a nice change of the daily routine.

Nevertheless it was sometimes very hard to see how poor people were and how they struggled to survive. Visiting them, asking them all kinds of – sometimes a little inappropriate – questions and then walk out again, did make me feel guilty at times. I could not do much in return apart from listening to them and show my genuine interest in their lives. I felt it was not really feasible to organise a meeting to tell them what I found out because that would have asked an extra effort of them whilst at the same time it might have raised hope that something could be done to improve their situation. I never gave them the impression that they would hear from us again, and I think they did not really mind and it was the right thing to do in this scenario.

Another thing I was aware of was the fact that reality as I saw it was at least partly the result of interpretation and therefore coloured by my own background as a white, highly educated female from the rich Western world.

3.3.2 Limitations of the research

Although I was fully aware of the traumatic past of black people in South Africa I did not entirely realise in advance how open the wounds of colonisation and apartheid still are. In my experience the racial tensions were always present, whether on a conscious or unconscious level. I am convinced that this has influenced my research. Although people were in general very kind and willing to speak to us (to my Venda interpreter and me) they did not always seemed to speak their minds. I had the feeling that my respondents
as well as the family with whom I stayed did not want ‘whites’ to get a bad impression of
them. I felt like they viewed me as a representative of the white people who had
repressed them for so long and until so recently or as a person from the dominant rich
western world. I had the impression that they were to some extent ‘keeping up
appearances’ and seemingly hesitant to reveal what could go ‘wrong’ at home My local
supervisor explained that this was not necessarily a racial issue, but could also be
related to the fact that some people felt ashamed about their poverty; something that
she as a black researcher had experienced as well.

This was also revealed when I tried to discuss gender issues. For instance during
an interview with an elderly couple the man reacted agitatedly on the questions about
who decided what to plant in the home garden and told us, ‘Why the questions about
deciding? It is not necessary to ask this.’ When we spoke to women separately they
sometimes did open up about how their husbands used to be in charge only to withdraw
their words in the next sentence.

This issue also became visible in a quote of my host (whom I did not consider as
being poor) when I interviewed her about gender traditions and patterns (she holds a
PhD on a gender-related topic). She told me about her own past, the harmonious way
the three wives of her father got along and the loving way her father took care of his
family. She finalised by saying, ‘It is not that African tradition was all that bad. No. No.’ Of
course I never suggested it was. However, living in a society that has always considered
black people’s culture as inferior, their hesitance to discuss cultural issues they suspect
to be seen by whites as ‘odd’ has undoubtedly influenced my research. Or, as my local
supervisor puts it, ‘People avoid being judged because they consider that you are likely
not to understand anyway. Some polygamous marriages indeed find a balance and a
peaceful happy existence.’

What also had an undeniable influence on my research, both positive and
negative, was working with an interpreter. Carrying out the research with someone who
lives in the region and who herself is a member of the group of people I was interested
in, opened doors for me that otherwise would have stayed closed. Moreover she learned
me a lot about the culture and the customs.

However I discovered that there are also some downsides of working with an
interpreter. For instance I never had the feeling that all the details survived the
translation; the answers delivered to me always seemed to be so much shorter than the
original ones. Repeatedly discussing this matter with the interpreter unfortunately didn’t change it. I also noticed that some questions made the interpreter feel a bit shy or ashamed, which was noticeable in the way she asked the question and probably influenced the answers given to her.

Furthermore I found it very hard to realise some kind of rapport with the respondent and at times I even felt incapable of turning the interview into a conversation. I am sure I would have been able to get more and clearer information if I could have spoken directly to the respondents. It was sometimes quite frustrating to realise this.
Chapter 4 - Empirical context

This chapter sketches the context in which the research has been carried out. It starts with the background of South Africa’s agrarian history (4.1), and continues with the changes in the agrarian land situation after the end of apartheid (4.2). Section 4.3 describes the conditions of the country’s rural poor and is followed by the gender implications of the land question (4.4). In Section 4.5 the smallholder and gender policies are discussed, followed by a description and comparison of the two research locations (4.6). The last section draws some general conclusions on the empirical context.

4.1 South African agrarian land history

From the moment Dutch settlers set foot on South African ground in 1652, land use and land ownership became divided along racial lines. The apartheid regime underpinned the racial division originated in colonial times by legitimizing it and by the large-scale displacement of black people from their land to the Bantustans. The Bantustans (homelands) were used to keep black people out of the white parts of South Africa unless they were needed as cheap labourers for work in mining or commercial farming. Traditional leaders governed the Bantustans, which only covered 13 per cent of South Africa; the rest of the country was possessed by the white. Land in the Bantustans was typical scarce and of poor quality and there were limited resources to cultivate it (Van Leynseele, 2013; O’Laughlin et al., 2013).

4.2 Land reform and agricultural policies in the post-apartheid era

Ever since the transition from the apartheid regime to a democracy in 1994, South Africa is struggling with land reform and land redistribution. The desire to change the existing patterns was strong amongst the black people who were chased away from the land their ancestors had worked and lived on and regarded as theirs. In line with this the ANC addressed the reform of land in her governance policy. However, two decades later the so-called Land Question is still largely unsolved, a sound example of which is the land redistribution. Although the original aim was to have one third of the white-owned
land redistributed by 1999 there was only 7.2 per cent distributed in 2011 and the deadline is now postponed to 2025 (O’Laughlin et al., 2013).

In the meantime landownership is as centralised and privatised as it was in the apartheid era and with regard to land ownership and use much of the old power structures have remained in place. Most former Bantustans are continuously struggling with underprivileged circumstances. They are mostly densely populated with little land available, a lack of infrastructure and capital, and high unemployment figures (Paumgarten et al., 2005). Issues that prevent the land reform to blossom are amongst others the neoliberal approach of the ANC that works in favour of large-scale capitalistic agriculture and, on the other side of the spectrum, the strong lobby of CONTRALESA, the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa. The latter plead for traditional communal landownership in which the traditional leaders own the land and have decision-making power over the use of it (Aliber et al., 2013; O’Laughlin et al., 2013; Walker, 2005).

Since the old traditional structures have largely been kept in tact until now, the local chief is still responsible for a lot of important questions in the municipality. In Tshakhuma, for instance, chief Madzivhandile is amongst other things the chairman of the Tshakhuma Trust that manages the Tshakhuma Community Farm that the community acquired through a land claim. The chiefs generally also mediate in conflicts and are making the decisions about the communal land. People who get land from the chief to live or work on get ‘Permission to Occupy’, which can lead to insecurity of land tenure (Van Leynseele, 2013).

At the same time South Africa transformed in the last decade from a net food-exporting to a net importing country. As a sharp increase in the price of wheat in 2009 showed, this makes South Africa vulnerable to price fluctuations on the world market. The prices of bread rose sharply as a result, as did the proportion of food in the total budget of the people (Satgar, 2011).

4.3 Situation of South Africa’s rural poor

As a result of its colonial, apartheid and commercial agriculture legacy, South Africa’s present situation in the rural areas distinguishes itself from other countries in the region by still having a large number of rural people working as wage labourers on commercial
farms and by the inconsiderable role small-scale agriculture plays in the livelihoods of the rural (O’Laughlin et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2013).

However the amount of agrarian wage employment has been decreasing over the past two decades and there is sharp competition from cheap migrant workers from neighbouring countries like Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The decline in wages also limits the financial inputs smallholders can make in farmland and recent research shows that, as a result, arable land in the Bantustans is increasingly not being cultivated (O’Laughlin et al., 2013).

There are only 300,000 black farmers at most who derive some cash income from agriculture; a small portion of the in itself limited number of 2.5 million black rural households that undertake any form of farming (O’Laughlin et al., 2013, p. 9). The total number of black people living in South Africa was approximately 40 million in 2011, around 79.5 per cent of the total population (Statistics South Africa, mid-year population estimates 2011).

All together the stagnating land reform results in continuing extreme poverty characterising the rural areas in the former Bantustans, and many rural households today are mainly depending on the social grants the government has been increasingly distributing since 1994 (O’Laughlin et al., 2013). The people in Limpopo call the governmental allowances ‘grant’ or ‘old age grant’ (or occasionally ‘money from Mandela’). Everybody who turns 60 years can apply for a grant, as long as they do not earn more than 64,680 Rand a year and there is also a limit to the possessions one is allowed to have. The grant amounts to 1,410 Rand a month. A pension from a job one had before retirement often replaces the right to a grant because it exceeds the limit and is commonly called ‘private pension’. There is also a children’s grant for people earning less than 3,300 Rand a month; the grant amounts to 330 Rand per child (under 18) per month. (http://www.gov.za/services/downloaded 30 June 2015).

4.4 Gender and the land question

With the effectuation of the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) in 2000 it became formally possible for women to independently own land. However, as Walker (2005) points out, legalisation of equal gender rights did not come with any governmental guiding for the implementation of the rights. This is confirmed by the proportion of women that is beneficiary of the land claims in 2004: 13.3 per cent
(Abrahams 2009, p4, cited in: Groenmeyer, 2013). Groenmeyer furthermore states that the Commission on Gender Equality declares that 90 per cent of the land was owned by men in the financial year 2009/2010.

Moreover, most rural women live in communal areas, which makes the reform of the communal tenure of most importance to them. The fact that the CLRA (also CLaRA, Communal Land Rights Act) that passed the parliament in 2004 (but is contested by the Constitutional Court in 2010\(^2\)) left the traditional leaders of CONTRALESA largely in charge over communal lands, meant a severe setback for the position of rural women. Strong opposition of women's organisations and NGOs on the draft CLRA-bill resulted in some improvements of Women’s Rights, for instance by enabling shared land rights for married couples, but it left the role of the traditional institutions intact (Walker, 2005).

Although the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the official guideline for the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and Women’s Rights are legally secured, there still is a gap between theory and practice especially in the communal areas were traditional culture and customs more often than not place women in a disadvantaged positions (Walker, 2005).

### 4.5 Smallholder and gender policies

Although the amount of money allocated to agriculture shows a rising trend over the past two decades and this money is not attributed to large-scale, mostly still white agriculture anymore, it also does not favour the bulk of the small-scale (black) farmers. The support is mainly addressed to emerging and commercial small- and middle black farmers and does not reach the majority of subsistence farmers because they farm small-scale, parttime and do not come into contact with programmes (Hall & Aliber, 2010).

According to Hollick Netshirungulu, extension officer in Thulamela Municipality, the Department of Agriculture in Thohoyandou is very dedicated to encourage women in agriculture. The Department wants women to share their knowledge. The main policy instrument is the Women’s Agriculture Competition where Netshirungulu is responsible

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\(^2\) The Constitutional Court contested CLRA on procedural grounds (the Parliament followed the incorrect process in passing the Act because it did not involve the provincial legislatures, as it should have done in deliberations that affect customary law (www.customconteted.co.za / downloaded 1 July 2015). Until today there is no alternative for CLRA realised, which means that the insecure land tenure of people and communities caused by apartheid continues to exist today.
for in the Vhembe District since ten years and that is part of a competition on provincial level (Limpopo). Every woman who feels that she is making the most of her garden can tell her local extension officer that she wants to compete and s/he will bring her a visit and give her free advice. The competition knows three categories the smallest of which is the backyard. He says that even an home garden of 0.5 – 1 ha that is in ‘full operation’ can join the competition, but the gardens of the number 1 and 3 winners of 2014 in this category were approximately 2 hectares big and both families had other land to farm on. The women who are keeping a small home garden around the house will therefore not benefit from this competition, or from the advices or the cash prizes one can win.

There is another, non-gender related smallholder policy called ‘Fetsa Tlala’ (do away with hunger). This is a national programme to stimulate people to farm their lands and to fight hunger. Crop scientist and extension officer Maite Sarah Mafa (see list of key informants in Appendix D) says that the main goal is to prevent people ‘to turn away from farming’. In her municipality Thulamela smallholder farmers with a field from 1 to 5 ha can come to the Department of Agriculture and put their name on a list. As long as the limit of 100 ha in total is not yet exceeded they will get their land ploughed for free and receive free seeds and fertilizers.

For most home gardeners this policy is not within reach because they do not have a minimum of 1 hectare of land available. In other municipalities the money available in the Fetsla Tiala programme seems to be allocated differently but it was hard to found specific information about it.

4.6 Research location

figure 4.6, Vhembe District (source: http://www.localgovernment.co.za)
The research has been carried out in two areas in the Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province. The Vhembe District includes the former Venda homeland (and two more municipalities) that was created by the apartheid regime in 1962 for Venda-speaking people. Venda was the smallest Bantustan in South Africa and was situated near the border of Zimbabwe in the North and Kruger Park and Mozambique in the East. From 1979 until 1991 Venda was declared independent as part of the apartheid approach to ban blacks from white South Africa (SAHO; http://www.britannica.com).

The Vhembe District is situated in the Limpopo province, one of the poorest in South Africa (Hall et al., 2013; Paumgarten & Shackleton, 2011) and 45.9 per cent of households in Limpopo are involved in agricultural activities (the highest percentage in the country). For 81 per cent of the households in Limpopo the main reason behind these activities is to have an extra source of food; for 7.4 per cent the activities were mainly carried out to contribute to their income (General household survey, 2012).

According to an evaluation of the agricultural situation by Maneta Training Consultancy, commissioned by the Vhembe District Municipality, roughly 82 per cent of the farmers in the district produce crops at a subsistence level, while only less than 0.5 per cent is classified as large-scale commercial farmers. They also found that the more than half of the residents (55 per cent) in Vhembe District are women and that these figures are the same for Mutale and Makhado, the municipalities where the research locations were located.

Table 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the study sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Makhado (Tshakhuma falls within this municipality)</th>
<th>Mutale municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>516,031</td>
<td>91,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young (0-14)</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age (15-64)</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly (65+)</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>134,889</td>
<td>23,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-headed households</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.1. Tshakhuma (Vhembe District, Limpopo Province)

Tshakhuma is a village situated on the Northern side of the N534, the road that goes from east to west through the Limpopo province, connecting the main cities in the Vhembe District: Louis Trichart (Makhado) and Thohoyandou. Tshakhuma is known in the region as a 'fruit hub': there is a 24 hour fruit market alongside the N534 where women sell fruits that they collect at the houses and buy from the large, commercial farms that are surrounding the village. Tshakhuma has a lush and green appearance, with beautiful views on the Soutpansberg.

Apart from being a fruit hub, Tshakhuma is locally also known as an 'education hub'. There are several primary and secondary schools and also a variety of colleges (vocational higher education). Particularly the latter gives an important impulse to the local economy, for instance because a lot of people rent rooms to the students, generally called 'boarders'.

The houses in Tshakhuma are generally relatively big and solid (concrete walls, firm roofs, surrounded by more land). Although Tshakhuma is not a dry area and there is a dam nearby that could be (but is not) used for water supply, the municipality provides water only once or twice a week. Furthermore it supposed to rain during summer, but it did not rain anymore like it used to do, people told me, and this enlarges the chance that the vegetables that people plant will burn. Most of the respondents were waiting for the winter to arrive (from April onwards) to start sowing and planting vegetables. If they would have had access to water regularly, they would be able to plant vegetables twice or more a year instead of only during winter, they told me.

4.6.2. Mutale municipality (Vhembe District, Limpopo Province)

Mutale is the most north-eastern municipality of the Vhembe District. It is bordered by Kruger Park in the East and Zimbabwe in the North. It is even more rural than
Tshakhuma: we travelled from Tshakhuma by minibus to Thohoyandou (approximately 45 minutes) and there we took another minibus to Mutale. Since there are not a lot of people traveling in that direction and the bus always waits until it is full, it took us 1.5-3 hours travel time to arrive in Mutale.

Our first visit was in Tshandama village, in a government 'locasion', a settlement of small, government-built houses. The houses were in a very bad condition. The lady we first interviewed told us that some of the houses collapsed while the people were inside and that is was a miracle that nobody died. We asked her permission to look inside her home were we could look straight through the brick in the wall. She also showed us how she put bricks on her roof to keep the iron sheets on their place because they were not fixed. The bathroom and kitchen that should have been part of these houses were never placed, and water was never installed inside the house. There was a water tap outside, but it only worked a couple of days a week. Although this was the worst case, there were a lot of poor government-built houses in Mutale. We did not see any such houses in Tshakhuma.

The water situation is not much better in Mutale than it was in Tshakhuma. Here some local chiefs are even trying to realise their own water supply because the municipality fails to do so properly. Here as well people told us that the lack of water means that during the summer it is not possible to plant vegetables because it is too hot.

4.7 Conclusion

The agrarian situation today in South Africa is still highly reflecting its apartheid and settlers’ legacy. That goes without any doubt for the Vhembe District in which the research has been carried out; this former Bantustan is still facing the harsh consequences of that period. Regarding the position of women and land rights there are some changes, but more in theory than in practice. There does not seem to be a lot of policy regarding the most vulnerable: women and people with a very small piece of land.

When comparing both research locations, Tshakhuma seems to be less remote and is part of a municipality in which (youth) unemployment is less prevalent than in Mutale. From our own observation we discovered that the homesteads were smaller and poorer built in Mutale. In the next chapter the research findings regarding the role of home gardening in creating food security in both research locations will be presented.
Chapter 5 - The role of home gardening in creating food security in Tshakhuma and Mutale

This chapter discusses the role of home gardening in creating food security (as a component of food sovereignty) in the households visited in Tshakhuma and Mutale (research question 1). First is described what kind of products people grow in their home gardens and under which conditions they do so. Section 5.2 looks into the way in which the people use their products; do they mainly use it themselves or is part of it being marketed, and if so, where and to whom do they sell their products? The next two sections (5.3 and 5.4) look into the contribution of home-garden products to food security and dietary diversity respectively. In the concluding section the situation in Mutale and Tshakhuma is compared and some conclusions are drawn.

5.1 Home garden production

Some general characteristics of home gardening in the two study locations are summarised in Table 5.1 and will be discussed in this and the subsequent sections. The table shows that half of the people interviewed fall in the oldest category (61 years and older). 30 per cent was between 31 and 60 years old and 20 per cent was younger than thirty. The majority of the home gardens (13 out of 30, 43.3 per cent) was smaller than a quarter of a hectare, 23.3 per cent had an estimated size between a quarter and half a hectare and 26.6 per cent covered a space between a half and a full hectare. There were two home gardens bigger than a hectare (6.6 per cent).

Table 5.1 Home gardens according to size, location, and sex and age of the owner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home garden</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sex of the respondent</th>
<th>Age of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tshakhuma Mutale Male Female 0-30 31-60 61-..</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0.25 ha</td>
<td>4 9 2 11 5 3 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.26-0.5 ha</td>
<td>2 5 2 5 1 3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.51-1 ha</td>
<td>7 1 2 6 - 2 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 ha-3 ha</td>
<td>2 - 1 1 - 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15 15 7 23 6 9 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fruit trees were abundant in the home gardens visited. Only one of the thirty households engaged in this research did not have a fruit tree in their garden. In the other
households there were always at least one or more mango trees, mostly some banana trees and often an avocado tree. Other trees that were pretty common were: naartjie (mandarin), orange, lemon and lychee. Guava and pawpaw (papaya) also grow in a lot of gardens. Some of the people we spoke to planted the trees fairly recently but the majority either planted them years ago or the trees were already there when the people started living there.

All of the households visited in Mutale and twelve of the fifteen respondents in Tshakhuma had maize in their home garden; of those who did not have maize, one planted it on another field on which the family was farming.

People start planting maize at the beginning of the summer which is supposed to be the main rainy season (from December till February) and at the same time the hottest period of the year, although in 2015 it stayed extremely hot and dry until at least the end of March when the research was completed. After the maize is harvested most respondents start planting vegetables on this spot.

They grow most of their vegetables in winter because it is supposed to be less hot in this period. There are however some exceptions. In the period of the research there were for instance pumpkin leaves in a lot of gardens. The flowers, the leaves and eventually the pumpkin itself are used for food, the latter of which is remarkably the least popular of the three. The flowers are dried in the sun and kept for times when there are no fresh vegetables to harvest; the leaves are a popular vegetable. The other exceptions are indigenous vegetables like muxe and delele (both green leave vegetables) that grow in the home gardens as well as in uncultivated fields and are, according to some of the respondents, to be found almost all year round. It was also harvesting time for butternuts, sugar canes and – especially in Mutale – ground- and round nuts were planted and in some cases almost ready for harvesting.
Most of the respondents were waiting for the heat to decline to start planting other vegetables like spinach, Chinese spinach, cabbage, tomatoes, unions, beetroot, sweet potatoes, green beans, *piri piri* (chilli peppers) and carrots.

A lack of water is the most often mentioned constraint to home-garden production, caused by a shortfall of rain, but moreover by a disappointing provision of water by the municipality. One respondent told us:

‘If the water comes I just irrigate the trees. It is not every day. The water comes only on Friday and Saturday is half a day. If the water comes daily you can make something better. But now you can’t plant a lot of things, because they will burn. They need water.’ (resp. 4) (see Appendix B for a list of respondents).

Another respondent told us that he had water every day because he does not use the water from the municipality anymore:

‘We use the water from the mountain, from the river. With the community around here we have done it ourselves, using different sizes of pipes. That is how people get water around here. (...) We have reported it to the municipality and they have supplied us with chemicals to clean the water. We save water in five tanks. And sometimes we have to purchase the chemicals. We put the chemicals in the tanks, so that when it comes here it is clean. Sometimes we go there and clean the tanks’ (resp. 13).

In Mutale, water provision is even a larger problem than in Tshakhuma, although an old lady told us that in her community the chief was also exploring the possibility to take over the water provision from the municipality. In the meantime she saved water from either the rain or the tap if it was working in a big brown bucket in the ground, in which fits enough water for twenty buckets or so:

‘I save the water inside here. I only use it for watering the garden. I take it out with a small bucket to fill up a large bucket. I fill the buckets one day and do the watering the next, otherwise I can’t manage. It is a lot of work, especially when there is not much water left inside’ (resp. 16).
When asked what kind of support they could use, respondents occasionally let us know that they could use seeds or seedlings, fertilizers and – the six respondents who held some small livestock (e.g. chicken, tilapia fish, pigs, goats) – animal feed. For some of the respondents more land was also a desire. One young woman showed a strong ambition to enlarge her farming activities:

‘...I would love to take them (the home garden products, MdH) to the market (...) and to be competitive with other young farmers like me! That is why I would want to know a lot about gardening. Cause, earnestly, I think I have little experience with it. I’m doing it on my own’ (resp. 5).

The respondent lives with her baby in her mother’s house. Her boyfriend, the father of her child, lives in Johannesburg. Her father passed away. She started the home garden five or six years ago and also planted some maize last year on the family’s avocado and mango farm that is situated on the mountain slopes some kilometres away from the village. She longs for another piece of land not too far from the homestead to farm some more.

Almost half of the respondents (13) were longing for more land; most of them (8) were living in Mutale were the home gardens were substantially smaller than in Tshakhuma (in Mutale 14 of the home gardens (93 per cent) fell in the two smallest categories with a maximum size of 0.5 hectare; in Tshakhuma six of the home gardens were smaller than 0.5 hectare (40 per cent) and nine fell into the two largest categories (60 per cent) – see Table 5.1). The respondents who were satisfied with their land thought they had enough, were too old to manage more land, or did not think they would be able to manage more land. Others already had another piece of land that they sometimes did not use because it was either too far away or too much work to farm it. Here the lack of water also came up again: to some of them another piece of land did not
seem useful because they would not have water to irrigate it and therefore the crops would not grow.

In summary, home gardens produce a diversity of products of which fruit and maize are the most common, but particularly in the winter season a variety of vegetables are grown as well. The main constraint to the production seems to be the water supply, which is especially bad when people are depending on the municipality to deliver it.

5.2 Destination of home-garden production

In general the products from the home garden are for home use (Table 5.2), which sometimes also means that other family members come and pick something up when they know it is there. A couple of respondents also mentioned giving away some of their harvest to neighbours or other community members. Within the household, everybody eats from the home garden products.

Table 5.2 Destination of home-garden production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination of the products</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sex of the respondent</th>
<th>Age of respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tshakhuma</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home use only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home use and selling to neighbours*</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home use, selling to neighbours and commercially **</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4**</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* including selling to neighbours who sell them to or on Tshakhuma Market (see Section 5.2)

** including selling to people who bring them to the atjar factory (see Section 5.2)

Besides home use, 19 respondents also sell some of the food after domestic needs are satisfied:

'We didn't sell any (mangoes, MdH) last year, because for the mango it is good business during September when they are starting. But we couldn't sell them in September because we were saving them for the kids so that they were able to eat them. During
December and January there are a lot of them so people don't buy them. That is because almost everyone has a tree at home' (resp. 11).

That is an often-heard complaint: that they cannot sell the mangoes because everybody has one or more trees at home. Nevertheless some of them do sell them: to people who in turn sell them on the Tshakhuma Fruit Market, for instance, or to the local processing company Valley Farms, where they make juice from it, or to people who make atjar from it and sell that at the local markets.

Some people also sell from the garden and try to find customers by walking from house to house, or find other creative manners to market their goods:

'I sell them to the local people and also at Mundendeni – that is an area where people get their old age grant' (resp. 22).

Eight respondents sell commercially; four in each location (Table 5.2). The criterion used for commercial marketing is whether one sells, directly or indirectly, to a company. Three sell to the local supermarket SPAR, all of them living in Tshakhuma. Two of them also have another field on which they are farming and one has an exceptionally big home garden (3 hectare). He is the only one who says he is primarily producing for the market:

'We use it for the household, but we produce first for the market. We take them to SPAR and people come here to buy it’ (resp. 6).

The size of his home garden makes him a bit of an ‘outlier’ as does the fact that he is a male and he regards his home garden as his job ('I had a hard time to find a job, so I decided to do the home garden'). Those facts make him probably more a small-scale farmer than a home gardener.

The SPAR is especially interested in the indigenous vegetable muxe, because the local home gardeners and small-scale farmers are the only ones who provide them with this vegetable, which is rather popular among Venda people. But the SPAR also buys butternuts and other vegetables from the respondents.

The only other person in Tshakhuma who marketed the products commercially is the one selling to Valley Farms. That means that in Tshakhuma the commercially selling
home gardeners are either delivering to the SPAR or to Valley Farms. In Mutale three of the four people who were regarded as selling commercially delivered fruit to the atjar companies. The fourth sold chickens to a local supermarket.

People hardly ever know what they are earning by selling their products, because:

‘...if I was saving it I would know the amount, but when I have it, I use it’ (resp. 15).

‘When someone comes and buys we have to use the money on something else. So I am not sure about the amount’ (resp. 18).

The maize from the home garden is generally taken to the local mill to get granulated. In exchange, the mill keeps a small portion of the *mielie meal*; how much exactly the people do not seem to know. ‘It is not much’, they say. When the harvest from the home garden is very small, the respondents do not bring the maize to the mill but eat the corncobs after they boiled or grilled them.

There seems to be a difference in market orientation between men and women. From the latter only 21.7 per cent (5 of the 23 women interviewed) sold to commercial partners, while 42.9 per cent (3 out of 7) of the men did. Of the women 39.1 per cent produced only for home use versus 28.6 per cent of the men and the same percentages apply to those who in addition to home use sell products to neighbours. The majority of the people who were only producing for home use fell in the oldest age group (9 out of 11, 81.8 per cent). The majority of the people who sold products to either their neighbours or to commercial parties are found in the age group between 31 and 60 years old (9 out of 19, 47.4 per cent). In general the respondents in Mutale seemed to be more market oriented: 73.3 per cent in Mutale sold some of their products while in Tshakhuma 53.3 per cent did. The number of respondents who said to produce for the commercial market however was equal in both locations (26.6 per cent).

In summary everybody who has a home garden eats from it. In addition, there is a substantial group (63.3 per cent) that sells some of their home garden products: men and respondents between 31 and 60 years old seem to be more market oriented than women and older people. Sometimes the respondents are looking actively for ways to market their products, sometimes they just sell to people who come by and ask for it. It seems like almost nobody registered the amount of money earned by selling the products.
5.3 Contribution of home gardening to food security

Home gardening is very important to food security, as illustrated by the following quotes:

‘If I didn't have a backyard, what am I going to eat?’ (resp. 8).

‘You have to have your own garden, because you have to eat. You have to get food from it!’ (resp. 19).

‘Yes, I am saving a lot by the home garden’ (resp. 28).

An example of the role of the home garden in providing food security is the production of maize. Porridge made of “mielie meal” (maize meal) is the staple food of people in the Vhembe District, as it is in large parts of South Africa. It is not uncommon to eat porridge, either ‘soft’ or ‘firm’, at every meal during the day. Maize therefore plays an important role in people’s lives.

Some of the people we spoke to eat from the maize supplied by their home garden almost the whole year round. More often the harvest is good for half the amount of maize needed in a year, as demonstrated by some of the answers respondents gave us when we asked them how much maize the home garden provided them with:

‘It is two bags of eighty kilos.’

_How many bags do you use in a year?_

‘3 bags.’

_So more than half of it is from the garden?

‘Yes’ (resp. 8)

Another respondent, who did not have a good harvest this year because there was not enough rain, told us:

‘Last year we didn't have many, only one bag of eighty kilos. Other years it is mostly two bags. (...) I need four bags a year’ (resp. 9).
Overall, in Mutale people find that the maize they grew in their gardens provided enough *mielie meal* for at least part of the year. That is important because:

‘The maize is very expensive at the shop’ (resp. 9).

Although in general only part of the food comes from the home garden, the respondents often state that they would have a problem having enough food if they would not have the garden. Some of them even say that most of the food comes from the garden.

From the 30 respondents, 12 told us that there is not always enough food, or not the food they assume to be healthy or which they prefer. For some that means that they are not able to buy the relish that is supposed to go with the rice that they traditionally use to eat on Sundays. For others it means twice a day only porridge on a regular basis or even going to bed hungry at least twice a month. One of them told us that she and her family are forced to eat only porridge three times a week, for both of the two meals they eat on a daily basis.

The home garden is a major supplier of vegetables and fruits in most parts of the year, although there are also periods, such as during the fieldwork, that the one crop (mango for instance) is finished and the next (avocados, bananas) is not yet ready for harvest. In such periods eating just pumpkin leaves is getting boring (‘you can’t eat pumpkin leaves every day, all day’), but the other vegetables are then only just planted.

Apart from the food the home garden delivers directly, a lot of respondents also mentioned the fact that the garden was also supporting them with money to buy things at the shop:
‘We plant vegetables and eat them at home. And even someone can come and buy some vegetables for 10 Rand and then we can go to the shop to buy bread’ (resp. 14).

In summary, home-garden production generally contributes substantially to the food security of the respondents, who highly value the garden for its products.

5.4 Contribution of home gardening to dietary diversity

When asked what they had been eating during the past 24 hours, all respondents answered that they consumed staples, almost all of them referring to porridge made of mielie meal although some of them also mentioned eating rice. This high percentage is confirmed by the baseline survey that shows a comparable high percentage (95 per cent) of respondents (141 in total) who said they had been eating staple foods the day before the interview.

Of the respondents 86.7 per cent had been eating some sort of animal products excluding dairy in the past 24 hours while 36.7 per cent had consumed dairy products (49.6 per cent in the baseline survey). During the previous day 76.7 per cent eat fruits (mostly mango, although the harvest was almost finished and in some cases already finished – especially in Mutale, probably because we did the interviews there in the last part of our research), and 73.3 per cent consumed vegetables in the past 24 hours. Both percentages are slightly smaller than in the baseline survey, which revealed 83.7 per cent for fruits and 81.6 per cent for vegetables. The difference could probably be explained by the fact that the baseline study did not focus on home gardens but on small-scale farmers who had in general more land available than the respondents in the home-garden research (mean 6.2 hectare, median 3.4, standard deviation 10.8, which reveals a high variance, but still: only half of the home-garden owners did have some other land to farm on and it was hardly ever more than one or two hectares; the home gardens themselves there were hardly any bigger than 1 hectare – see Table 5.1).

Ninety per cent of the respondents said that some of the products they consumed during the past 24 hours were from the home garden: mostly maize, vegetables and/or fruits, although there were some respondents who eat chicken they kept in the home garden. There is a remarkable diversity in vegetables and fruits that people grow. Almost all the respondents grow more than five different products. Since people eat a
large part of the products grown in their garden themselves, this contributes importantly to their dietary diversity.

One of the respondents told us that she started growing vegetables after her husband died because she could not afford to buy them in the shop anymore. Since fruits and vegetables are expensive to buy, home garden production contributes largely to households’ dietary diversity. The respondents are overall very aware of the contribution the home garden makes to their dietary diversity:

‘The fruits are healthy and we don’t have to buy them’ (resp. 11).

Even the family that regards themselves forced to eat only porridge a couple of days a week, (and was the most food insecure family we met in Tshakhuma) told us that they did eat fruit and vegetables from the garden (mango, avocados, paw paw, lychees, lemon and pumpkin leaves) from the garden (resp. 9). Other people formulated it like this:

‘I love vegetables. The reason for starting this garden is that I don't like always to eat meat. So I am eating vegetables most of the time. (..) Yes, most of the healthy things are from the garden, because I have lots of fruits’ (resp. 16).

She grows: bananas, guava, avocado, mango, papaya, passion fruit, maize, sweet potatoes, sugar canes, pumpkin leaves, Chinese spinach, spinach, onion and cabbage. ‘I am planting all those things on this small plot!’, she adds laughing. The size of her home garden is approximately 10 x 15 metres. This is illustrative of the contribution of home gardening to people's dietary diversity.

5.5 Conclusion: a comparative review

There is a clear difference in scores between Tshakhuma and Mutale on a couple of variables (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Most noticeable is the size of the home gardens, which are a lot smaller in Mutale than in Tshakhuma (Figure 5.1): 60 per cent of the home gardens in Mutale are a quarter of a hectare or smaller – whereas only 26.7 per cent of the visited home gardens in Tshakhuma fall within this category (Section 5.1). The category 0.25-0.5 hectare also has a larger representation in Mutale (33.3 versus
13.3 per cent in Tshakhuma), while the largest two categories (0.51-1.0 and 1.1-3.0 ha) are almost solely found in Tshakhuma.

Also the food security people experience differs according to location. Asked whether there is always enough food in the household for all its members 11 people (36.7 per cent) in Tshakhuma and 8 in Mutale (26.7 per cent) say ‘yes’; from the 5 respondents who said they had not enough to eat at least once a month 4 lived in Mutale (Figure 5.2).

This is in line with the finding that not many respondents in Mutale seemed to be able to supply themselves with enough maize during substantial periods of the year, while a lot of people in Tshakhuma did. Furthermore the 10 per cent of respondents who did not eat anything from the home garden during the 24 hours before the interview were all based in Mutale and told us that it was because there was currently nothing to harvest.

Additionally we observed that the houses in Mutale were substantially smaller than in Tshakhuma, which was underpinned by some of the answers we got when we asked the respondents, 'If someone would ask you what kind of outside support your household would need to improve your situation, what would you answer?'

‘If the government can build me a house.’

*You don’t like living in the rondavel?*

‘No.’

*Why not?*

‘It is too small for four people’ (resp. 22).
‘The house is very small to accommodate all these people’ (5 people, MdH)

How big is it?

‘It is only 2 bedrooms and 1 kitchen.’

No bathroom?

‘Yes the plan has a bathroom but they never installed it’ (resp.18).

The planned but never installed bathrooms are common sense in the government-built houses in which a lot of respondents in Mutale were living (none in Tshakhuma), and some of them were in a very bad state, as this old lady told and showed us:

‘I would want the government to rebuild these houses, because they are not properly built. You can see that there are cracks in the walls. And when there is a lot of wind – you can see I put those bricks on top of the iron sheets, because they move when there is a lot of wind. If the government can do something about this situation, because some of the houses now are falling apart. They have to rebuild them. A lot of people are hurt because their houses have been falling when they were inside (resp. 16).

The data furthermore shows (see Figure 5.3) that in Mutale there are more respondents who, besides using their home gardening products at home (which everybody does), were trying to sell a part of their harvest; only four of the respondents (26.7 per cent) told us they exclusively used their products at home (seven or 46.7 per cent in Tshakhuma). A total of eleven people in Mutale were selling their products to either the neighbours (7) or a more commercial partner, mostly the people who make atjar from their mangoes. So there were less respondents selling their home-garden products in Tshakhuma (8 in total, 53.3 per cent), half of whom sold to commercial partners (mostly to the SPAR). The people who did sell to the SPAR were mainly the people with the largest home gardens or with another field they are farming on (which probably helps them to get a relationship with the supermarket, because they have more products to offer).
To conclude, it seems that the respondents in Mutale are selling more because they are struggling more, and not because they have a larger production (on the contrary) than people in Tshakhuma. However, that does not mean that the role of home gardening in creating food security and dietary diversity is less in Mutale. There was no one who did not use the home-garden products to contribute to the family meals and, as said before, the little money earned by selling home-garden products was most of the time immediately used to buy other food products.

In the next chapter gender patterns in home gardening will be explored.
Chapter 6 - Gender patterns in home gardening in Tshakhuma and Mutale

This chapter addresses the second research question of how the gender division of (a) labour, and (b) access to land and (c) access to resources does affect women’s contribution to home gardening within the household. It is based on topics discussed in the semi-structured interviews (see Section 3.2.1) about who within the household decides on how to use the land that is now the home garden, who takes care of the activities needed to be done in the garden, and how access to land and resources is arranged.

The majority of the households interviewed were female headed: nineteen in total, eight of which lived in Tshakhuma and eleven in Mutale (see Table 6.1). Most of the husbands of the women who currently headed the households had passed away, and – as was to be expected – the largest group of female-headed households fell within the age category of 61 years and older. There was also a substantial number of husbands, spread over the different age categories, who were absent because they were either living in Johannesburg – some of them were working there, others stayed there even though they were retired – or were just not involved in the family live.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1 Household composition according to age and location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshakhuma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that there were so many female-headed households obviously influences the topics described in this and the next chapter, because when the man of the household is absent or distant, his influence is usually limited. This applies, for instance, to the first section of this chapter which looks into the gender division of labour. Next, the gender differences in access to land (Section 6.2) and resources (6.3) will be analysed. In Section 6.4 we will consider the contribution of women to home gardening, while the final section (6.5) compares the two research locations and summarizes the findings.
6.1 Gender division of labour

In the female-headed households the division of labour between man and woman was usually not a topic of discussion. In the households were man and woman lived together a diversity of patterns occurred. Being a male-headed household did not necessarily imply that the men were engaged in either the work or the decision-making regarding the home garden. Of the ten respondents who were living together (there was one unmarried male) only three couples were both involved in home gardening. In all three of these cases, however, some suspense rose that it might, after all, be the woman who did most of the work. Only one of the female-headed households whose man was living in Johannesburg said that her husband helped in the home garden when he was home during the holidays (resp. 11). The other who told us that she and her husband were doing everything together (resp. 17) gave contradictory answers. When asked who did the ploughing of the garden, she answered:

‘Both, me and my husband, but he shows where to plough and how to plant.’

She also claimed that they were doing the planting/sowing, weeding and water supply together, but later on, when we asked her whether she would like to have more land, she said:

‘...I would love to have another piece of land, because I love to farm.

Then why don’t you ask the chief for more land?

‘I would love it, but I won’t manage with the work. It is a lot, because my husband has a problem with his hand. He does help, but most of the work is done by me.’

Later it turned out that her husband had burned his hand severely as a child, and was handicapped to the extent that work such as ploughing or planting was rather impossible.

The next couple to which we talked (resp. 24) revealed something similar: the husband told us that they were doing everything together, but during the interview it turned out that he was ill and his wife answered concrete questions like what was currently growing in the home garden. Furthermore it turned out that they had another field on which they normally grew maize, but they did not do so this year. Although they not literally told us so, this seemed to be so because the wife had just given birth a
couple of months ago and thus was pregnant during the time the land had to be ploughed and the maize should have been planted. All these things together gave us the impression that she was the one taking care of the home garden.

It seems like both couples wanted us to have the impression that the men were contributing (see Section 3.3.1 on ‘keeping up appearances’). In both cases the home garden was important for the family’s food supply and income since both of the men were not working (although the first husband did receive a disability grant from the government).

The last couple that claimed to work together was a bit older (67 and 64 years respectively) and told us a different story. She wanted to do the interview but said she could not do so without asking ‘the owner’ – by which she meant her husband – for permission. After giving his approval, which automatically implied that we should ask him the questions, he told us that regarding the home garden they decided and did everything together. But when we asked them when they decided to create a home garden the woman answered:

‘In our culture, if you marry the first thing you have to show to your in-laws is by starting a home garden.’

*Why is that?*

Husband: ‘Because you are now married, you are a wife, so you have to do it.’

*So you (the woman) have started the home garden?*

Wife: ‘Yes, the husband must go to work and you, as a wife, have to do the work in the home garden’ (resp. 25).

Hence she has been responsible for the home garden for most of their married live, until the husband retired some years ago. His answer to the following question underpins this conclusion:

*May I ask how much money you make with the naartjies and the mangoes?*

Husband: ‘You must ask my wife (...). I don’t know much about that because I have been working in the hospital and used to only come back during the weekend. But now I am on pension.’
Although the reason behind the contradictory answers was slightly different – in this case the male did not want us to have any doubts about his dominance (see also 7.1) – it seems again that the woman was largely responsible for the home garden and for the labouring, in any case until some years ago.

During the focus group discussion, the oldest participant pointed out another change in the labour division within the households during the last two decennia:

‘Long ago there was no money. So I was the one who was getting to the market – I would buy bananas and sell it – and get a 50 cents Rand and buy mielie meal and relish with it. The men didn't have work. They were sitting at home, maybe doing the pruning of the trees and weeding.’

She claimed things were better back then, because now the men do have money (because of the grants) and they go out and drink instead of working in the garden, which the other focus group members confirm.

‘The men don't use the money properly. They buy things that are not important like chips and alcohol' (focus group).

When asked whether all men are like this, they seem to agree on this:

‘All men! (.) Only 1 per cent is different, 99 per cent is the same. (.) you go anywhere where there is liquor, like in the bottle stores [bars, MdH]. Those who are not drinking are sleeping.’

Of the other seven respondents who were living together with their spouse either the man or the woman considered the garden as his or hers. In that case the one who is responsible for the garden usually does all the work while the partner is not or hardly involved in the home gardening. Respondent 6, for instance, has a home garden of 3 hectare, on which he and his brother work. His wife occasionally helps harvesting and selling the products. Another male respondent said that his wife never helps in the garden because ‘She is lazy’ (resp. 4). Sometimes the partner of the home gardener (male or female) is not healthy and therefore not able to help (resp. 7, 13).
When the woman (in a male- or female-headed household) regards the home garden as hers she often expresses enthusiasm for it:

‘As you start with a home garden, and you see things growing, you wish to have a bigger land. (..) When you see that you can pick up things like this [shows a butternut] it makes you wish to get a bigger area where you can get more of these (resp.1).’

‘I am enjoying the ploughing and working’ (resp. 3).

‘The garden means a lot to me, because I have learned how to plant. I have learned how to make a hole and plant the small plants. (..) I learned by doing, from myself’ (resp. 24).

You still do the weeding yourself? (respondent is long past 65 years old)
‘Yes! I love to do it. It is part of my job. It keeps me busy’ (resp. 29).

Although especially the younger women often tell us that what they really want is a job (5 out of the 6 women of 30 and younger; 4 of the 6 in the age category 30-60), it is generally accepted that the women are the ones who stay around the house. We for instance did not find one household in which the woman was working in Johannesburg, and when asked why they maintained a home garden many women replied that they either saw it as part of their job (as a wife) to clean the yard, to keep them busy or both:

‘The garden is very important to me because it keeps me busy while I am not working’ (resp. 2).

‘A was bored just staying at home. I couldn’t find work. Than I decided I should do something’ (resp. 5).

‘It keeps my mind away from things, because I am always alone. And it is also part of my exercise’ (resp. 16).

In summary, the vast majority of the home gardens are taken care of by the women. Although this is partly due to the fact that a lot of households are female-headed it also seems to be more a women-thing to maintain the home garden. According to an elderly couple it used to be the custom that a woman started a home garden when she got
married. And although nobody else mentioned this tradition, the fact that home gardening was regularly called part of cleaning the house seems also to refer to chores that are supposed to be done by women. A lot of women also mentioned that they were at home all day and therefore liked to do something around the house. The men seemed to be more away from the homestead and those men who did maintain the home garden regarded it often more as a way of making a living.

The women seem to be proud of the contribution they deliver to the household’s survival by maintaining the home garden and although they are mostly the ones to do the work, they don’t seem to have a problem with that.

6.2 Gender differences in access to land

From the nineteen female-headed households almost half (nine) had a home garden in the smallest category (0-0.25 ha). For the male-headed households this was a bit over a third (four out of eleven). Obviously, this is related to the fact that most female-headed households were found in Mutale where the home gardens were smaller (see Section 5.1).

We did not find any suggestion that the women were restricted in their access to the land available around the house. There is however a difference in the amount of households who have another field on which to farm: ten out of the nineteen female-headed households have another field while almost all male-headed households had another field on which to farm (10 out of 11). It is not clear whether this is caused by less access to land, less ambition to farm, or a lack of resources to work another piece of land.

There does not seem to be a substantial difference between men and women in the opportunity to get more land for home gardening. It is not easy to get land from the chief for both of them, because there is simply not enough land, especially around the houses.

‘It is very hard to get a piece. There is no space around here. So if you want to have a piece you should go to someone with a bigger piece and asked for a piece and than go to the chief’ (resp. 18).
Sometimes it is possible to get land further away, on the slopes of the mountains. Some of the women to whom we spoke did have fields like that.

In the focus group the women expressed very clearly that nowadays women do have the same chance to get land:

‘Yes, yes, we can own our own land now. We can own our own businesses. We can own what ever we want to own. Fifty-fifty. (...) If I want to buy a farm I can do it, as long as I do have money.’

Another participant:

‘Yes, we can also build the houses. There is no “man” and “woman” these days. We are all equal.’

When asked how it used to be, they answered:

‘It was ours to look after the kids at home, and to look after the home, cleaning and washing and doing everything that... you know household care.’

So women are more independent now than they were before?

‘Yes.’

The two women attending the focus group who did not have their own field to farm on and were working for one of the other women, did however make an interesting differentiation:

‘Long ago when we were working for the boers there was no work for a man or a woman. We all did the same job. We all did the weeding, we also all did the picking of the macadamia. So we were all carrying the whole hand of bananas, both men and women.’

Do you think anything has changed now, can you decide more for yourselves?

‘No it is the same. Nothing has changed.’

While referring to the situation at work rather than the gender relations at home, there comment is still remarkable; it is probably true that men and women have more equal
rights nowadays, but the reservation also made by the other focus group participants that you can do anything as long as you have the money, is crucial.

One of the respondents did have doubts whether it was possible for a woman to get land:

‘I don't know for now, because I haven't tried yet (.) but I haven't seen a woman around here having her own place. Most of them they do it here at home at their backyards’ (resp. 5).

This respondent also tells us that she did not try yet because she heard that it was expensive to get land from the chief. However, most people told us that you only have to pay a small amount of money to the chief to get a piece of land. Since it is communal land, the chief is giving Permission To Occupy (PTO); it is not to be expected that a large amount of money is asked in return.

However with regard to access to land in general and probably also from a gender perspective, the economic class to which one belongs might play an important role, as shown by the ‘workers’ cited above. The women in the focus group who were convinced that they nowadays had equal rights came from a different class than the two women who in the past worked for the boers and were now working for the other ladies. Two of them had a field beside their home garden on which they were producing vegetables for SPAR. One of them told that she asked the chief for another piece and that her dream was to produce on a larger scale and for other commercial buyers as well. She regarded herself as being in the business of agriculture. This brought her, and the other woman who also had another field on which to farm, in a totally different position than the ‘workers’.

The importance of class in gender relations was also emphasized by one of the key informants, Mrs. Rabothata (see Appendix D) who was awarded a PhD degree for her research into traditional songs and the way in which women use them to speak out for themselves because their culture does not allow them to be assertive otherwise. In her opinion the only thing that made women really equal to men was education. Only when women are as educated as men, she said, they are able to stand up to them properly and have the same opportunities.
In conclusion, regarding the land around the house the women generally are free to use it if they want to. The female respondents did however seem to have less access to other fields, although it is not entirely clear what the cause is. Furthermore, it is clear that getting decent land is not easy for anybody, male or female, because it is scarce. The next section addresses gendered access to resources in the two locations in more detail.

6.3 Gender differences in access to resources

Most of the people we interviewed about their home garden did not have a lot of money, which constrained their opportunities severely. They generally seemed to have just enough to manage to get by; some of them telling us that the last week of the month (before the money of the grants would come in) was a problem. Others told us that they sometimes had to eat only porridge for days and occasionally people mentioned going to bed hungry (see Section 5.3).

When asked what kind of support they needed regarding the home garden, there were roughly three categories of answers, related to:

1. Water
   ‘... if I can get a borehole so that I can have water easily. (..) I only have water three days a week’ (resp. 3).
   ‘More drums to put the water inside’ (resp. 10).
   ‘The first thing would be a pipe for water’ [respondent has to walk to the central tap on the road to get water] (resp. 21).
   ‘Water, if they could supply me with everyday water’ (resp. 27).

2. Seeds and fertilizers
   ‘...help me with the seeds for planting’ (resp. 3).
   ‘Fertilizers and seeds’ (resp. 5).
   ‘I want support like seeds, plants and fertilizer’ (resp. 9).
   ‘...if they could supply us with fertilizer, manor and seeds. Because they are very expensive’ (resp. 14).

3. Knowledge
   ‘Knowledge, obviously knowledge!’ (resp. 5).
'I would want people from the farming office to come and check my garden. See whether I am planting things in a good way. Come and inspect my garden and give me advise’ (resp. 15).

A couple of respondents told us they used their own seeds for maize and even for vegetables like cabbage and Chinese spinach. One however also tells us that she only does that if she is not able to purchase them, because:

'The more you save them, the more they don’t produce as much as the ones you buy’ (resp. 5).

Three respondents (all of them living in Mutale, resp. 19, 24, 27) get maize seeds from the government once a year; one of them also received fertilizer. All three of them had another field on which they were farming and probably received the seeds to plant on that field.

One male respondent with a big home garden (3 hectare) told us after the interview that he had tried to get a loan (from the government as well as from the bank), but that he had not succeeded in getting one. He was convinced that he could make his land more productive if he could hire people to help him (resp. 6).

We did not find an important difference between men and women regarding access to resources. None of the respondents had a job, a finding that of course is severely biased by the fact that we sampled our respondents by walking through the villages during the day at which time people with a job would not be home. Unemployment is abundant in South Africa (an estimated 25 per cent in 2014, according to the World Factbook of the CIA (CIA, 2014). Especially the women under 60 who sometimes only had one or more child grants, in addition to what they earned with the home garden, were in an economic fragile state. However also the families in which a lot of people depend on one old age grant are facing constrictions that, amongst other things, caused a lack of resources like gardening tools, fertilizers and sometimes seeds that led to some unused land as well:

'We have some land elsewhere but we don’t use it, because we don’t have the materials. (. .) Things like fertilizers, and we [would] also have to hire people to do the ploughing. And [we need] the hand ploughs’ (resp. 26).
Hence, as regards the gender differences in access to resources, we can conclude that in our sample, scarcity of resources seems to equally apply to women and men. With regard to the home garden some respondents from both sexes said they could use support regarding water supply, seeds and fertilizers. One female respondent asked for more knowledge, while one male was trying to get a loan from the government. In the next section the share of women in home gardening is reviewed.

6.4 Women’s contribution to home gardening

In the theoretical chapter (2.3) the household was introduced as a ‘bargaining unit’ (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012, p. 5) to serve as an instrument to unravel the internal power structures. The fact that the majority of the households were unitary (19 female headed, 1 single male) made this approach here less valuable. As mentioned above, in ten households there was an adult woman present besides the male head of the household. These cases therefore offered the possibility of the home garden being a separate subunit independently managed by one of the household members. In two of these ten cases the wife was either not interested in the garden (according to her husband), or was not healthy enough to help. That leaves eight households that could be regarded as bargaining units. In four cases the woman was clearly the independent manager of the home garden subunit. In one case the male was the head of the subunit, because they both regarded it as his job. She helped him out occasionally. In the other three cases the couple said they did and decide most things together but, as elaborated above (6.1) we had the feeling it was the woman who did most of the work.

These figures suggest that the contribution of women to home gardening is substantial. It underpins another assumption made in the theoretical framework (2.3) that home gardening is predominantly a women’s issue (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a; Ogundiran et al., 2014). The fact that a lot of the respondents regarded home gardening as part of their job (as a wife), is also coherent with the gender division of labour in a male-dominated society in which domestic chores and childcare are seen as women’s responsibilities (Meinzen et al., 2012a; Ogundiran et al., 2014). The suggestion of the focus group participants that today it is no longer a female task to look after the children and the house is not in line with the research findings from the interviews: the women
were still responsible for the house and the household chores, as illustrated by the following quotes:

‘To me it is part of cleaning the yard.’

*It is part of your work?*

‘Yes’ (resp. 8).

‘It is part of cleaning the yard’ (resp. 11).

*What made you decide to create a home garden?*

‘To make the stead look clean. It is part of cleaning’ (resp. 28).

‘I love to do it. It is part of my job. It keeps me busy’ (resp. 29).

The most illustrative quote, of course, is the one mentioned in Section 6.1 from the wife of respondent 25:

**Wife:** ‘Yes, the husband must go to work and you, as a wife, have to do the work in the home garden’ (resp. 25).

However, they were the only respondents who explicitly mentioned this, and the couple was in the second half of their sixties and their views might have been a bit old-fashioned. The answer below of one of the youngest respondents seems to indicate that things are starting to change:

**Would you like to have a job?**

‘Yes, of course!’

**You don’t want to stay at home with your kids?**

‘Well… You don’t have to stay with them, because when they need something you would have the money to buy it for them. Working helps a lot. It is better than staying with them’ (resp. 12).

For the male respondents it was mostly the other way around: they made their home garden into a job, or they started it because they wanted to sell some products or because they thought they needed the exercise involved by working in the garden. They never mentioned seeing their work in the home garden as part of their ‘chores’.
For the moment it also still seems to be true that it is predominantly women who engage in home gardening because the home garden is the only land to which they have access. Of the twenty-three interviewed women ten (71 per cent) expressed their desire to have more land to farm or increase there production; while only four of the seven interviewed men (57 per cent) expressed this desire.

Moreover, particularly for the younger women, the home garden seems to function as a substitute for a paid job, which they would prefer. It is not possible to conclude from the research findings whether work outside of the house would mean that the women would stop taking care of the home garden.

6.5 Conclusion: a comparative review

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the high proportion of female-headed households in the villages influences the outcomes of the research regarding the impact of gender relations on home gardening and, as shown in Table 6.1, even more so in Mutale, where 73 per cent (11 of 15) of the respondents was part of a female-headed household. In Tshakhuma it was 53 per cent (8). In both villages six female-headed households fell in the oldest age category.

The fact that there are so many female-headed households influences the division of labour: in the female-headed households the women almost exclusively maintained the garden themselves (apart from a single husband helping out when home during the holidays or a grandson or son that made the home garden his project). Therefore I did not have the impression that there was a lot of bargaining about the labour division or about the use of the land for home gardening going on in the households.

There seems to be a difference in ambition level between the female respondents in Mutale and Tshakhuma. In Mutale 54 percent of the women (seven of thirteen) said that she would like to have more land to farm, or other means to increase the production. In Tshakhuma this percentage is 30 (three out of ten).

If we include the three cases discussed in Section 6.1 in which we expressed our doubt regarding the male contribution, women were in charge of the home garden in fourteen out of the fifteen cases in Mutale. In Tshakhuma the amount was ten, but the amount of male-headed households we spoke to was also more abundant there (see Table 6.1). Therefore it seems fair to conclude that the contribution of women to home gardening is large in both villages.
In the next chapter we will analyse the autonomy of women in taking care of the home gardens and the influence this has on their food sovereignty.
Chapter 7 – Decision-making in home gardening in Tshakhuma and Mutale

As described in the introduction of Chapter 6, the majority of the households interviewed were female-headed (see Table 6.1) and that influences the autonomy of women, measured in this research through the ability to make one’s own decisions (see Section 2.3). There were however some male-headed households in which the home garden was maintained by the woman and the focus group on gender relations also gave some more general insights into the ability of women to make their own decisions.

In the first section the decisions regarding the use of the land around the house and the decisions regarding which crops to grow are reviewed. The second section describes the decisions regarding the distribution of food within the households and includes the question if things recently have changed in this respect. In Section 7.3 the decisions regarding market orientation are analysed and Section 7.4 reflects on the influence of the decision-making process on women’s autonomy. Section 7.5 compares the two research locations on this issue.

7.1 Decisions regarding land use and crop choice

One of the women interviewed started laughing out loud when asked if her husband agreed on the creation of a home garden:

*Who, within your household, decided on how to use the land that is now your home garden?*

‘My decision.’

*Did your husband immediately agree?*

‘(laughter) Yes, he agreed. He is not working. I’m the one who is working. How can he say no?’ (resp. 1).

And although she was not the average respondent (she recently retired from a job with social status and received her own private pension) we did not find any signs of debate about the land used for home gardening. All the female respondents who said they would like to have more land for farming pointed to the chief when asked who could give them the land. No one answered that their husband could give it to them. This finding was underpinned by our observations: around most houses all the land that was useable for home gardening was already used.
Remarkably it was one of the few male home gardeners who spontaneously started to make excuses for having made the decision to start a home garden alone and for being the one who made the crop choices:

*Who decided on how to use the land that is now your home garden?*

‘I decided it, because I was not married for a long time, only since a couple of years. So I’m the one who decides what to grow’ (resp. 6).

Of the female respondents 21 said it was their decision to start a home garden. In 16 of these cases the household was female-headed; in the other 5 households the man was the head of the household, but the woman made this decision anyway. Whether that large proportion is caused by autonomy or by the fact that women were/are supposed to maintain a home garden we could not clearly assess: in two of the five cases it seemed to be an autonomously taken decision but in the other three it was not that obvious. Nevertheless the women all seemed to be rather fond of their home gardens and although women often described it as their task, we did not see any signs of them experiencing working in the home garden as an unpleasant burden.

In six cases it was the man who decided to create a home garden and he was also the one who primarily maintained it. In the remaining three cases two respondents answered that they made the decision together and in one case the woman interviewed said it was her husband who decided to create the garden, and that they maintained it together.

Furthermore we tried to find out if things were different for the female-headed households in which the husband was absent because he passed away. For some of the respondents this was the case:

*Were you also the one who decides what to grow when he was still alive?*

‘No, it was my husband who used to decide. When there is a husband in the house he is the one who always decide what must be done’ (resp. 27).

*Was it already your decision to use the land for home gardening before your husband passed away?*

‘No, it was my husband’s decision before he passed away’ (resp. 9).
Sometimes it is really hard to find out who really decided on what:

*Who decided to start the home garden, was it you or was it your husband, back then? (the respondent told us that she had the home garden for a long time).*

'It was my decision.'

(…) *Did you husband also decide what to plant in the garden?*

'When my husband was still alive, he was the one who took care of the garden. He did everything: the ploughing, planting everything.'

*You just took over when he died?*

'We used to help each other’ (resp. 19).

In general it seems fair to say that the women in younger families have been more empowered and are now involved in the decision-making regarding land use and crop choice; a change in attitude confirmed by my local supervisor, Petronella Chaminuka (see Appendix D, List of key informants). Nevertheless we had the impression the decision-making regarding land use and crop choice was to some of our respondents a sensitive subject. Respondent 22 for instance gave us this answer while we were still in the early stages of the interview and did not discuss any gender or decision-making issues yet:

*Who, within your household, decided on how to use the land that is now your home garden?*

'Me. You can even ask my husband. He is inside.'

Her reply suggests that it is not customary for a woman to make this decision. Respondent 25, who did the interview together with his wife, made it very clear that for him it was a sensitive subject when, after being asked about the decision-making over the land used for the home garden, we asked him who decided what to grow:

'Why the questions about deciding? It is not necessary to ask this.'

In general, the one who is taking care of the garden also decides what crops to grow, with the exception of the couples who decided to use the land for home gardening together: they also make the crop decisions together.
To conclude, the agitation of respondent 25 on the decision-questions and other thorny or blurred answers gave us the feeling that the respondents sometimes did not want to reveal the complete truth to us on the decision-making topics. It seemed like they wanted us to get a good impression of them; that they want us to think that the husbands were treating their women right (see also Section 3.3.2., limitations of the research). Hence, we got the impression that most of them regarded it to be seen as ‘right’ when man and woman are equal. This in itself might reveal a change in attitude in a country were equal rights for women officially only exist since the implementation of the Bill of Rights in 1996, and, as debated in Section 4.4, knows a large gap between theory and practice regarding these rights (Walker, 2005). The food distribution within the household, which will be discussed in the next section, reveals a similar cautious change in attitude.

7.2 Decisions regarding food distribution within the household

The majority of the respondents said that the one who cooks also decides who will eat what. Hence, it is mostly the woman who decides because in this respect the gender patterns in this part of South Africa assign food preparation to women. The questions about who decides how much each family member eats evoked laughter or even a sense of outrage: the main message was that everybody decides for him- or herself how much s/he wants to eat.

*So there is no one deciding whom eats what and how much?*

‘No! I just cook and everybody eats as much as they can’ (resp. 1).

*Who decides who is eating what and how much?*

(laughter) ‘I am!’ (resp. 3).

‘In our culture no one decides. You just cook and everyone can eat how much they want’ (resp. 21).

However, when we persisted we sometimes got a different answer, for example from respondent 10, whose husband lives in Johannesburg:
Who decides who is eating what and how much?

‘Me.’

Has this changed over time?

‘Nothing has changed, it is still the same.’

So even when you were recently married, it was not your husband who decided?

‘Yes, back in the old days, it was my husband who used to decide.’

When did this change?

‘Now I am old, so it doesn’t hurt me, I just cook anything.’

What do you mean?

‘When my husband is around, I have to cook what he likes. But when he is not around I can cook anything I like.’

When asked if things were different in the past the respondents occasionally confirmed that back in the old days the man used to eat first:

‘(...) Yes it is true, the husband is the one to who the food would first be given, with the biggest pieces of the meat. And then it comes to the wife, and then to the children. (...) [But] these days... it is old fashioned. Even the kids are getting those pieces today that would have gone to the man in earlier days’ (resp. 8).

One male (respondent 13, 73 years old) who does the home garden alone because his wife is sick, openly told us:

‘(...) We are still doing it in the old way. When it comes to certain pieces of meat ... the head of the household has to eat first. We are still doing that here. So we haven’t changed the old way. But when I am not around, they can’t wait for me. They have to eat. When I am around, I have to be the first one to eat. (laughs). We do eat at the same time, but I start.’

Just like with the questions around crop decisions and land use in the previous section some respondents gave us the impression that they did not want to talk about the subject:

Who decides who is eating what and how much?

‘I do.’
Was this different before, when your husband was still around?
‘Yes, it has changed. My husband has passed away.’

How has it changed?
‘Nothing has changed’ (resp. 18).

Who decides who is eating what and how much?
‘No one.’

You mean that everybody decides for himself or herself?
‘Yes.’

Has this changed over time?
‘No, it hasn’t changed.’

Your husband was not the kind of husband who liked to eat first?
‘Yes, he was. The husband has to start and then the rest eats.’

And today does your son starts?
‘No, now we all eat at the same time’ (resp. 19)

We asked one respondent after the interview whether we could come back later to talk to his wife since she was the one taking care of the home garden, but we could not because ‘she would say exactly the same’ (resp. 7) and we could not convince him that she might have additional information. Other respondents tried to avoid telling us about certain aspects of their culture:

Who decides who is eating what and how much?
‘In our culture no one decides. You just cook and everyone can eat how much they want.’

Was this different when you were a child?
No, it is still the same.

Your father didn’t eat first or got the best meat?
(Laughs.) ‘So you heard about our culture? (...) Yes, it was different back then. The man, my father, used to eat first. And he has to eat inside the house and the rest may be in the outside kitchen or outside.’

But it is not like that anymore?
‘Now it is different. You can eat anytime, anywhere. You can even find some people sitting on the table, all eating at the same time.’

Do you think it is better today than it was back then?
‘The way we are living now is better, but I can’t just say what was done before was not good. It was also good’ (resp. 21).

Here the limitations to the research as discussed in Section 3.3.2 come to the fore once more: I got the feeling that people want me, as a white person, to get a good impression of their culture and therefore tried to avoid to talk about certain sensitive subjects or made things ‘better’ than they were in reality.

Nevertheless the impression is that the traditions in which the man was dominant in the decisions regarding the distribution of the food within the household are vanishing. The men who are still eating first and getting the best meal are in the minority nowadays. Here it should also be pointed out that the fact that there were so many female-headed households influences the outcomes of the research. That leaves unchanged that, as stated in the previous section, we also found a certain level of awareness of Women’s Rights, starting with the distribution of food within the household.

7.3 Decisions regarding subsistence and market orientation

In general the women seem to decide for themselves what to do with the home garden products and they only sell what is too much for the family to eat. Some of the respondents were very eager to produce more in order to be able to sell more. A couple of them were either considering to ask the chief for more land or had done so already and were waiting for his decision. Others did not think they would manage to produce more because they either considered themselves too old, unable to get more land, or lacked other recourses to realise a larger production (see Section 5.1). No one mentioned that they did not know how to market their products or that they had a hard time finding buyers; the main restriction for being more market-orientated seemed to be a lack of land, water and/or resources.

‘When we do the harvesting maybe we could take our products to the big companies, the maize and also the vegetables.’

*Than why didn’t you use the other field?*

‘(...) The water is the problem. That is why we can’t use it’ (resp. 24).
'More land means hiring more people and then I have to use all my money to pay the workers, and I will not have any money left for food' (resp. 10).

There seems to be a difference in market orientation between men and women since 39.1 per cent of the women produced for home use only versus 28.6 per cent of the men (see Section 5.2). Our research does not clearly enlighten whether this is the result of making other choices or of a difference in circumstances such as having less access to land and resources or having less other opportunities of purchasing food. However, the fact that in Mutale more people sell food from the home garden, while in Tshakhuma the home gardens seems to be bigger (see Table 5.1), contradicts a relation between less access to land and resources and not being able to produce for the market. In fact it seems like the less assets people have, the more they are eager to earn some money by selling their home garden products.

Nevertheless according to some of the respondents there appears to be a difference in decision-making regarding subsistence or market orientation between the sexes. One woman said that if it were up to her husband to decide what to do with the products from the home garden, he would sell all of them:

'It is different because now I am alone. (...) When my husband was still alive, he would have said that we have to sell everything' (resp. 27).

A focus group participant confirmed that men in general make other decisions than women do:

\textit{Do you think in general that women make other decisions than men do?}

‘Yes, just like when we are at home and have to take decisions on using his money. (…) Sometimes you’ll find that he doesn't have any know about the children in the house. The person who interacts with the children at home is the woman and she knows the needs of the children.’

The other focus group members endorse this viewpoint:

‘The women use the money better, they budget the money. The man buys things which are not useful, like sweets and chips when there is nothing to eat in the house.’
This assumption is confirmed by one of the respondents when she told us about a typical female phenomenon that we came across more often: the saving groups. In this case over ten women save 220 Rand a month during the year to buy groceries together in December. They buy things such as oil, teabags, sugar, tinned fish and beans with which they can use the whole year. Some of the groups save their money at SPAR and get discounts in return; others save at the bank but get their groceries cheaper because they buy bundles. When we asked respondent 14 whether men could do something similar she said:

‘Ai, no! (laughter) Men don't allow things like this. (...) When you are saving the money they will always complain about it and say that you are wasting your money: you are paying money for things you don’t have. But when they have everything in December they will say: yeah, you have done a good job. They don’t want things like this, but they want to eat!’

To conclude, we had the impression that in general the women who took care of the home gardens decided themselves whether they wanted to use the products at home or sell them. This was partly the case because so many of the households are female headed. Some of the respondents let us know that they were eager to produce more for the market but that they were unable to do so because of a lack of resources (land, money, water).

Although we did not find any concrete evidence for a difference in attitude between man and women regarding subsistence and market orientation, the female respondents as well as the participants of the focus group seemed convinced that there is. They ensured us that men in general are not as devoted to taking care of the food needs of the family as women are, and thereby they underpin the view of Meinzen-Dick et al.
(2012a) that in women’s budgets nutrition, health and schooling are first targeted, while men do not tend to place the households’ wellbeing on the first place (see Section 2.3).

7.4 The influence of decision-making processes on women’s autonomy in the production and consumption of food

In general the women who took care of the garden told us that they also decided themselves what to grow in the garden and what to do with the harvest. For making these decisions they have to make their own considerations and this contributes to their autonomy, as it is defined within the food sovereignty movement: the ability to grow what one individually values as being important to grow (Section 2.3).

What made you decide to plant so many groundnuts?

‘I was planting them for the children, so that they don’t go to the neighbours after school to get anything’ (resp. 23).

The theoretical chapter (Section 2.3) also stated that home gardening can be empowering to women because it could provide them with their own income (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a). If they grow things they can sell, this contributes to their autonomy because they can decide or co-decide what the money is used for:

‘We decide both. But the money from the garden I do myself’ (resp. 22).

‘With the money I get from my neighbours [for the home garden products she sells, MdH] I go and buy something I like for my family to have, bread, butter’ (resp. 1)

‘When we have money we discuss how to use it. I have to talk to my husband first, we have to agree’ (resp. 17).

Sixteen of the 23 women stated that they decided themselves how to spend the cash income they either earned with the home garden, received from the government in the form of an old age or children’s grant, or got from their husbands; six of the respondents said they decided together (some of whom are male respondents). In some other cases the mother or father-in-law of the respondent decided on the cash income. Not one respondent – male or female – answered that it was the husband who solely decided:
‘I decide myself. When it comes in I decide what I will do with the money’ (resp. 27, female).

‘As for the grant I decide myself, because I have to buy everything. The mielies, and also what has to be eaten with the porridge. As for my daughter's income: she decides herself, because she pays for her children school fees and uniform and things like that. But her children don’t stay here. They stay somewhere else’ (resp. 19, female).

Regarding the consumption the vast majority of the respondents said that they decided what the family would eat, and the next quote clearly indicates that this gives the respondent a sense of autonomy:

\[\text{Who within your household decides how your cash income is spent?}\]

‘(Laughter) I decide myself, because I am the owner.’

\[\text{What do you mean? Are you the head of the household, not your husband?}\]

‘Yes, it is my husband. But the one who takes care of everything is me. I am the one who buys food. I control everything. I am the one who knows what has to be bought, especially when it comes to food. So when my husband gets the grant, he gives a big amount to me so I can buy everything for at home’ (resp 14).

Although it could be the case that some respondents gave politically or culturally correct answers, it seems fair to say that the decision-making processes regarding the home garden contribute to the autonomy of the women, in both the consumption and production of food.

\textbf{7.5 Conclusion: a comparative review}

The majority of the women seemed to be rather independent in their choices regarding the home garden as long as we focus on the decision-making processes. The women who were working on the land were almost always also in charge of the production process. The majority of the women interviewed decided for themselves what they wanted to grow, what they wanted to do with the products and how the food was distributed within the household. The restrictions to their autonomy were in general to be found in
the lack of access to land, resources and water; not in a lack of influence on the decision-making regarding the home garden within the household.

There was some difference in the number of women making the decisions regarding land use between the two locations. In Mutale twelve female respondents said they decided to use the land around the house to create a home garden versus nine in Tshakhuma. However, this difference is biased because in Tshakhuma five of the fifteen respondents were male (two in Mutale). After having been corrected for sex in both locations about the same proportion of women interviewed said it was their decision to use the land that is now the home garden (Mutale 92.3 per cent (12 of 13) and Tshakhuma cent 90 percent (9 of 10)).

There was no difference in the decision-making regarding crop choice: in general the one who takes care of the garden also decides what will be grown and that goes for Tshakhuma as well as for Mutale.

The reluctant attitude as regards talking about decision-making processes was equally present in both locations, however in Mutale the people seemed to be a bit more reserved to talk about the distribution of the food within the household and especially about the (former) customs than the respondents in Tshakhuma. The research does not really provide an explanation for this difference; it was, for instance, not related to age, because there were more people in the oldest group in Tshakhuma (8, versus 7 in Mutale) and also in the middle-aged group (5 in Tshakhuma, versus 4 in Mutale).

The influence of the decision-making processes on women’s autonomy in the production and consumption of food was also more or less equal, although one could say that in Mutale the home garden more often contributed to the autonomy of women by supplying them with (a little) extra money, since market-orientation was slightly higher in Mutale. The decision regarding the selling of products however was the same in both locations: the one who sells the products mostly also uses the money to buy other products in a supermarket or spaza shop.

In general there does not seem to be a big difference in decision-making processes and autonomy between the two locations.
Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This chapter discusses the main findings of this research, first by formulating answers to the sub-questions, from which the answer on the main research question emerges (8.1). The next two sections reflect on the theory (8.2) and methodology (8.3) on which the research is founded respectively. The last two sections provide recommendations for further research (8.4) and policy and practice (8.5).

8.1 Answers to the research questions

1. What role does home gardening play in creating and sustaining food sovereignty of households in Limpopo, South Africa?

Chapter 5 showed the importance of the contribution of home gardens to respondents’ food security and dietary diversity. Although there were important differences between both locations, the home-garden products supplemented the daily meals of all respondents, particularly in the winter when the vegetables were planted and harvested. But also during the fieldwork period in the summer ninety per cent of the respondents had consumed products from the home garden in the 24 hours prior to the interview. Moreover, people told us that they either sold or gave away some of the products to the neighbours or, occasionally, sold them to a supermarket or food-processing company. Through these channels the home gardens also contribute to respondents’ food and income security: several respondents referred to the opportunity to go to the shop to buy food items like bread or butter after having sold some of their home-garden products.

Almost all of the respondents grew a diversity of products, commonly maize, fruits (mango, avocado, bananas, pawpaw), and vegetables (pumpkin leaves, Chinese spinach, cabbage, muxe, butternuts). As such, the home gardens also contributed to dietary diversity.

Through home gardening the respondents also experienced influence on what they were eating by making their own considerations on what to grow and how to grow it, which to some extent contributed to their food sovereignty. However, this was restricted by access to both land and resources: people regularly let us know that they would grow more, and sometimes other, products if they would have more land, better access to water or the money to buy fertilizers, seedlings and/or pesticides.
Hence, the answer to sub-question 1 is that home gardening plays a role in creating and sustaining food sovereignty among the study population in Limpopo.

2. How does the gender division of (a) labour, and (b) access to land and (c) access to resources affect women’s contribution to home gardening within the household?

This question was addressed in Chapter 6. Since most of the households were female-headed it was not always clear how to interpret the fact that the majority of women maintained the home garden. However, home gardening in general seemed to be more a ‘women-thing’, as also debated in Section 2.3. Women considered it their task to clean the yard, ‘keeping them busy’ since they were at home all day. However, they also showed pride in maintaining the home garden and in contributing to the household’s survival.

We did not find any signs that the women were restricted in their access to land for home gardening within the household; they were free to use the land around their house to grow things. Nevertheless a lot of women longed for more land on which to farm, but the main reason for not getting it was the scarcity of land available within a reasonable distance of their homes. In general the only land available is on the outskirts of the hills surrounding the villages and most women did not want land so far away. According to the focus group discussion, women are as likely to get land as men these days, but there were other respondents who doubted that (see Section 8.4).

A lack of resources constrained both the men and women to make more of their home gardens. Access to water (which could for instance be solved by making one’s own bore hole) or to fertilizers, seeds or pesticides could improve the harvest considerably. However, we could not find a difference in access to such resources between men and women.

Hence the answer to sub-question 2 is that the gender division of labour, access to land and access to resources affect women’s contribution to home gardening within the household: being around the house and taking care of the household tasks is primarily a woman’s job and this includes maintaining a home garden. Women see this as ‘keeping themselves busy’ or as one of the little things a woman can do to make or save money.
3. Who makes the decisions regarding crop choice, food distribution within the household, and subsistence/market orientation and how does this affect women’s autonomy in the production and consumption of food?

Chapter 7 showed that in general the one who takes care of the garden also decides what will be grown and hence the women were free to grow what they preferred. The majority of the women told us that nowadays everybody decides for him- or herself what to eat. As debated in Section 7.2 we suspect some of the answers to be slightly coloured by political or cultural correctness, but this fact also reveals a certain awareness of Women’s Rights. This suggests that things are changing and that the trend is towards an equal distribution of decision-making within the household.

Women also make their own decisions regarding subsistence and market orientation. Those who express a desire to produce more for the market point to a lack of land, water and resources as restrictions for doing so, and not to their husbands. There does however seem to be a difference in market orientation between the sexes: men seemed to be a little more market-oriented than women and some of the female respondents and focus group participants are convinced that men make other decisions regarding market orientation; decisions in which earning some money plays a more important role than taking care of the family.

The answer to sub-question 3 therefore is that women seem to be rather autonomous regarding food production and consumption: they make their own decisions regarding crop choice, food distribution within the household, and subsistence or market orientation.

This brings us to the final answer to the main research question:

How do gender relations influence the role of women in creating food sovereignty through home gardening in Limpopo, South Africa?

Home gardening in the two research locations in Limpopo contributes to women’s food sovereignty because a) the garden products contribute importantly to food provisioning in the household, and b) dietary diversity as well as the food security are strengthened by the food products and/or by the money earned by selling the products. Gender
relations influence this role by making women the principal responsible for housekeeping, which makes the homestead their most important living space. Because she spends most of her time around the house it is convenient to maintain a home garden; for some it is part of 'cleaning the yard'.

The women seemed to be quite autonomous in the decisions made regarding the home garden. It seems like the gender patterns within the household that could restrict women’s autonomy and that we expected to find based on the theory (see Section 2.3) are starting to vanish. This is partly the case because there were a lot of female-headed households, but it we also found a shyness of speaking about unequal gender patterns that seems to signal a growing awareness of Women’s Rights.

8.2 Theoretical reflection

The theoretical framework of this study, outlined in Chapter 2, builds on the concepts of food sovereignty and gender. The three components of food sovereignty – food security, dietary diversity and autonomy – are all viewed through a gender lens. This specific look constrains the wider implications that food sovereignty has particularly on the autonomy dimension: whereas this research mainly looked at the autonomy within the household, the food sovereignty movement takes into account the autonomy on a personal, local, regional, national and global level by including the power relations involved in the food market on these different levels in their analysis (McMichael, 2014; Van der Ploeg, 2014). In that sense this research is very limited. On the other hand the gender perspective should be a central feature in the food sovereignty movement, just like home gardening. This research shows that, through home gardening, women can essentially contribute to the goal to ‘(...) Build food sovereignty from below, based on small-scale farming and agroecology, not industrial agriculture,’ (recently adopted declaration of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign). (“Declaration of South African Food Sovereignty Campaign,” 2015).

Focussing on the contribution of women to food security and dietary diversity through home gardening is in line with food sovereignty as an answer to the growing anxiety about the dominant role of the world market in agricultural production (Van der Ploeg, 2014); the products, if sold, remain in local markets, thus creating localised food systems so much advocated by proponents of food sovereignty (Pimbert, 2009). This
makes women less vulnerable to sharp price drops typical for world food markets nor are they solely depending on the large food companies to purchase or sell food products because mostly they produce and distribute through local food systems. Since they do not specialise they are neither depending on a specific crop.

Home gardening also contributes to the food sovereignty goal of making people responsible for their own food production and realise their rights to healthy and culturally appropriate food. Home gardening can therefore be an important argument against the dominant opinion that the most obvious way to food security is for countries to fulfil their needs by importing cheap food. Through the hands of ordinary men, but more often women, home gardening underpins Pimbert's (2009) statement that 'Food policy is too important to be left to corporate monopolies, agricultural professionals and economists alone'.

In summary, home gardening by women does fit into the food sovereignty approach because it makes use of their knowledge and potential, enlarges food production and choice and, although this was not part of this research, it also seems to be a more sustainable way of producing since the products are sold locally, with limited use of fertilizers and less chance of soil depletion because there is a constant crop rotation based on customs and seasons. Women's autonomy also seems to be enlarged by home gardening because they decide themselves what they want to grow. Home gardening not only gives the women more autonomy within the household, it also contributes to more autonomy of the entire community to buy and eat what they like, as demonstrated by the fact that local vegetables like pumpkin leaves and flowers, muxe and delele were widely grown and highly appreciated; these vegetables would be not be available to a lot of people if there were no home gardeners and small-scale farmers who grow and sell them locally.

The research also confirms the claim of Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a), that home gardening has the potential to increase dietary diversity by growing fruits and vegetables.

Regarding the gender patterns we have found home gardening to be primarily a women’s issue (Ogundiran et al., 2014; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012a), but we did not find signs that the population therefore undervalued it. Only at policy level home gardening seems to be underestimated: just six of the respondents got some governmental support in the form of seeds or fertilizers once, but not regularly. The support that exists for
home- or backyard gardening seems to start at home gardens of minimally 1 hectare and focuses mainly on maize production, as key informants Maite Sarah Mafa and Hollick Netshirungulu (both extension officers) told me (see Appendix D).

The approach of the household as a bargaining unit (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012, p. 5; see Section 2.3) with several sub-units did not turn out to be very useful for this research because most of the households were female-headed. In the few households that did form a bargaining unit, the respondents did not reveal much about the bargaining that might or might not have been going on. However, there were signs of a very different approach of men and women with regard to decision-making on how to spend money as also emphasised by Meinzen-Dick et al. (2012a).

To conclude, the research underpins the theoretical assumption that home gardening is an undervalued and underexploited way of enhancing food sovereignty. Based on the results it has become more plausible that the influence of an increase in home-gardening harvests on food security, dietary diversity and therewith on health is large. An increase of home-garden production would probably also further enlarge women’s autonomy since they are becoming better equipped to take care of their family, which presumably gives them a stronger position in the household (if they are not the household head) and maybe even in the community, but the latter aspect was beyond the scope of this research.

The theoretical suggestion that it is mostly women who maintain the home garden is underpinned as well as the suggestion that women make decisions that are more favourable for the weaker members of the household. Therefore it seems obvious that in research regarding the improvement of food sovereignty as well as in policymaking women’s contribution to food sovereignty through home gardening should be a central topic.

8.3 Methodological reflection

My practical experiences in Limpopo strongly emphasise the epistemological position taken before I left for the field that it is not possible to find ‘the truth’ but that it is merely possible for the researcher to describe the reality of which s/he is a part. As also elaborated in Section 3.3.2 on the limitations of the research, the fact that I am a white, western woman did influence the research results, not only because the respondents react to it, but also because it coloured my own perception.
In hindsight, if I should do the research again, I might want to look for a way of integrating more in-depth interviews or even an ethnographic approach in an attempt to go beyond the culturally and politically correct answers that I sometimes seemed to have gotten. As my local supervisor also pointed out, it is understandable that people do not open up about these issues in one interview. If there was time to interact more then they could have opened up after they started trusting me. An approach like that would however take more time than I had available within the framework of this MSc research.

Furthermore I like to emphasise here that a generalisation of the findings is of course not feasible since the research was largely qualitative in nature and the parts that were quantifiable were too small in number to draw any general conclusions.

8.4 Suggestions for further research

Water supply
Since the poor supply of water by the municipalities was the mostly heard restriction on enlarging home-garden production, it is relevant to find out why the municipalities are not delivering daily supply of water, especially since the local chiefs who are taking over this service seem to do better. This seems to indicate that not the availability of water is the problem but the organisation (technical as well as logistical). A better water supply could improve home-garden production as well as the general living circumstances of people considerably.

Access to land
According to the focus group, women are as likely to get land as men nowadays. One respondent however told us that it should be like that, but that she had never seen a women getting land of her own. Although we met one woman who got a field from the chief, we do not know exactly how this was arranged and if her husband had played a role in it. It seems essential to find out how open access to land really is to women nowadays, because women involved in this research indicated that they would appreciate more land not only nearby the house, but some also farming land in general. We found that a little over half of the female-headed households had another field to farm, while almost all male-headed households had one. It is not clear whether this is caused by less access to land, less ambition to farm, or a lack of resources to work
another piece of land. If further research could find this out it might be easier to develop effective policy to engage women more in small-scale agriculture.

**Gender patterns**

I had the feeling that the gender patterns as well as the attitude regarding equal rights for women were changing. Almost twenty years after the legalisation of Women's Rights it would be very interesting to find out how far these changes have been implemented and how they influence gender patterns within the households as well as in communities. During the fieldwork I visited a couple of meetings for small-scale farmers and the women always formed a minority. It might be of great importance for their food sovereignty to found out if and how women could be encouraged to engage more in agriculture.

**Decision-making**

As elaborated in Section 7.1, a large proportion of the female respondents said it was their own decision to start a home garden, but I did not find out which was the main impetus behind it: was it because they were expected to or because they wanted to? This might be important to find out.

The same goes for the motivations behind the decisions regarding market orientation. As stated in Section 7.3, we found a difference in market orientation between men and women, but we could not enlighten whether this was the result of making different choices or of a difference in circumstances such as having less access to land and resources or having less alternative opportunities of purchasing food.

**8.5 Recommendations for policy and practice**

The most important recommendation is realising an improvement in governmental water supply. If people could count on having water more often they would be able to grow more, particularly vegetables, which would contribute to a healthy diet. In a couple of cases people also mentioned that the fruit harvest was limited because of a lack of water. An extension of the production could also enlarge the amount of products people market which has a positive influence on the food and income security.
Furthermore it would help people to enlarge their home-garden production if the government would distribute seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. We also heard people say that they did not plant particular things that year because they did not have the money to buy seeds or seedlings. The research indicated that there is hardly any support for home gardening in the Vhemba District at the moment. Considering the conclusions of this research, that seems to be a missing opportunity. It does not seem to be very complicated to organise some sort of support for home gardening since it does not have to cost a lot of money or effort (distribution could go through existing channels like extension officers, the chief or even the church).

One respondent also asked for more knowledge because she had basically learned everything herself and she expected that she could make more of her garden if she knew more about home gardening. It could be useful for women to exchange their knowledge of home gardening and the local extension officer could play a role in organising these meetings. Gatherings like that could also be sources of useful information for future research regarding some of the aforementioned suggestions for further research, for instance to find out more about the gender patterns or the access of women to land and resources.
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Operationalization Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Research method</th>
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<td>Food sovereignty</td>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>Access to food</td>
<td>What products from home gardening?</td>
<td>Survey/semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Destination of products (subsistence or market)</td>
<td>Survey/semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Number of foods or food groups consumed over the last 24 hours (e.g.: starch staples, dairy, all animal foods excluding dairy, legumes &amp; nuts, fruit &amp; vegetables (Steyn et al., 2014)</td>
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<td>See operationalization under gender</td>
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<td>See operationalization under gender</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>How is gender division of labour arranged regarding soil preparation</td>
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<td></td>
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Appendix B: List of the respondents

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<th>Age</th>
<th>Female/male headed household</th>
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Appendix C: Composition of the focus group

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<th>Social position</th>
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Appendix D: List of key informants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Petronella Chaminuka</td>
<td>University of Limpopo, School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences</td>
<td>Polokwane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(local supervisor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Maite Sarah Mafa</td>
<td>Crop scientist and extension officer</td>
<td>Mpumalanga (Thulamela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Khathutshelo Muthala</td>
<td>District manager Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Thohoyandou</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Hollick Netshirungulu</td>
<td>Extension officer, responsible for the Women’s Agriculture Competition</td>
<td>Thulamela Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. T.T. Rabothata</td>
<td>Head of a primary school; scholar with a PhD degree in gender and literature</td>
<td>Thsakhuma</td>
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