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GENDER INEQUALITY, POVERTY AND URBAN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN CAPE TOWN

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Abstract

This discussion paper aims to advance our understanding of the gendered nature of urban household food security and how it is shaped by the relationships between internal household gender dynamics and external social factors of gender- and race-based inequalities. The manifestation of the gender inequality-food security nexus at the household level is most evident in the different food-related roles and responsibilities adopted by women and men. These differences typically centre on tasks such as growing, purchasing, and preparing food as well as household members who undertake none of these responsibilities. Other gender-based household food security determinants include the gender of the household head and the household head's marital status. More than 20 years after the transition to democracy in South Africa, the legacies of racial discrimination and unequal access to resources and opportunities continue to shape the food security experiences of poor and low-income households, the majority of whom are Black Africans and women. External social factors that also influence household food security status include access to employment opportunities available to men and women. By using primary household survey results from a low-income urban area in Cape Town, we demonstrate these interconnections and argue that the pervasive poverty and income inequalities overshadow important insights about the role of gender inequality in shaping urban household food security.

Keywords

household food security, gender, race, Cape Town, South Africa

This is the 18th discussion paper in a series published by the Hungry Cities Partnership (HCP), an international research project examining food security and inclusive growth in cities in the Global South. The five-year collaborative project aims to understand how cities in the Global South will manage the food security challenges arising from rapid urbanization and the transformation of urban food systems. The Partnership is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through the International Partnerships for Sustainable Societies (IPaSS) Program.

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Introduction

Applying a gender lens to household level analysis of food security reveals gender inequality as both a cause and a reflection of food insecurity. In certain contexts, girls, women and members of female-headed households are likely to be more food insecure than boys, men and members of male-headed households (Adepoju et al 2015, De Cock et al 2013, Dodson et al 2012, Taylor and Chagunda 2015). The risk of being hungry and the actual experience of hunger are further elevated in urban informal areas (Ndobo 2013, Sekhampu 2017, Shishana et al 2013). This is especially significant in a country with high poverty rates and where nearly two-thirds of South Africans are already living in urban areas (UN-HABITAT and UNECA 2015). The focus of this discussion paper is on the connections between gender and racial inequality, poverty, and household food insecurity in the City of Cape Town. We argue that under conditions of pervasive poverty, the impact of gender inequality in the private and public domains on household food security can be obscured. Hence, a pro-gender and pro-poor understanding of household food security is one way to account for the impacts of poverty and unequal gender relations.

The general context of gender, race, poverty, and urban food insecurity experience in South Africa and Cape Town is first outlined. Then the paper provides a case study using AFSUN-HCP household survey results from Philippi-Browns Farm, a low-income and poor neighbourhood in the City of Cape Town. The connections between gender and racial inequality, poverty, and food insecurity are then discussed, highlighting three interconnected issues: (a) the gender of the household members and food-related responsibilities; (b) the gender of the household head and household food security status; and (c) the gendered nature of household income and household food security status. Although poverty is a strong driving force in household food insecurity, the paper demonstrates that gender inequality and unequal gender power relations also impact on household food insecurity.

Gender Inequality in Context

Although South Africa achieved political equality in 1994, legacies of injustice present contemporary challenges related largely to economic disparities along racial and gender lines (Cheru 2001, Moolman 2013). As regards issues of gender inequality, the Office of the Status of Women (2000: 1) captured the profoundly impoverishing effects of the gender-race intersection, noting that under the institutionalized racism of apartheid:

> *Rights, life chances and the distribution of goods and services were predicated along racial lines [and] respect for dignity of individuals was determined by the colour of their skin and, further within racial groupings, by their gender designation. [Thus,] the socio-cultural dictates of all groups defined female to be inferior to male and as such assigned to them the position of minors in both the public and private spheres of life.*

This intersection of gender and race thus created a complex hierarchy even among women as a group. In the two decades since the transition to democracy, South Africa has made great strides towards women's empowerment and gender equality. However, women's full enjoyment of the right to equality is a work in progress with deep and visible poverty masking evidence of gender inequality (Government of South Africa 2015, Rogan 2015, Taylor and Chagunda 2015). Advancement in education levels and access to employment helps to map progress towards achieving gender equality and addressing the legacies of apartheid.

Education

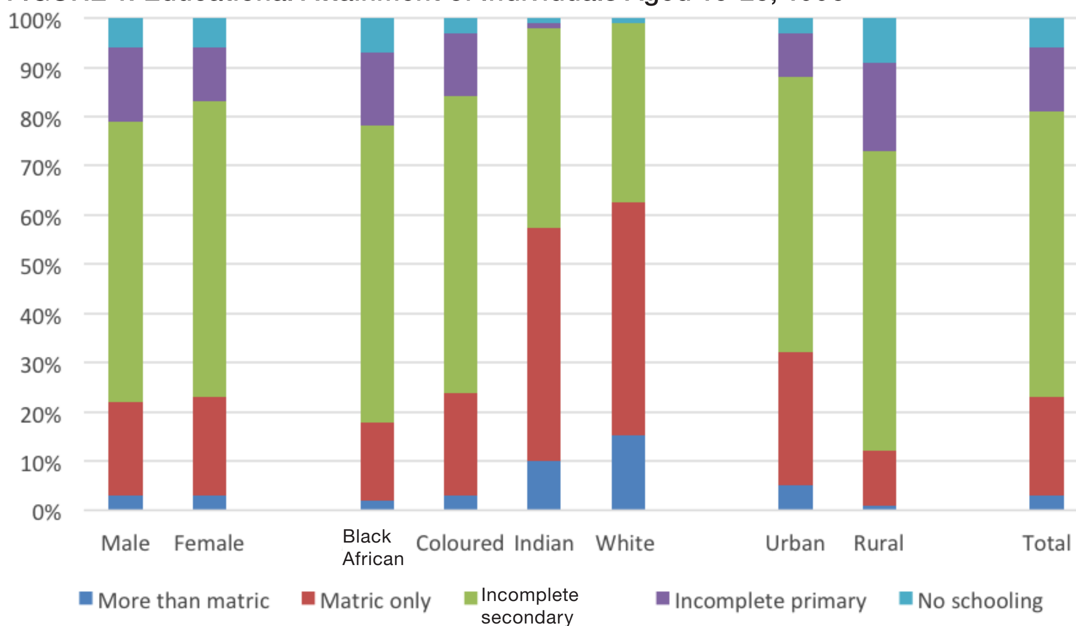
According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), significantly more Whites (15%) than Black Africans (2%) and Coloureds (3%) had a post-secondary qualification ("more than matric") in 1996 (Stats SA 2001). Similarly, more Whites (47%) than any other race group had successfully completed high school (matric) (Figure 1). Data for 2011 shows that

education levels for Black Africans and Coloureds improved, even though there remained a significant gap between the percentage of Black Africans and Coloureds with matric and post-secondary qualifications compared to Whites (Figure 2). The 2016 Educational Enrolment and Achievement report (Stats SA 2016) suggests that progress remains slow. Of those between the ages of 25 and 64 years of age, 38% of Whites compared to 9% of Black Africans and 8% of Coloureds obtained a post-secondary education. Despite an increase in the percentage of Black Africans and Coloureds with a high school diploma, these two groups still lag in the proportion of adults with post-secondary educational qualifications. Two main reasons for this are lack of financial resources and qualifying high school grades (Mitchley 2017).

The 1996 and 2011 Statistics SA data does not show any significant difference in the proportion of women and men with a high school diploma and post-secondary education (Figures 1 and 2). Tracking enrolment levels after 1994 to evaluate the post-1994 generation, the 2016 Education Series show that there were still more women than men with no schooling (55% versus 45%) (Figure 3). The 2016 data, however, shows that slightly more women than men have a high school education (51% versus 49%) and also post-secondary education (52% versus 48%).

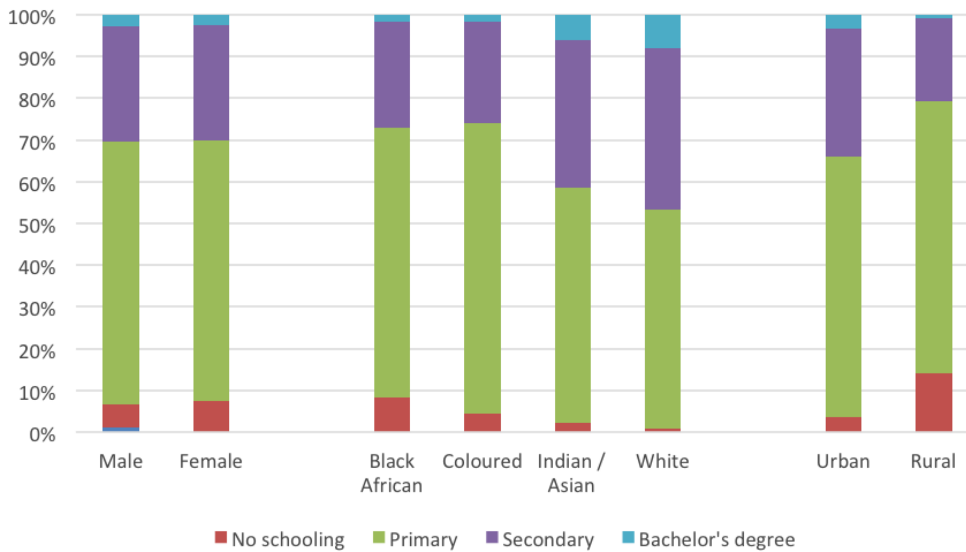
Urban areas have fewer individuals with no schooling and large cities have the highest percentage of individuals with post-secondary education. In the City of Cape Town, of those residents 20 years and older, slightly more Black Africans (2.5%) have no schooling compared to Coloureds (1.6%) and Whites (0.3%) (City of Cape Town 2016). Thirty percent of Black Africans, 27% of Coloureds and 37% of Whites completed high school. The gap between previously disadvantaged groups and Whites is more obvious when comparing those with post-secondary education: 45% of Whites compared to 9% of Black Africans and 8.7% of Coloureds.

FIGURE 1: Educational Attainment of Individuals Aged 16-25, 1996



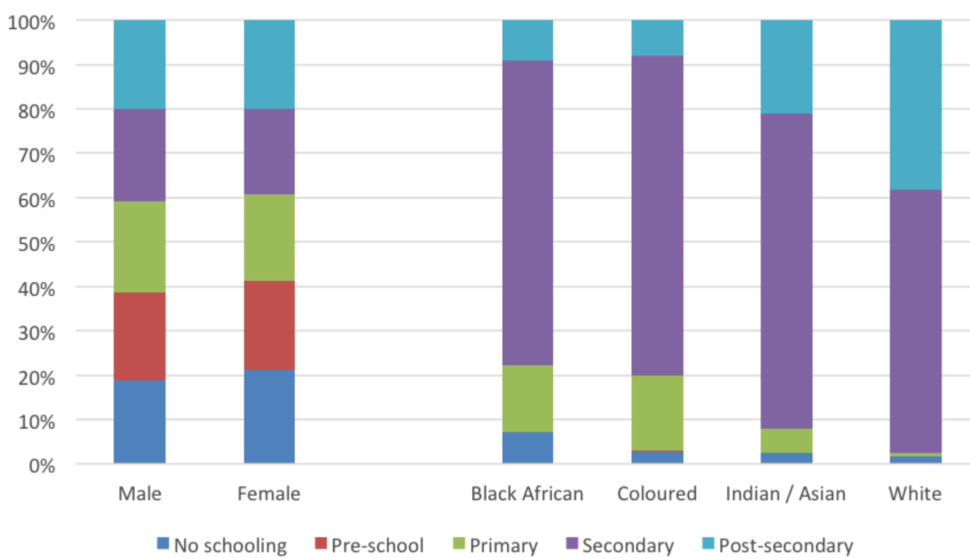
Source: Stats SA (2001)

FIGURE 2: Proportion of Persons Completing Education, 2011 Census



Source: Stats SA

FIGURE 3: Educational Attainment of Individuals Aged 25-64, 2016

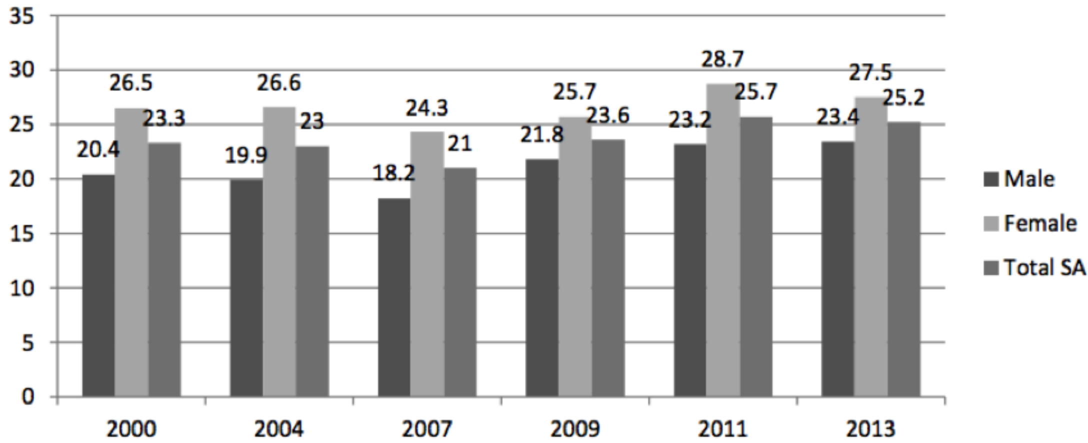


Source: Stats SA (2016)

Employment

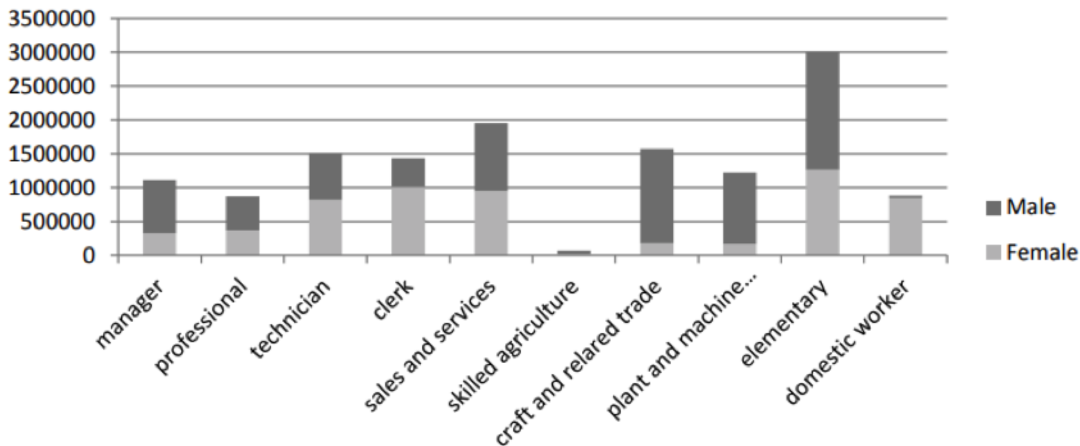
Post-1994 employment rates for women are not favourable. Between 2000 and 2013, their unemployment rates were consistently higher than those for men (Figure 4). There is also a disconnect between the proportion of women of working age and the actual number of women in the labour force even though South African women have entered the labour force in increasing numbers (Ackermann and Velelo 2013). In 2011, 45% of the labour force were women, and 75% of those were Black African, 11% Coloured and 11% White. The fact that the majority of women in the labour force were Black African might seem reassuring. However, a closer examination of "vertical segregation" (occupational status or ranking of jobs) and "horizontal segregation" (the distribution of the labour force across a range of different sectors and industries) suggest that women and especially Black African women are disproportionately found in lower paid, non-managerial jobs (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4: Unemployment Rates by Sex, 2000-2013



Source: Ackerman and Velelo (2013: 165)

FIGURE 5: Employment by Sex and Occupation, 2013



Source: Ackerman and Velelo (2013: 162)

In the City of Cape Town, the formal economy is service-driven and for the last decade the finance and insurance industry has constituted more than 30% of the city's economic growth (City of Cape Town 2016). This suggests that Cape Town's labour market relies heavily on skilled labour, which is both gendered and racialized in favour of men and Whites. For example, women are significantly underrepresented in senior management and professional positions. And, while the percentage of women in professional occupations is increasing, it is largely White women who benefit from these advances (Sharaunga et al 2016). Women dominate in the service sector in both the formal (37% versus 18%) and informal (20% versus 8%) economies (Table 1). Overall, the informal economy serves as an important avenue for women's employment in Cape Town. In 2015, 40% of informal economy participants were female and about half of informal sector workers were Black African while 15% were White (City of Cape Town 2015) (Table 2).

TABLE 1: Formal and Informal Sector by Industry in South Africa, 2011

Sectors	Formal		Informal	
	F	M	F	M
Agriculture	4.5	5.9	2.0	5.1
Mining	0.8	4.7	0.0	0.2
Manufacture	12.3	28.0	11.0	8.4
Utilities	0.5	1.1	0.0	0.1
Construction	2.6	10.9	0.9	22.3
Trade	21.9	18.7	58.1	35.8
Transport	3.3	15.1	1.7	13.3
Finance	16.9	15.1	6.1	6.5
Services	37.0	18.3	19.9	8.3

Source: Stats SA Gender Report, 2013

TABLE 2: Informal Sector Employment in City of Cape Town

		% informal-sector workers	% employment in informal sector
Gender	Female	40.2	4.1
	Male	59.8	6.4
Race	Black African	48.5	6.9
	Coloured	36.0	4.1
	Indian/Asian	0.5	3.9
	White	12.9	4.6
Education	None	3.0	16.9
	Less than primary	8.2	7.2
	Primary	5.4	6.1
	Matric	27.1	4.8
	Some tertiary	10.4	3.7
	Other	2.6	9.3
Spatial location	Urban formal	88.2	5.0
	Urban informal	11.8	8.0

Source: City of Cape Town (2015)

Food Security and Gender Inequality

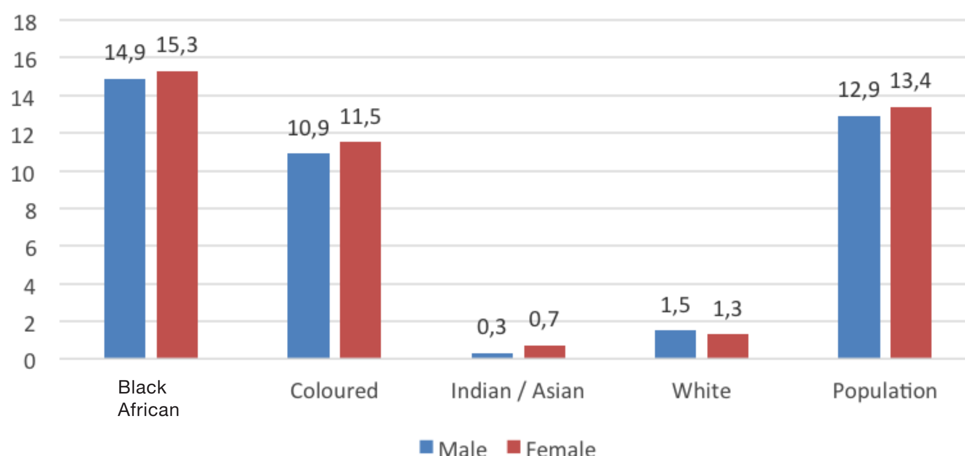
There were two significant food security policy initiatives in South Africa after 1994. The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS), adopted in 2002, advocated the formulation of "a national strategy which addressed the complexities of food security in a coordinated, interdepartmental way" (McLaren et al 2015: 38, Government of South Africa 2002). The IFSS established the current jurisprudence and government policy regarding socio-economic rights that prioritizes the most hungry, those most vulnerable to hunger, and, more generally, the poor (Brand 2003, May and Timaeus 2015, SAHRC nd). The second major policy initiative is the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS), adopted to replace the IFSS (Government of South Africa 2014). The overarching goal of the new National Policy is to serve as a framework for greater collaboration between the different strategies and programmes of government and civil society. Both these policies situate food security within the broader context of poverty (McLaren et al 2015). The NPFNS includes an explicit acknowledgement of the need for framework legislation to give effect to the right to food and this, at least, broadens the relevance of the issue beyond the question of poverty per se.

This pro-poor policy approach to food security adopted during the first two decades following the transition to democracy, saw improvements in the welfare of the poorest groups in South Africa with a dramatic decline in self-reported hunger and food insecurity (May and Timaeus 2015). Despite, or perhaps because of, the role of poverty in our understanding of food insecurity and the adoption of a poverty-based approach to food insecurity, the impact of gender inequality is not as visible. Women and men experience poverty differently, and according to Taylor and Chagunda (2015: 120) "the significance of gender and especially women's ongoing struggles in accessing their right to food" is laid bare through a closer analysis of people's experience of food insecurity. What also comes into sharp relief is the intersection between gender, race, and the experience of food insecurity. Black African households in urban areas are far more likely to have inadequate access to food than households in any other race group and many more of the households with adequate food access are male-headed (61% versus 39%) (Table 3) (Taylor and Chagunda 2015: 122-123). Figure 6 shows the percentages of women and men living in households that reported hunger in 2012. Women are marginally more likely than men to be living in households reporting hunger.

TABLE 3: Poor Urban Household Food Access, 2011

		Adequate food access (%)	Inadequate food access (%)	Total (%)
Race of head	Black African	71.3	86.4	76.0
	Coloured	9.8	10.9	10.1
	Indian/Asian	4.8	0.8	3.6
	White	14.1	1.8	10.3
Sex of head	Male	61.0	56.1	59.5
	Female	39.0	44.0	40.5
Source: Taylor and Chagunda (2015: 122)				

FIGURE 6: Percentage of Males and Females Living in Households Reporting Hunger



Source: Adapted from Taylor and Chagunda (2015: 123)

The next section of the paper describes the research site, Philippi-Browns Farm, and the methodology adopted in the 2013 household food security survey. This is followed by a discussion of the survey results with the following sub-sections: gender and household food-related responsibilities; gender of the household head and the household's food security status; and income and household food security status. In the final section, we conclude our discussion by suggesting a pro-gender and pro-poor approach to food insecurity, especially when focusing on urban households, in order to better understand the impact of gender inequality on household food security.

Methodology

Philippi is a suburb in the City of Cape Town, about 21 kilometres from the city centre (Figures 7 and 8) (City of Cape Town 2013). Browns Farm is one of nine sub-areas in Philippi. Philippi was first settled in 1833 and for most of the twentieth century it consisted of working farms and grazing land for livestock (Anderson et al 2009).

Urban Philippi is best described as a creation of late apartheid and the emergence of a democratic South Africa. The area urbanized at an extremely rapid rate during the 1980s and early 1990s when the relaxation of the apartheid government's influx control measures facilitated large-scale migration of Black South Africans from the rural Eastern Cape. In addition, political violence and overcrowding in more established neighbouring townships, such as Langa, contributed to population growth in Philippi through relocation. In 1994, coinciding with the first democratic elections in April that year, Browns Farm became fully settled. Provision of infrastructure and attempts at planned (re)settlement occurred after 1994.

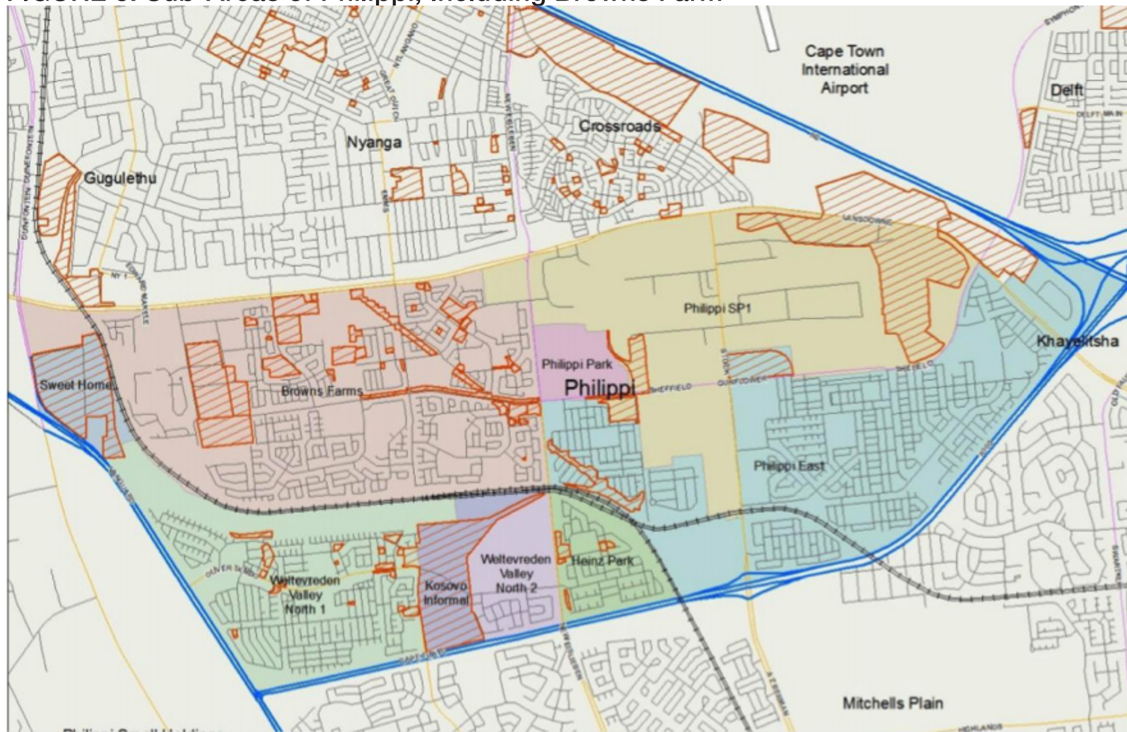
Philippi is now a low-income area with a population that is predominantly Black African (94%) (Statistics SA 2018). Its population increased by 73%, from 110,321 to 191,025 between 2001 and 2011, and Browns Farm is the most populous sub-area. According to the demographic profile generated after the 2011 Census (City of Cape Town 2013), only 32% of those 20 years and older completed high school and 62% of those 15-64 years of age, i.e. eligible to work, are unemployed. Approximately 62% of the 60,000 households are male-headed households. The area has high levels of informal housing as only 44% of households live in formal dwellings. With regard to household income, 78% of households reported a monthly income of ZAR3,200 (about USD305 at the time of the survey) or less.

The HCP household food security survey was conducted in December 2013 across the city of Cape Town (Crush et al 2018). This paper uses a sub-sample of households from Browns Farm where 384 households were interviewed in Municipal Ward 34. The survey participants were adult representatives of households with at least two members. The HCP baseline household survey questionnaire covered the following issues: (a) food security, (b) food sources, (c) household roster, (d) household data, and (d) social grants. The analysis in this paper links gender inequality with food security in various ways, including (a) household food security levels of male- versus female-headed households; (b) the food-related domestic work performed by men and women; (c) the employment status of men and women; and (d) the role of social grants in food security in Browns Farm.

FIGURE 7: Map of City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality

Source: https://municipalities.co.za/map/6/city-of-cape-town-metropolitan-municipality

FIGURE 8: Sub-Areas of Philippi, Including Browns Farm



Source: http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Maps%20and%20statistics/2011_Census_CT_Suburb_Philippi_Profile.pdf

Gender of Household Members and Food-Related Responsibilities

In many African contexts, women and girls are the ones responsible for food-related tasks especially purchasing food, planning and preparing meals, and household agricultural activities (Quisumbing et al 1995). The allocation of household responsibilities is certainly influenced by gender in Cape Town. For example, men are still viewed as breadwinners and decision-makers, while women are the home-makers and responsible for nurturing the family (Shefer et al 2008). These gendered constructs equate male roles with production and female ones with reproduction, which includes responsibility for the health, education, and general well-being of children and husbands. Amidst this practice of traditional gendered roles, there are young urban women ascribing to "resistant femininity" who expect "financial independence, freedom to make decisions, including over sexuality, and equality" (Pettifor et al 2012: 478).

Gender norms and cultural practices also shape the unequal division of labour within the household (Floro and Komatsu 2011). According to the 2011 South African time-use survey, women spend almost twice the amount of time as men on household work: 279.46 versus 106.47 minutes per day on domestic chores and care work. Men spend more time participating in the labour market (210.16 versus 127.54 minutes per day) and men also spend more time looking for work (10.95 versus 2.14). The time that women spend on household tasks, including food-related responsibilities, is also time not spent in employment outside the home or looking for work. In instances where women are working, they undertake household responsibilities in addition to employment outside the home.

The HCP survey provided empirical data on the division of labour in terms of food-related tasks within Browns Farm households. It included a set of five questions about who is normally engaged in buying food, preparing meals, allocating food, growing food, and doing none of these tasks. Multiple responses were permitted for each household member. Table 4 shows the percentage of individuals in the different row categories who engage in each of the five tasks. An individual might normally be engaged in multiple tasks and multiple people within a household might be engaged in one task.

The evidence shows that across all categories of food-related responsibilities, females are generally more responsible for tasks. In female-headed households, for example, 87% of the heads buy food (compared with 74% of the heads in male-headed households). Three-quarters of the heads in female-headed households prepare food, compared with only one-third in male-headed households. Furthermore, in female-headed households, 84% of the heads take on the role of allocating food, compared with only 57% of the heads in male-headed households. Finally, 20% of the male heads play no role in food-related tasks compared to only 2% of the female heads. Although 74% of male household

TABLE 4: Gender and Household Food-Related Responsibilities

Household member	Sex	Buys food	Prepares food	Allocates food	Grows food	None of these activities	N
Head	Female	86.6	74.5	84.3	0.9	1.9	216
	Male	73.8	32.7	57.1	1.2	20.2	168
Other person aged >18	Female	34.6	62.0	38.5	0.5	34.3	379
	Male	24.9	22.4	15.2	0.4	62.9	237
Other person aged 10-18	Female	5.3	15.4	8.9	0.0	84.6	169
	Male	2.5	9.8	5.7	0.0	90.2	122

heads and 25% of other male adults "buy food", this category unfortunately does not distinguish between the physical activity of purchasing and the provision of money for food. As a result, it is possible that some male wage-earners provide the money for food but do not do the shopping.

The gender differences are even more pronounced with other household members. Thirty-five percent of women versus 24% of men buy food; 62% of women versus only 22% of men prepare food; and 39% of women versus 15% of men allocate food (Table 4). As many as 63% of men play no role in food preparation compared with 34% of women. Even though the percentages for those under 18 years of age with food-related responsibilities are fairly low, more girls than boys play an active role particularly with regard to preparing food: 15% of girls and 10% of boys. Given the advocacy of urban agriculture as a solution to food insecurity in African cities, it is notable that the participation rates of both males and females are extremely low. Only 1.2% of male household heads and 0.9% of female household heads grow food. The fact that so few people participate in urban agriculture is consistent with other Cape Town findings (Battersby and Marshak 2013, Kanosvamhira 2018, Reuther and Dewar 2006, Olivier and Heinecken 2017).

In some instances, the gendered nature of food-related roles may slowly be eroding. For example, looking at the gender divide between male and female young people, girls are more likely than boys to be engaged in food-related tasks, but the margin of difference is less than among adults. The changing social and economic developments responsible for these changes include more girls accessing education, the increasing number of female-headed households where female heads are employed outside the home, and a growing awareness and demand by young women for more equality in personal relationships (Goebel 2015, Pettifor et al 2012, UN-ESA 2015). Unmarried household heads, predominantly female, are also at a disadvantage in that they do not have a spouse or partner to contribute to the economic well-being of the household, nor the unpaid labour required to run a household.

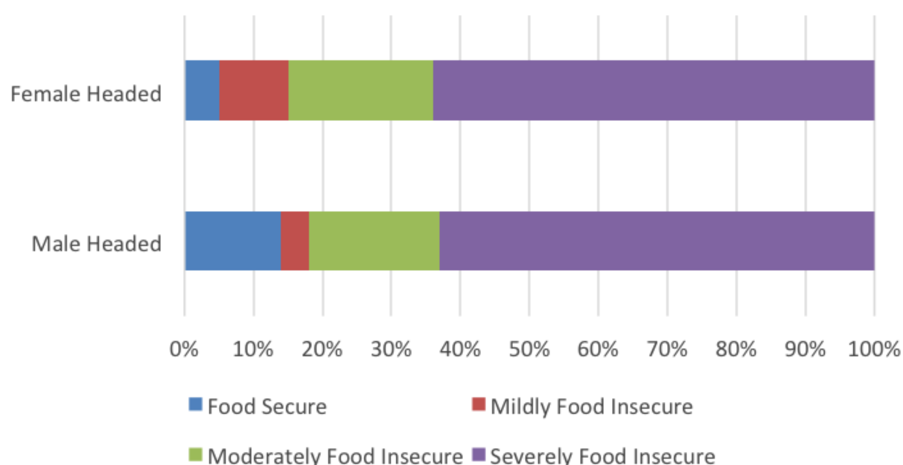
Gender and Household Food Insecurity Status

The Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) is one of four food security measures developed by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) project and is the key household food security metric used here (Coates et al 2007). The HFIAS consists of nine frequency-of-occurrence questions assessing whether households have experienced a range of problems with food access during the previous 30 days. Responses are used to calculate a food security score for each household ranging from 0 (least food insecure) to 27 (most food insecure). Based on its HFIAS score, the Household Food Insecurity Access Prevalence (HFIAP) tool assigns each household to one of four food security categories: food secure, mildly food insecure, moderately food insecure, or severely food insecure.

The mean HFIAS score among male-headed households was 10.8 with a standard deviation of 6.78 (minimum of 0 and a maximum of 25). The HFIAS for female-headed households was 11.0 with a standard deviation of 6.54 (minimum of 0 and a maximum of 27). Figure 9 compares the HFIAP results and shows that for both types of household nearly two-thirds are severely food insecure (63% of male-headed and 64% of female-headed). Despite the overall low levels of food security, more male-headed households are completely food secure than female-headed households (14% versus 5%).

The fact that household food insecurity is so high overall helps explain why gender differences are not more marked in the HFIAS and HFIAP. So generalized is the nature of poverty in the urban informal area of Browns Farm that all types of households face an intense challenge of food insecurity, irrespective of the gender of the household head. Browns Farm is thus not too dissimilar from other urban informal areas in South Africa (Rudolph et al 2012, Ndobo 2013, Sekhampu 2017). When households are extremely poor, the gender of the household head does not seem to be as significant a factor.

FIGURE 9: Food Security Status of the Household by Sex of Head



Understanding the gendered experience of household food insecurity therefore requires going beyond these metrics to a broader understanding of experiences of gender inequality with regard, for example, to access to education and employment.

Gendered Nature of Household Income and Household Food Security

Employment status is generally a key predictor of access to cash income and the survey showed that men were better off than women with regard to employment. Forty-eight percent of male household heads and only 21% of female household heads were in full-time employment (Table 5). The unemployment rate for household heads was the reverse of the employment rates: 16% of male heads versus 28% of female heads reported being unemployed and looking for work. More male than female heads had part-time or casual employment (26% versus 19%), indicative of intermittent access to cash. Even male spouses were more likely to be employed than female spouses, although the sample size was small. These gendered employment patterns provide male-headed households with the distinct advantage of an increased chance of being food secure.

As Figures 10 and 11 show, the employment status of the household head has an impact on the food security status of the household, in the case of both male-headed and female-headed households. In the case of male-headed households, 23% of households with a head in full-time employment were food secure compared with only 8% of households with a head who is unemployed. The equivalent figures for female-headed households were 22% and 12%. However, the figures also clearly show that irrespective of the employment status of the head of household, the vast majority of all households are food insecure.

A partial explanation for the fact that gender disparity in access to employment and the precarious

TABLE 5: Work Status of Men and Women by Position in the Household

	Head		Spouse	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Working full-time	47.6	21.3	43.8	20.0
Working part-time/casual	25.6	18.5	16.7	13.6
Self employed	4.2	8.8	4.2	3.2
Unemployed and looking for work	15.5	27.8	20.8	51.2
Unemployed and not looking for work	0.0	6.0	4.2	3.2

FIGURE 10: Work Status of Female Household Head and Food Security Status

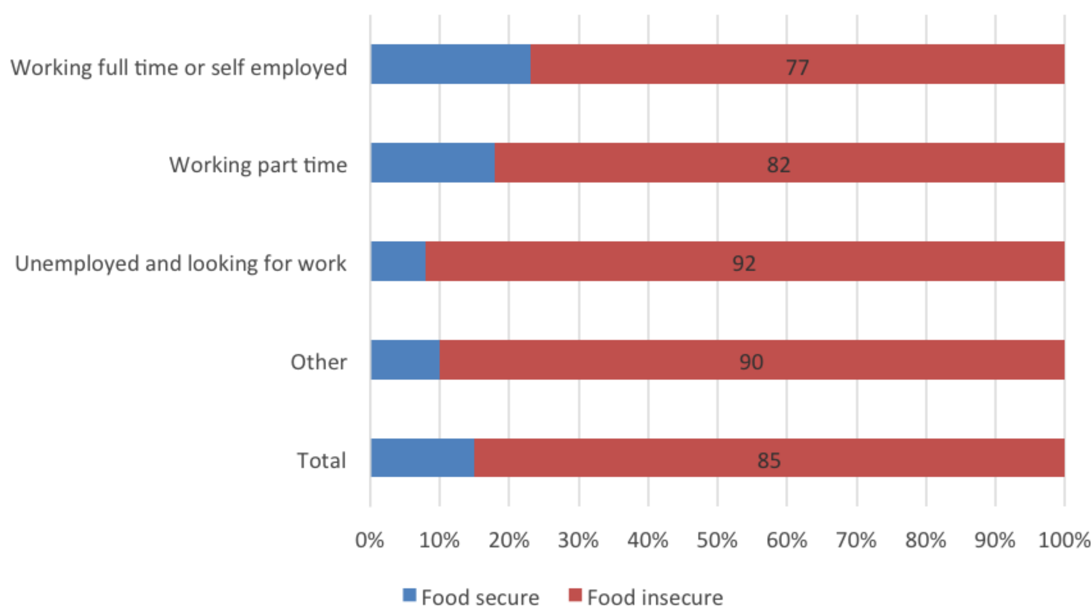
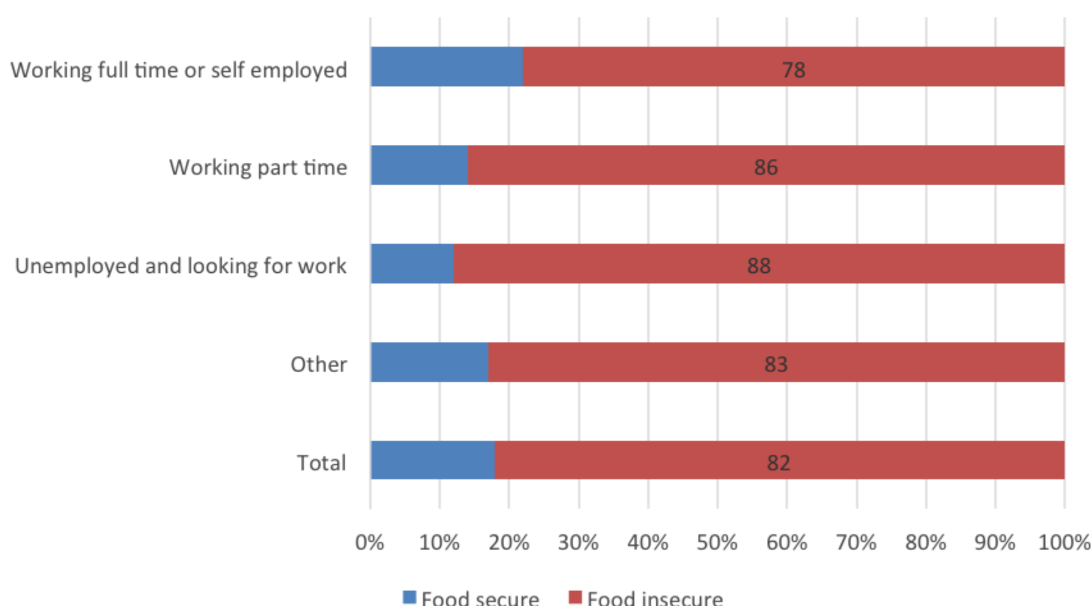


FIGURE 11: Work Status of Male Household Head and Food Security Status



employment situation for women relative to men do not translate into greater gender-based disparity in levels of food insecurity is the mediating role of social grants in stabilising income. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that regular social grants, and other forms of government-provided cash transfers, are essential for household food security, particularly for poor households (May and Timaeus 2015, Patel and Hochfeld 2011, Samson et al 2004, Sekatane and Sekhapmu 2014, Taylor and Chagunda 2015). In Browns Farm, 72% of female-headed households receive income from social grants as opposed to only 59% of male-headed households.

Research on social grants, and primarily the child support grant, suggests that these cash transfers are of particular importance to female-headed households. Dodson et al (2012) speculate that social grants could help explain the relative gender parity

TABLE 6: Relationship between Food Security Status and Social Grants

	% Food secure or mildly food insecure	% Moderately or severely food insecure
Female-headed households receiving grants	15	85
Female-headed households not receiving grants	13	87
Male-headed households receiving grants	15	85
Male-headed households not receiving grants	22	78

in household food security in South African cities (where grants are distributed) compared to cities in other Southern African countries (where there are no grants). What is clear from Table 6, however, is that social grants do not automatically lead to food security. Households that receive social grants, irrespective of the gender of the head of the household, still experience high levels of food insecurity. There are minor differences between female-headed and male-headed households. Female-headed households not receiving grants are the most food insecure with rates higher than male-headed households not receiving grants (85% versus 78%). However, male- and female-headed households that do receive grants are equally likely to be food secure or insecure. Among female-headed households, those that did not receive grants were less likely than those that received grants to be food secure (13% versus 15%).

Conclusion

In Browns Farm in Philippi, patterns of urbanization shape the economic, geographical and structural conditions that expose women and girls, particularly in urban informal areas, to food insecurity. In Cape Town as a whole, the state of being food insecure is influenced by gender relations and racial identities. This paper used a sub-set of data from HCP's urban household food security survey to explore the effects of gender inequality on food security at the household level in a low-income informal settlement in the city. Gender clearly plays a role in the allocation of food-related household tasks within low-income households, but the gendered differences in food security prevalence between male- and female-headed households were not as significant as expected. This was despite the fact that males enjoy greater opportunities in the labour market and have lower levels of unemployment than females. The paper attributes this finding to two things: first, there is the fact that poverty and food insecurity are all-pervasive in the area with very few households experiencing food security. Second, gender-based differences in access to income are partially compensated for by the social grant system, which tends to benefit female-headed more than male-headed households. These findings from a small area study area in Cape Town need to be tested in other parts of the city and in other urban areas to further expand our understanding of the complex relationship between gender inequality, poverty and urban household food security.

McLaren et al (2015) find that the target audiences for food security initiatives are those most vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity. This pro-poor approach is consistent with that of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC nd). Some programmes attempt to address the food security needs of specific groups of women, including women farmers, rural women, pregnant and lactating women, elderly women, and households with women as heads. This approach ignores the systemic and structural factors that leave women and girls vulnerable to food insecurity. For example, this approach omits women and girls in food secure male-headed households assuming that all the members in male-headed households are food secure (Taylor and Chagunda 2015). Such an approach also ignores the ways in which gender inequality operates by not taking into account gender norms that continue to ascribe social reproduction roles for women. Finally, a pro-poverty approach buys food, improves school enrolment

and alleviates women's child care burdens, but it does not change gender relations (Patel and Hochfeld 2013).

Mosse (2010: 1157) notes that the complexities of poverty involve "social processes that make poverty and inequality durable" including boundary making and exclusion which give particular importance to efforts of identity and social categorization (for example, of caste, ethnicity and gender). These efforts are long-lasting because they operate on broad categories regardless of the attributes of individuals. When food insecurity is predominantly experienced by poor and low-income households and solutions are couched in poverty alleviation programmes, the impact of gender inequality on urban household food security is potentially lost. A pro-gender and pro-poor approach to gender inequality, poverty and food insecurity includes "challenging the power structures and institutions that serve to reinforce women's subordinate position in society" drawing on existing expertise and knowledge ranging from feminist researchers to civil society organizations and generating gender-based knowledge through active programming (Gideon 2002: 870).

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