

Interdisciplinary Research on Food Security in African “Households”: Exploratory Directives ¹

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ABSTRACT Poverty, undernutrition and malnutrition are significant problems in South Africa. About half of the population, many of whom are subject to chronic food insecurity, subsist below the poverty line. Empirical research on food security and knowledge about the specific underlying causes of food insecurity are limited. The aim of this paper is to describe the specifics of the socio-economic factors influencing food security. A better understanding shall be gained about the characteristics of households struggling to attain food security. Special attention is given to gender relations and to the functioning of social network. This is the first sub-study in a larger research project (the THUSA project) in which the impact of urbanization on the general health situation of Africans in the North West Province (South Africa) is being studied. With its interdisciplinary approach, this study contributes to research in the field of food security, and uses qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings can provide a basis for information on household food security, which is essential for assessing nutrition policies and for the appropriate targeting and implementation of nutrition programmes. This paper describes the approach of the study, the methods used and presents preliminary concepts.