

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION AMONG CAPE TOWN STUDENTS:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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(MCMMOL002)

Minor Dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy in Climate Change & Sustainable Development
through the African Climate & Development Initiative



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South Africa

February 2016

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the participants of this study, and their willingness to have me follow them around the grocery store. It was a pleasure meeting you all, and I will always remember the numerous lattes and cappuccinos we enjoyed together at the Pick n Pay café.

A special thank you to Dr Shari Daya for her continued support and supervision throughout this process. Your insight and input have been exceptionally beneficial, and I appreciate this more than I can say in this short section of acknowledgements.

Most of all, I would like to thank the friends and family, both near and far, who have supported me throughout this journey. I am greatly indebted to you for your unwavering encouragement.

To all of you, once again, thank you—

Molly Scott McMahon

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Abstract

Much of current research on ethical consumption biases the North – South relationship of Northern consumers being considered ethical based on their purchasing of items from Southern producers. This establishes the dominant perspective of ethics needing to be expressed toward the distant other and to be based in a specific object, often typified by Fair Trade. These conditions of ethics have led to the assumption that Southern consumers lack ethics in their consumption. Thus this research seeks to expand the current understanding of ethical consumption to include ethics at home and ethics of care, as well as expand the demographic of ethical consumption studies to include Southern consumers.

The aim of this research is to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption through the exploration of ethics in grocery shopping among students. Students from various universities in the Cape Town area were observed while grocery shopping and interviewed about their shopping habits and their thoughts on ethics and values, particularly in terms of consumption and food. Twenty-eight students were interviewed, and of those, 23 were also observed shopping.

At the conclusion of this study, it is evident that students, as Southern consumers, do express ethical consideration in their consumption habits. This is based on both perspectives of ethical goods and ethical practices. However, they are more apt to act on the ethics of care at home than on the ethics of care at a distance. The strongest trends among students are thrift, care at home and care for self, as well as a significant draw towards shopping local and supporting local producers based in their communities and nationally.

The implications of this research are that it adds to the literature through its theorization within the Global South, its focus on ethical consumption as a practice instead of solely object-based and the discussion of students as a research demographic. Overall, this study demonstrates how Southern consumers do express ethics in their shopping choices particularly through care at home.

Table of Contents

Compulsory Plagiarism Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Context & Significance of Study	1
1.2 Research Question and Objectives	3
1.3 Theoretical Rationale	3
1.4 Organization	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Consumption & Consumer Studies	6
2.3 Geographies of Food	7
2.4 Consumption in the Global South	11
2.5 Ethical Consumption	13
2.5.1 Perspective A: Ethical Objects	13
2.5.2 Perspective B: Ethical Practice.....	17
2.6 Higher Education, Students & Activism	21
2.7 Conclusion	24
Chapter 3: Methodology	26
3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 Research Design	26
3.2.1 Participant Observation	26
3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews	27
3.3 Ethical Considerations	28
3.4 Selection of Participants	29
3.5 Data Collection	31
3.5.1 Participant Observation: Grocery Shopping Observation	32
3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews	33
3.6 Data Analysis	33
3.6.1 Participant Observation: Grocery Shopping Observation.....	34
3.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews	34
3.6.3 Complete Data Analysis.....	35

3.7 Limitations	35
Chapter 4: Findings	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Consumption & Higher Education	38
4.3 Ethical Objects.....	45
4.4 Ethical Practice	49
4.5 Conclusion	56
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	58
5.1 Summary of the Study.....	58
5.2 Implications	59
5.3 Recommendations for Further Research.....	60
Bibliography	61
Appendices.....	66
Section 1: Participant Consent Form	66
Section 2: Observation Documentation Form	68
Section 3: Observation Documentation Example.....	69
Section 4: Interview Questions.....	70
Section 5: University of Cape Town, Faculty of Science Consent.....	73
Section 6: University of Cape Town, DCA 100: Research Access to Students	74
Section 7: Stellenbosch University Ethical Approval	75
Section 8: Participant Location & Consent Table	76

List of Tables

Table 1	Participant Breakdown by University
Table 2	Participant Breakdown by Gender & Race
Table 3	Intended Sample Targets by Gender & Race
Table 4	Final Targets by Gender & Race

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context & Significance of Study

In academic literature, consumption is often framed in one dimension, as simply a capitalistic practice that centers on the product or products of purchase. This angle fails to examine the deeper conversation on how our consumption choices and habits are formed through a variety of social processes, and furthermore, how these actions become unique statements of self (Miller, 2012). When this is done, it establishes a more vibrant discussion, which is tied to a body of literature focusing on ethical consumption. Through this lens, the many political and social movements that relate to consumption take on a stronger role and demonstrate the ethics and social responsibilities that are very prevalent in everyday consumption choices, such as grocery shopping.

Focusing on ethical consumption more aptly incorporates social and cross-disciplinary elements of consumption, because it considers how and why certain products are chosen based on personal value systems, experiences and beliefs. The growing popularity of alternative food networks is an example of ethical consumption. This demonstrates how something as everyday as grocery shopping choices can become a space of ethical, social and political debate (Barnett et al, 2005a). Items such as organics, free range and Fair Trade are strongly associated with these alternative food networks. They represent an increased concern into where and how food is produced, as well as an introspective look at what our food choices mean to and about us. Nonetheless, the research on ethical consumption and alternative food networks is often limited to the narrow focus of examining the product of purchase, instead of examining the broader scope of the consumption habits (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). A more dynamic perspective on ethical consumption is necessary, one that is based on the practice of consuming, instead of the object, and one that relates to actions such as thrift, personal relationships and care at home.

Furthermore, research on ethical consumption, and consumption studies in general, most often focuses on Northern consumers and Northern ideas of ethical consumption. This creates a space in the research, where consumer ethics in the Global South are overlooked or not interpreted within their own context (Bijapurkar, 2008; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). In general, the trends and expectations of the North have long been broadly placed onto Southern spaces without true consideration of the role of place and contextualization (Hawkins, 2015; Pollard et al., 2009). In this way, Southern consumers are being “understood” only through a Northern lens with Northern expectations (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). One example of this common assumption is the expectation that ethical consumption is

predominantly based on the relationship of the Northern consumer and the Southern producer (Goodman, 2004; Gregson & Ferdous 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Varul, 2008).

Another limit to the current research on ethical consumption is that it focuses mainly on shopping for a household. This neglects the habits and ethics of persons living outside a traditional household, such as students. Students provide a rich space of interrogation because of their economic, social and political positioning, which contributes to a long history of activism on campuses globally (Littler, 2008; Wilson & Curnow, 2013; Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). There has also been a recent global trend of student led protests revolving around many pressing issues, with a strong emphasis on the access to affordable, quality education (Southey & Costello, 2015).

Access to higher education has long been seen as the step to a better standard of living and opportunity. However, due to various institutionalized barriers, many struggle to gain such an opportunity (Disemelo, 2015). Furthermore, students are often overlooked as active and demanding constituents in politics. This is changing with the growing number of students taking on social issues, shutting down campuses and challenging authorities to take them and their demands seriously (Southey & Costello, 2015; Boswell, 2015). 2015 was an active year for student protests in South Africa with both the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall campaigns gaining local, national and international attention (Fairbanks, 2015; Nkosi, 2015). This heightened attention to activism, movements and social rights strongly influenced conversations held with students on their grocery shopping habits. It also influenced conversations held with students about the role that coursework and campus experiences have on their individual beliefs and how they perceive and understand ethics and ethical consumptions.

In the end, the significance of this research is three-fold. It adds to the research on ethical consumption by focusing on an additional perspective where the ethics are tied to consumption practices instead of just specific categories of objects. This expands the research to include habits outside choosing Fair Trade, organics or free range to concerns for thrift and care at home (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). Furthermore, by refocusing the discussion on Southern consumers and situating the research in the Global South, it challenges previous assumptions of the North-South relationship associated with object-based ethical consumption and increases the data available on the subject (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). Finally, this research expands the conversation past the family household to look at ethics in individual and non-family relationships. The majority of consumption research has focused on family consumption, and in terms of “care at home” it has been based on the care of a family household (Gregson & Ferdous,

2015; Miller, 2004). This research expands the discussion to non-family households examining how individual choices are more than self-centered preferences and how non-family relationships lead to as much ethical consideration as family relationships. Thus this research provides benefits in expanding the discussion on ethical consumption in many ways.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

As discussed above, this research fills the gaps of the current literature by exploring the role of ethical consumption within the Global South, while also focusing on individual shoppers who are often neglected in similar studies. Therefore, the aim of the research is to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption, by focusing on the food and grocery purchasing choices of students attending selected universities in Cape Town.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Identify “everyday” food and grocery purchasing habits of Cape Town students
- Explore how and why students made certain food purchasing decisions
- Identify what role ethics play in the consumption habits of Cape Town students

1.3 Theoretical Rationale

This research considers how different objects and practices of ethical consumption take on different meanings and perspectives based on their association with specific spaces and places. This relates to both the discussion of ethics being tied to the object of consumption, seen with the dominant perspective on ethical consumption, as well as the perspective where ethics are tied to the practice of consumption with concern for where, how and why certain consumption choices are made (Castree, 2004).

There is evidence in the literature that Southern consumers are more likely to express ethical consideration through the practices of ethics and care at home (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). So therefore, this research proactively focuses on how the acts and practice of consumption relate to ethics, specifically in connection to the geographies of food. Furthermore, this research is positioned within the Global South and of the Global South, with a specific emphasis to not compare the consumption habits and expressions of ethics of the Global North to the Global South. Instead, it is to explore the landscape of ethical consumption within the Global South, from a Southern perspective. And while the research focuses on the themes and example of ethical practices, it also takes into account the role of ethical objects in consumption.

Nonetheless, the current research, in both the Global North and Global South, is generally based on the consumption of a household, particularly family-based households. This places student-only households on the periphery, not based on their student status, but due to the individualness of their consumption habits and being outside a family-based household. Furthermore, other research has expressed that single persons are less likely to express ethical or emotional consumption habits (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Miller, 2004), thus placing this research in a position to challenge and add to ongoing conversations on ethical consumption in multiple fashions.

Students, as a demographic, provide a wealth of information due to their unique positioning. Furthermore, the space of higher education often acts as a space to develop new ideas and ways of thinking that may, in fact, encourage students to be more conscious of their role in relationships and society. However, due to limited resources, students do not necessarily have the means to purchase free range and organics. With this consideration, it establishes the rationale that students are potentially expressing ethical consumption more through expressions of care and thrift. Therefore, the geography of food and the consideration of ethical consumption in the Global South take on a dynamic position within this research.

1.4 Organization

This research thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and outlines the context and significance of this study, the research question, objectives and the theoretical rationale. The second chapter contains a review of the current literature using a geographical lens to explore the current research surrounding consumption in general, ethical consumption specifically, the current research on students and higher education, and how this relates to both consumption and ethical consumption studies. The third chapter outlines the methodology of this research, explaining the breakdown of methods, as well as the process in which this research was planned and executed. The fourth chapter concerns the findings of this research, specifically how this research adds to the conversations on students as consumers and how ethical consumption is understood and acted upon by students in Cape Town. The final chapter is a conclusion, which summarizes the research conducted, explores the significance of this research and makes suggestions for future research. Appendices containing supplementary documentation and reference materials can be found at the end of this document. Overall, this document provides a thorough overview of this research's development, execution and contribution.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Studies on consumers and consumption represent the importance of the everyday choices made throughout the world and among varying and differing cultures. However, there are numerous perspectives on this subject, all situated in various disciplines. Nonetheless, by focusing on the geographies of food, the role of consumption takes an interesting shape that spans various fields of research and works within both traditional and alternative economic markets, often in an overlapping, compromising and conflicting fashion. Working within this diverse landscape of consumption and food, the conversations around ethical consumption represent one example of this. There are differing perspectives on how ethics are understood, experienced and acted upon in consumption. These perspectives are often nuanced and overlapping, and most studies do not explicitly take a binary line. Nonetheless, two perspectives that often dominate the conversation can be summarized as 1) objects of consumption have ethical value and 2) practices of consumption have ethical value (Barnett et al, 2005a; Barnett et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

Both perspectives are relevant and demonstrated in the literature, but they take on different meanings and resonate with different demographics and spaces. One example of this is along the divide of the Global North and Global South. Within these diverse spaces and places, consumption and ethical consumption take on their own meaning and roles: socially, economically and politically. Therefore, it is not only important to consider multiple perspectives of consumption and ethical consumption but also seek to understand consumers from their specific cultural and geographical perspective, in this case from the context of the Global South as its own space and people (Gregson & Ferdous 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

Nonetheless, much of the research that currently exists focuses on family and household consumption (Gregson & Ferdous 2015; Lachance & Choquette-Bernier, 2004; Miller, 2004; Sabri et al, 2010). This neglects single member households and non-family households, such as students who live independently, though often with other students. Furthermore, experiences at higher education institutions have a great impact on students' perspectives and understanding of the world and society, and this often extends to consumption habits (Lachance & Choquette-Bernier, 2004; Sabri et al, 2010; Wilson & Curnow, 2013). This suggests that students may provide an important demographic to explore the geographies of food and ethical consumption.

The following literature review explores some of the current perspectives on consumption and consumer studies, specifically considering food as a consumer object. Then it discusses the subject of geographies of food looking at commodity studies and alternative food networks, before investigating the current research on ethical consumption. Finally, this review explains why activism, students and higher education are linked with consumption studies and ethical consumption.

2.2 Consumption & Consumer Studies

Acts of consumption and consumerism have found themselves deeply rooted in society (Gibson-Graham, 2008). And while it is easy to simply brush studies on consumption as fetishizing or as attempts to justify over indulgence, the meanings behind this consumption is usually more than just hedonism (Miller, 1998a; Popke, 2006). Miller (1998a) argues that while not every item may “matter,” some “stuff” does matter. He further emphasizes that it is not a question of an object being important. It is a question of the object or item mattering. Establishing the “mattering” of an item presents additional questions, thoughts and concerns that revolve around how and why an item is chosen, as well as how this item is positioned within culture and identity, and how it fits within society (Castree, 2004; Miller, 1998a). Thus it is this mattering that adds more depth to such studies. It establishes a more robust perspective on consumption, which includes not only a consideration of why studies on stuff are important, but also how ethics and morals are represented in these spaces, and how different geographical theorizations and understandings are all necessary.

Many academics have steered away from studying “stuff,” in terms of consumerism, because there is a stigma that such research simply encourages fetishism (Miller, 1998a). According to Marxist theory, the capitalist economy has led to the fetishization of commodities, leading society to associate “natural laws” to the economy, economic systems and the items they are purchasing (Gunderson, 2014). Miller (1998a) argues that this paints everything with one brush, and that, in fact, the things we buy have great resonance in our lives, and that they grow to represent more than just class or status, as generally argued. Furthermore, there are already various academic disciplines and studies that revolve around material culture. They just happened to have been established individually, thus they are not usually situated under the umbrella of “material culture” or “consumption studies” (Miller, 1998a).

Historically, the role of archaeology and certain historical studies has been to find and understand the everyday items of ancient cultures and civilizations in order to better comprehend life during those periods. By considering consumption from a historical perspective, it places a different emphasis on the “items” and “stuff” of ancient times and

distances itself from “fetishism” accusations (Miller, 1998a). According to Stearns (2001), the culture of consumption today commenced around the end of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, its origins are from the time when aristocrats moved away from a simple style of living and began to increase possessions. Likewise, the merchant class was growing in size, and there was a desire to emulate this aristocratic behavior. Thus the culture of consumption began. Consumerism then spread through Western Europe, to the Americas and eventually around the world. This global spread has largely been associated with “Westernization” and the influence of globalization (Stearns, 2001).

However, there are historical signs of consumer culture and material acquisition in Africa and Asia before Western influence. Looking at Africa specifically, Stearns (2001) examines how Western consumer behavior was more quickly adopted by the people in Africa for reasons such as popular preferences for colorful style and the cultural importance of self-presentation. Other influences include the fact that, as opposed to Western and Eastern religions such as Christianity and Buddhism, there were less religious pressures against material accumulation in African cultures. Nonetheless, it was through the influence of explorers and colonialism that interest in Western products, specifically guns, clothing and jewelry, grew rapidly. However, this only added to the already present cultural practices, and does not represent the start of material accumulation in Africa (Stearns, 2001; Richard, 2010). This is an important distinction to make as it demonstrates the value of studying consumption habits from a relevant historical, geographical or cultural lens. The historical acknowledgement of African consumerism supports the continued need for a Southern theoretical perspective on Southern consumption instead of examining themes through the lens of Western exploration and influence. It also introduces the historical prevalence of global economic flows and demonstrates how Southern theorization does not need to exclude Northern influences but at least acknowledge the positioning of these relationships in the discussion (Richard, 2010).

Thus consumption and its role in society is more than the accumulation of “stuff,” it represents cultural values and individual social relationships that are unique and locally developed within specific spaces and under particular circumstances. Similar relationships within consumption are seen in our everyday choices as well, such as how we engage with food.

2.3 Geographies of Food

Food plays vital roles in society, from the basic need of hunger to the powerful social, political and economic status that it holds. Nonetheless, its role and the understanding of its place in society have many shapes and perspectives. The geographies of food are apparent in various types of studies and conversations such as commodity studies, alternative food networks and

moral geographies. Food as an entry point links these different studies and conversations together, building a dynamic discussion of how the straight forward choice “to eat” is tied to a much more complex and interesting network of choices, values and privileges.

An example of these complex networks, spaces and relationships is seen in Miller’s (1998b) exploration of Cocoa-Cola production and consumption in Trinidad. The everyday and inconsequential consumption of a Coke is broken down to demonstrate the dynamics between global chains, their symbolisms and the way that they resonant locally. In Trinidad, Coke has a strong cultural meaning for its association with social activities, specifically with “Rum and Coke,” as a popular adult beverage, and a general preference for sweet drinks at all age levels. From this basis, Miller describes how the production of Coke in Trinidad is actually a very local process, because the concentrated syrup is purchased independently and then local companies mix the concentrate, bottle the liquid and sell it on the island. The bottles used are even produced on the island by a local company. Thus Coke is not seen as an import from the United States. It is seen as something created in Trinidad, for the people of Trinidad. Nonetheless, without taking the time and effort to understand how and why Coca-Cola came to be on the island and established itself as a preferred drink, it would simply be seen as an example of globalization and a projection of Western culture, which is only one side of the story (Miller, 1998b).

This type of study on a product within a certain space relates to consumption studies, and more directly with commodity chains. Commodity studies consider how production and consumption tie different spaces together, and further demonstrate the cultural and historical values in consumption (Castree, 2004). Thus commodity chains are insightful in tracking and understanding how something is produced and gains meaning within consumer culture, including foods such as sugar, chicken and even frozen Indian-inspired microwavable meals (Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008; Murdoch & Miele, 2004). They also demonstrate the ties between local and global and establish an understanding of how and why products move, as well as demonstrate the need to consider consumption and consumer habits with a location relevant perspective (Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008; Massey, 2004; Murdoch & Miele, 2004). This is very apparent with the case study on Coca-Cola in Trinidad, and how a product from an international corporation can actually have very strong local resonance to counter other products that may seem more outwardly locally based.

However, commodity chains do not need to be so spatially bound. They can also refer to larger trends and networks. An example of this is a comparison of the fast food industry, iconized by McDonald’s, and the Slow Food movement (Murdoch & Miele, 2004). This comparative case

study pushes beyond the production and industrialization of food items and focuses on the consumption practices at work. By expanding the research and understanding of commodity chains to include the consumption influences for the demand, an additional layer of complexity is added. This integrates the consumer and demand market within the chain and establishes a more holistic understanding of the food item's placement in society.

Within this example, McDonald's represents the standardization and uniformity via an industrialized system. McDonald's is able to offer cheap prices and fast services because it does not internalize the externalities put on society. Slow Food represents a consumer movement promoting diversity in production. Slow Food costs more because it has internalized these costs, and it is offering consumers the true cost of their food, with the addition of the historical knowledge and cultural importance as a reward (Murdoch & Miele, 2004). Slow food is inherently linked to the surrounding space and time, often drawing on historical and forgotten trends (Mayer & Knox, 2006; Murdoch & Miele, 2004). Both of these "movements," or styles of consumption represent the global flows of food and how food reaches across national borders and cultures. They also introduce the conversation of how certain spaces and types of consuming can be perceived to have more ethics, values or morals than other spaces and habits (Murdoch & Miele, 2004).

When placing ideals and morals onto objects such as on food, it establishes a gauge of goodness or badness based on underlying associations, representations and effects on a culture, community or person (Castree, 2004). It also establishes the idea that certain spaces or relations to certain spaces have more or differing ethics than others, in the same way that products do. These spaces can be actual spaces, such as the specific divide between Global North and Global South, or the more overarching divide of global and local (Friedmann & McNair, 2008; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Massey, 2004). However, they can also be spaces in terms of the networks and movements of ideas, such as alternative food networks.

Alternative markets for food include Community Sustained Agriculture, organic and free range foods, as well as Fair Trade. Each of these networks has its own specific ideology and motive, but together they represent perceived alternative pathways for buying and consuming food (Clarke et al, 2008; Meyers & Sbicca, 2015). These alternatives are often seen as attempts to defetish the commodity markets by encouraging consumers and producers to consider the ethical impacts of their choices: these impacts include environmental, social and political concerns (Holloway et al, 2007). Thus this represents a bid for the moral economy, where consumers and producers work together in order to establish a more fair and just economic system (Goodman, 2004; Starr, 2010). This idea of the moral economy is seen as an alternative

economic pathway for certain countries and markets, and it demonstrates how these spaces of ideas are also tied to actual geographical spaces and divides: Global North – Global South and Global – Local (Goodman, 2004; Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008).

Economies around the world are unequal, and the visualization of Global North and Global South provides one perspective on how these inequalities are situated (Goodman, 2004; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). The alternative development scenarios associated with food networks, such as Fair Trade, are often built on this divide (Goodman, 2004; Varul, 2008). Based on this perspective, “fair” markets are created in order to make it easier for Southern producers to make a living while selling to Northern consumers. Southern producers who conform to a certain set of ethical considerations are given preferential treatment in these markets, and Northern consumers feel gratified in knowing they have chosen ethically. Thus they do not have to change their consumption habits, which is one of major criticisms of these alternative markets (Littler, 2008; Varul, 2008). This also demonstrates another example of Southern consumers being overlooked, as they are often excluded from these “ethical of “fair” markets based on marketing and business expectations (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Gregson, et al., 2010; Richard, 2010; Littler, 2008; Varul, 2008). Thus, this supports the need for a more explicitly Southern perspective when discussing consumption in the Global South.

Another example of geographical divides within the discussion of food is between local and global. In many cases, people are unfamiliar with where their food comes from and how their food is produced (Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008). However, for some people there is an assumption that “localness” means better quality (Clarke et al, 2008; Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008). Other reasons consumers consider localness when shopping is because they want to support local businesses, and they have a supposed increase in trust when buying from a local farm or store (Daya, 2015; Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008; Massey, 2004). In placing more value on local products, it also creates an assumption that there is something “bad” concerning global products and globalization. This places global and local forces in conflict, and having such a divide masks the many ways in which these spaces interact and build upon each other. Therefore, these two spaces should not be seen as separate, but instead we should attempt to view these spheres through each other (Castree, 2004; Clarke et al, 2008).

Therefore, these two examples of divided spheres, North-South and Global-Local, demonstrate how different values and preferences are situated in different geographical spaces. The values in each of the spaces establish respective ethical considerations when it comes to the consumption habits (Castree, 2004; Clarke et al, 2008). Nonetheless, it is not an equal relationship in how the ethics are acted upon and perceived. Within the divide of the Global

North and Global South, the Southern producers must follow the established guidelines of Northern market preferences and their associated markets such as Fair Trade. With the Global-Local geographies, the idealization of local foods and products fail to consider the interconnectedness of global systems and influences (Massey, 2004; Starr, 2010).

The geographical ties within the different food networks and movements parallel the ethics and values within the geographical spaces from which these movements came or were conceived (Castree, 2004; Guthman, 2008). Thus many of these alternative networks and movements represent primarily Northern perspective and ethics, and then simply expect to find the same values in the Global South (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). This is problematic because in order to understand complex systems such as ethics, each rendition must be considered within its own context and conceptualization (Castree, 2004; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Guthman, 2008). Therefore, because this research focuses on consumption within the Global South, it must be conceptualized through the South and of the South.

2.4 Consumption in the Global South

Consumption studies are strongly positioned within the Global North, and when the South is discussed, it is usually within the context of Southern producers (Goodman, 2004; Gregson & Ferdous 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Varul, 2008). Thus research done on Southern consumers is limited. Of the studies that do exist, they tend to focus on one type of demographic or rely on Northern biased indicators in order to conceptualize trends and to understand choices (Barnett et al, 2005b; Goodman, 2004).

As mentioned previously, the role of consumption in the Global South, specifically on the African continent, did not commence with the start of European exploration and trade. Nonetheless, the Atlantic trade route represents a key point in European economic history, as well as in the establishment of the African economic producer imagination (Richard, 2010). The continued use of the distant producer imagination has hindered consumption studies within the Global South (Goodman, 2004; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Popke, 2006; Varul, 2008). Nonetheless, the growing middle class throughout the Global South is repositioning this conversation. This change in economic status and classification has increased research interest, both for academics and economic investment, and has led more researchers to reconsider the producer imaginations for a more engaging discussion that focuses on the consumers of the South (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Gregson et al., 2010; Hawkins, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

Within the consumption literature globally, the middle class is the most common demographic of study (Gregson & Ferdous 2015; Hawkins, 2015; Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Meyers & Sbicca, 2015). Thus, not surprisingly, it is also where much of the

current growing research on the Global South consumers is situated. Furthermore, within the Global South, there is particular emphasis on the idea of the “new” middle class, and how this redefines middle class, as well as the idea of “the New African Consumer” (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015: 2). The African Development Bank defines a person of middle class status to be someone who spends between \$2 – \$20 USD a day. This large range in spending availability skews the exceptional growth in middle class numbers, and it also makes it difficult to study this demographic group due its great variance. Nonetheless, many of the current economic development plans favor the middle class; and the emerging economies around the world, including South Africa, are relying on this “age-old faith in the potential of middle classes to fuel economic growth and transformation” (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015: 2). Furthermore, based on the large income range of the “new” middle class, many people in this category are still exceptionally vulnerable with constant fears of falling back into poverty. This is why many researchers focus on the “new” middle class, as they are interested in whether or not the previous spending trends of the “traditional” middle class will be carried across cultural and racial lines.

Further complicating the situation, even when distinguishing of “new” and “traditional” middle classes, there is also a general homogenization of the middle class throughout the Global South (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). Bijapurkar (2008) states that this is one reason for the significant investment failures in India. The diversity of India’s middle classes as consumers, as well as a group, was not fully considered by corporate investors, and what caused additional stress on the investments, was the reliance on Northern models of consumption patterns. Thus demonstrating how often when academic and corporate research is conducted in the Global South, Northern-based expectations are being used as the benchmark (Barnett et al, 2005b; Hawkins, 2015; Pollard et al., 2009; Goodman, 2004).

Additionally, Hawkins (2015) discusses how comparative research often uses the Global North “as a kind of base line to which the Global South can be compared” (174). She discusses this in association to ethical consumption, and how cause-related marketing (CRM) is well documented and debated in the Global North but in the Global South it is a secondary conversation only to be used as comparison or at other times simply overlooked. Furthermore, she states that the Global South is often used “as a kind of laboratory through which to test theories developed in the Global North” (Hawkins, 2015: 174). Thus, despite the growing research on consumption in the Global South, it is still being limited by such assumptions and expectations (Hawkins, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Gregson et al., 2010; Yeh & Lama, 2013).

Overall, much of the current research in the Global South, as well as in the Global North, focuses on household consumers. While this is a valuable starting place, it neglects various other consumers and does not provide a holistic picture. Furthermore, because consumption and particularly ethical consumption has been limited in perspectives and contextualization, the current research in the Global South is further hindered. In order to fill these gaps, this research has been localized within the Global South and focuses on ethical consumption.

2.5 Ethical Consumption

As discussed previously, there are various alternative networks and markets to represent different ideals and values in consumption. These alternatives can often be grouped together as a part of ethical consumption. There are many arguments within ethical consumption, however two that provide valuable insight are as follows. The first identifies specific objects as being of ethical concern, and the second identifies an act or practice of consumption having ethical concern (Barnett, et al, 2005b). These two specific perspectives are prevalent in both the Global North and Global South, with varying emphasis on the role of the objects of versus the practices of ethics. However, this demonstrates the similarities while also acknowledging the differences within the global landscape of ethical consumption. “Food,” broadly put, offers a practical entry point for comparison and understanding of ethical consumption, because it has application within both arguments. By interrogating the two differing perspectives of ethical consumption and evaluating the various aspects of each, a deeper understanding of ethical consumption and its relation with greater consumption studies and society as the whole can be understood.

2.5.1 Perspective A: Ethical Objects

In previous research, ethical objects as ethical consumption has been the dominant perspective, particularly within the Global North. Within this perspective, consumers express their ethics through the purchasing of specific objects that have received certain branding or certification. It focuses on the evaluation of objects having ethical value, such as being environmentally sustainable, cruelty free, non-animal tested products and Fair Trade (Barnett, et al, 2005b). This is a predominantly Northern perspective of which traditionally revolves around the industry of celebrity-sponsored Fair Trade products (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Barnett, et al, 2005b). Popular objects of ethical consumption are Fair Trade coffee, tea and chocolate (Barnett, et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). With each of the examples, in order for consumer to be ethical, there must be a choice to buy these specific items. This section explores examples of ethical objects such as Fair Trade, boycotts & buycotts, further expands on Alternative Food Networks and examines the different values and assumptions that are made of and within these spaces.

Fair Trade is a useful example of this perspective on ethics in consumption, because it so clearly places the morality in the object or product being purchased. In order to express ethical consideration, the consumer must purchase a product with a Fair Trade logo on it (Varul, 2008). The most prominent Fair Trade food is coffee, with massive growth in recent years. Other commodities include tea, chocolate and bananas. With this overwhelming growth, there has also been a move for regulation and formalization, and this has led to the creation of the Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International, along with 17 other national labeling groups that fall under its umbrella (Goodman, 2004). Fair Trade also does not include an option of “not buying,” such as how vegans can choose to not buy milk or meat as a way of demonstrating their values. This separates Fair Trade from other ethical consumption examples such as product boycotts (Varul, 2008). With Fair Trade the action of consumption must be made for it to have any activist or political prevalence.

However, there are some conceptual challenges surrounding Fair Trade. Because Fair Trade is based on two defining characteristics, authenticity and distance, it creates a relationship of care at a distance, between the producer and consumer. This establishes an important critique of Fair Trade, because the producer is forever objectified and imagined as a poor, distant Southern person who can only make authentic or traditional crafts and must be saved by Northern consumers (Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008; Varul, 2008). This perpetuates the appeal of “traditional” lives of the Global South and falsely portrays these spaces. Thus despite the advertisement of wanting to bring Northern consumers and Southern producers closer together, it actually keeps them divided and solidifies this binary relationship of producer and consumer, civilized and rural (Varul, 2008).

The idea of care at a distance, as demonstrated by the Fair Trade relationship, is another defining characteristic of this definition of ethical consumption. This expression of care is toward a distance farmer or worker, and the consumer’s choice is an expression of support for the political, economic and social practices associated with this product (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). When the consumer chooses the organic vegetables, he or she is demonstrating care toward the farmers who choose to not use pesticides, and thus is supporting the farmers’ “green” practices and sustainability. Therefore, within this perspective, when consumers choose to buy a “certified” ethical object, they are in fact turning consumption into a political act and framing themselves as consumer activists (Barnett et al, 2005a; Clarke, et al, 2007).

In this way, ethical consumption becomes a political stance of collective responsibility (Barnett et al, 2005a; Clarke, et al, 2007). In recent years, there has been a trend of people, particularly in the Global North, pulling away from collective activism and political activism. However, other

research has demonstrated that many consumers are starting to make politically and socially charged choices on an individualistic level, such as buying Fair Trade bananas or boycotting a brand of chocolate due to a corporation's human rights or environmental record (Clarke, et al, 2007; Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011).

For example, with Fair Trade, consumers are choosing to buy a certain item because of the ethical quality that it embodies, as opposed to other products that are available on the shelf. In this way, buying Fair Trade is an example of a buycott. This is an alternative to a boycott, in that it runs on the campaign that you should purchase this product to show your support for a certain cause. The buycott also relates to the Buy Local or Buy National movements that have grown in popularity at different times in history. One such is Swadeshi, or 'Buy Indian' movement, which was an important part of Mahatma Gandhi's strategy for India's independence (Littler, 2008). This demonstration of political power and action through consumption choices has also become apparent in the growth of alternative food networks (Barnett, et al, 2005a). It is furthermore an example of how consumers are changing the economic market into a space where people are able to express their ethical, moral, and political preferences (Barnett, et al, 2005a; Bonsu & Zwick, 2007).

The discussion on Fair Trade foods and alternative economic markets for food can go further than the producer-consumer network generally explored, such as focusing more directly on the consumer identities and their attachment to these alternative markets. These items and networks are created with a certain imagine and expectation, and thus they carry a certain identity and meaning among consumers (Barnett et al, 2005b; Goodman, 2004). Some argue that this has led consumers to be more morally reflexive in their shopping, and this consciousness is described as "wearing one's stomach on one's sleeve" (Goodman, 2004: 896). Activist groups have been vital in this mentality and movement, often with the reflection that "fair trade is more of a consumer-dependent movement for change rather than a consumer-led movement" (901).

The alternative food networks, which Fair Trade is apart, are growing around the world, primarily in the Global North (Friedmann & McNair, 2008; Starr, 2010). For supports, these networks demonstrate more than just a change in tastes or interest. They are, in fact, movements that challenge traditional economic structures by focusing on the small businesses and personal relationships, while striving for sustainability (Starr, 2010). This growth is seen as an evolution of former consumerism movements, from lobbying for basic information and consumer choice to product safety, corporate accountability and finally to the current concern for environmental, economic and social impacts of food and consumer choices (Gill, 2012). The

alternative food networks claim to be pushing against the current industrialized state of food. They are also attempting to challenge big names and superstores with Fair Trade and organic certifications, as well as farmers' markets and vegetable boxes that are delivered to consumers' doors (Starr, 2010; Guthman, 2008).

Furthermore, many supporters view alternative food networks as an issue of social justice, where citizens vote with their forks. Often they are promoting and encouraging the expansion of these networks into low-income communities with the expectation of this alleviating food insecurity (Meyers & Sbicca, 2015; Guthman, 2008). This attempted expansion of alternative food networks has led to the creation of numerous "community" projects that operate with the assumption that food insecurity and unhealthy eating among low-income residents is due to a lack of knowledge and access. Thus these projects emphasize localized production of food and fresh fruits and vegetables as the solution, without taking into consideration cultural values and the specific needs and desires of the communities (Guthman, 2008). Likewise, these supporters often fail to take into account that for poor or underserved communities, food is already costing families a higher percentage of income. So even if consumers had a desire to purchase organic products, they cannot afford the increased cost (Meyers & Sbicca, 2015). Thus these new food regimes are inherently unequal in their availability to different social groups of consumers. However, this should not distinguish certain demographics as less ethical in their consumption habits, eating or otherwise.

In this way, alternative food networks are mainly catering to middle class consumers. They are further argued to promote elitism and isolated values, tastes and cultural practices, which are especially apparent in the placing of "ethical" value onto an object or classification of food (Guthman, 2008; Johnston, Szabo & Rodney, 2011). The idealization of local and organic foods fails to consider that these new food regimes do not inherently guarantee just labor and environment practices, which would thus negate the ethical value of these objects (Clarke et al, 2008: 5). There is also the discussion of how alternative food networks are still encouraging consumption without tackling concerns of overconsumption and waste. Therefore, these more fair and just practices are in fact encouraging the same damaging behavior as before (Goodman 2004).

This bias for middle class consumers is also tied to a bias for Northern consumers. When researching ethical consumption, the demographics of study are generally limited to middle class, but more specifically to the middle class in the Global North. Furthermore, many of the items that Northern consumers are purchasing as ethical come from the Global South and are marketed based on care at a distance. In this manner, the roles of Northern consumer and

Southern producers are perpetuated (Barnett et al, 2005b; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). This establishes an imbalance where the Northern consumers assume exclusive responsibility in consumption, ignoring and negating any ethical notion Southern consumers may have, and even insinuating that “ethical consumption and ethical consumers are absent from the South” (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015: 2).

However, based on the research that has been done, Southern consumers do have an opinion on the ethics of products. One case study that takes place in South Africa shows that consumers do have a fairly high level of ethical concern. Nonetheless, despite this high concern, they are not choosing to purchase “ethical objects” due to various reasons (Tustin & Jongh, 2008). However, this does still demonstrate that Southern consumers are taking ethics into consideration.

Furthermore, this also begs the question if these ethics are not compelling consumers to purchase ethical certified objects, then how are ethics being translated into the actual practice of buying? Based on emerging research and case studies, some argue that the ethics in question are being acted upon in the form of “ordinary” ethics, and with the perspective of ethics being based in the “practice” instead of the “object” (Barnett et al, 2005a; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

2.5.2 Perspective B: Ethical Practice

This perspective of ethical consumption is part of the growing literature on the role of everyday consumption, ordinary ethics and exploration of how and why consumers make their choices (Clarke et al, 2007; Clarke et al, 2008). It expands the definition of ethical consumption to not only the “conspicuous or socially visible acts” and concerns for “narrowly-defined social and environmental responsibility,” but also to include ethical practices that occur everyday (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015: 1). These actions are described as “caring at home” and often focus on interpersonal relationships and the theme of thrift (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015: 1). This emerging research conceptualizes ethical consumption as a “means of acting in an ethical way toward particular objects of concern,” where the main crux of the understanding is in the word “acting” (Barnett et al, 2005b: 5).

In this way, the ethics are no longer associated with the object in itself, but the way in which consumers make their choices at the grocery store (Barnett et al, 2005b). This perspective focuses on the everyday practices and the ordinary purchases, attempting to understand and conceptualize why consumers choose one product over the other, and how this relates to the relationships around them. People have many moral and ethically considerations when they are shopping. Often when shoppers are choosing to not purchase Fair Trade, organic or free-range objects, there is a feeling of guilt and a desire to make excuses for this behavior. However,

when asked if they identify as an ethical shopper or an ethical person, many would agree. Thus this demonstrates the need for an additional angle to how we perceive the ethics of shopping (Adams & Raisborough, 2010).

This moves the research past the assumption that most consumers are single-minded agents choosing the cheapest priced object on the shelf, with no concern of quality and personal or family preference (Miller, 2012). It further challenges the role that hedonism plays, emphasizing that much of the time, it is “caring,” specifically “caring at home,” that is driving product choices and feelings of ethics (Barnett et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Miller, 2012).

Overall, shopping choices can be divided as: for the household, for a friend, or for oneself. Miller (2004) focuses much of his research on the household roles. He studies how within these different relationships, there is generally one person who takes on the shopping responsibilities. Furthermore, this one person often takes pride in the task of providing for the household in this manner. So even when the shopping is done out of care and love, there is still an expectation that these actions should not be taken for granted and that the family or partner should show appreciation for the time and effort that has gone into the making of these choices (Miller, 2004; Miller, 2012).

However, for some household shoppers it is burdensome. This is due to the stressors of care, such as the mother with limited income and an inability to provide for children, or for the lack of anyone to care for, such as the single women who is not in a relationship nor has children. Without the need to provide for another, the interest in shopping is limited. This does not make the purchaser individualistic necessarily though. While there is a lack of interest for some, others use their “singleness” to look for ways to provide and care for others – this is common with elderly people. For other single persons, such as teenagers, consumption is a way to understand and become oneself. It is done in the way of mirroring or challenging what is around them (Miller, 2012). Nonetheless, there is also an argument that consumption by and for an individual can still express ethics through the caring for oneself. This further challenges the Marxist perspective of consumption being simply “a hollow and alienating act” based on human’s obsession with things (Popke, 2006: 508). Thus there is some space to explore the perspective in how ethical consumption through ethical practices are portrayed among single and individual persons.

Ordinary ethics in consumption revolves around relationships, and it has a role in shaping the way people care for each other, such as their families and friends (Barnett et al, 2005a; Miller, 2013). Therefore, the “consuming” that people do, is not done as “consumers” in an individualistic sense, but actually done as part of other social roles and identities, such as

Mother, Father or Friend (Barnett et al, 2005b). Nonetheless, conversations about these choices and why people shop one way or another are difficult to have because these relationship dynamics, in terms of shopping habits, are difficult to articulate (Miller, 2012). So while research on “ethical products” focuses on marketing strategies and efforts to bridge intention and behavior, this alternative perspective questions the more personal motives that consumers experience when choosing organic or local foods, as well as name brand cereals and discounted produce (Clarke et al, 2008). Overall, making it a more complex conversation to explore.

This also introduces the conflicting dynamic of ethical objects and ethical practices, where both can be present, but it is, in the end, the meaning behind the choice that says more than the actual object. An example of this is how organic vegetables and fruits are seen as ethical based on their sustainability and environmental practices, as well as for the perception of organics being good for one’s health. Thus without exploring why the organic choice was made, either perspective on ethical consumption could be applied. However, if it is the second option leading the choice, the ethics is placed on caring for oneself or for one’s family (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015).

The first perspective on ethical shopping focuses on the seeming “goodness” of an item, therefore, on a high-level, it includes alternative food networks that emphasize organic, Fair Trade food and free range foods (Tustin & Jongh, 2008). However, on an individual level, these choices are most likely being made with less concern for the distant “other.” Instead, these choices are made in the belief that organic food is healthier and will be better for oneself and one’s family (Miller, 2012; Clarke et al, 2008; Barnett et al, 2005a). Thus this altruism is rooted not in the care of a farmer who lives in a distant village or works on a distant cocoa plantation. It is instead based on the concern for personal relationships, summed up in the term “caring at home” (Barnett et al, 2005a; Miller, 2012). While not directly related to food and grocery shopping, the popular Bangladesh brand Aarong further illustrates an example of this “care at home” dynamic based on a Southern perspective (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015).

The brand, Aarong, sources products in a Fair Trade manner and works with local and rural artisans to provide contemporary and modern products, such as household goods and clothing with a traditional flair. The store is very popular among middle class families. However, according to Gregson and Ferdous (2015), the distinction is that the consumers are not shopping at Aarong because of individualistic politics seen with the first perspective of ethical consumption. Instead, consumers are choosing to shop here because of its reputation for high quality and trendy products. In this way, Aarong makes a case for “caring at home,” as consumers choose to buy high quality products for the house and family. Thus they focus on

quality over quantity and are engaging with ethics outside the arena of political consumerism. Furthermore, Aarong demonstrates a shift in perceptions of consumption, because it marks a type of “ethical consumption located in pride in national and ethnic identities, and the valorization of home-produced, indigenous goods,” instead of distantly made gifts and specialty food items marketed to far away customers (9). In the end, this demonstrates that “ethical consumption exists in the Global South, not as ethical consumption per se but as ordinary consumption whose effect is ethical” (9).

Building on this concept of “caring at home” within the Global South, another key attribute that has become apparent in the research is this idea of “thrift.” Buying for thrift represents an interesting dynamic between the perceived conditions of society over-consuming, while also “on the hunt” for great savings. According to Miller, “thrift is what ensures that the household retains as many of its resources as possible when engaged in consumption” (2012: 81). However, these practices of thrift are “actually embedded in much broader concerns which people have about, for example, what to put in their kids’ packed lunches, or about the health impacts on themselves and their loved-ones of different sorts of food that they might be buying” (Barnett et al, 2005a: 6).

In a study by McEwan, Hughes and Bek, they focus on the idea of thrift being directly related to the view of ethical consumption and “caring at home.” They focus on examining how “caring at home” plays into consumption habits, specifically comparing the trends within the South African middle class (2015). The study found that the idea of “thrift” and the balance of “value for money” is the “primary factor in consumption decisions,” and that it seems to be the main ethical concern and practice that the majority of participants share (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015: 2). Furthermore, even though the study focuses on the divide between the “new” and “traditional” middle classes, there are many similarities in the ethical decision-making that inform both groups’ consumption patterns. The study further states that due to these similarities, the continued distinction between “traditional” and “new” middle classes is not beneficial or helpful in understanding these trends. This conversation on thrift as ethics demonstrates how ethical considerations are not necessarily tied to economic class. This, in turn, creates a space for greater investigation on ethical consideration. It moves past the limits of class based ethics, as well as successfully positions ethical practice as the dominant form of ethics in the Global South.

As discussed previously, literature on ethical consumption within the Global South is limited but growing. Previously the dominant argument was that ethical consumers were absent in the Global South. However, now the argument can be that ethical consumers are in fact present, but

they are acting on their ethics in various ways, and more often through ethical practices, described as care at home. Nonetheless, the literature and debates around ethical consumption, specifically in the Global South but also worldwide, cannot always be divided into clear categories of ethical practice and ethical objects. An example of this is the ethics of localness.

Ethical practice is strongly associated with care at home, as opposed to care at a distance. So while home is generally associated as a singular household and the care within focuses on the relationships between household members, care at home can also be extended to mean care for and within the community. Therefore, concern for localness and the desire to support local producers and providers is another example of ethical consumption. Furthermore, this mentality and concern does resonate within the Global South (Daya, 2015; Littler, 2008). However, shopping local and the support of localness is more aligned with the category of ethical objects. This is because in order for the consumer to express his or her ethical concern, a specific object, one of local origin, must be purchased. Nonetheless, it is a trend that is found in both the Global North and the Global South, thus it straddles both the geographical divide and the theoretical divide.

This establishes the need for continued research on ethical consumption and an increase in the literature on how consumers understand and act on their ethics and values. Besides the favoring of Northern consumers and Northern perspectives, an additional limit to this literature is that it primarily focuses on household consumption. Thus this research needs to be extended to additional demographic groups.

2.6 Higher Education, Students & Activism

As stated previously, most of the research on consumption focuses on a particular type of consumer. This consumer is generally a middle-class, working adult who is responsible for purchasing items for a household (Miller, 2012; Johnston, Szabo & Rodney, 2011). This limits the view and understanding of ethical consumption, because it excludes much of the population and casts the assumption that only adults buying for a household have ethics. Thus the demographics of study must be extended to include persons outside this image, such as students. This group offers a different perspective on consumption and ethics, because students are seen as trend setters and having more flexible incomes, as well being highly influenced through higher education. Thus they are more willing to change consumption habits, as well as, take a more activist stance in consumption (Crafford & Bitzer, 2009; Gill, 2012; Sabri et al, 2010; Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2005; Wilson & Curnow, 2013). This section explores the role of students have as consumers, as well as how they are influenced and interact with ethics in consumption.

Students have a politically and culturally privileged status because of the overall low numbers of young people who attend university. They also have a shared identity through the commonalities of being a student and the particular nature of campus life (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). This places them in a unique position for study, particularly in terms of consumption. Furthermore, there is currently a demographic transition fueled with economic growth, which has led to a high demand of higher education in the Global South from low and middle-income countries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were barely half a million students at higher education institutions worldwide. In 2000, this number had increased to about 100 million, with much of the growth occurring in India and China (Alcorn, Christensen & Kapur, 2015). So while the position as a student is still privileged, as a whole, students represent a growing demographic that will have a great impact politically, socially and economically in the future.

Though students are seen as a transient social group, which has no direct economic production, they do engage in social reproduction and are active consumers (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). Students are often associated with being “trend setters and early adopters,” who are more apt to take positions of consumer activism and change their preferences (Crafford & Bitzer, 2009; Gill, 2012; Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2005). Nonetheless, their consumption is generally linked to outside sources, such as families or state funding. Therefore, they are acutely aware of how government and economic changes effect and impact their standard of living and experience on campus, as well as having influence on their families’ consumption habits (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008).

With the changing marketplace and the changing global economy, there are many challenges for young adults when it comes to finance decisions, consumerism values, environmental responsibility and other consumer-related issues (Crafford & Bitzer, 2009; Lachance & Choquette-Bernier, 2004; Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2005). This introduces the role of ethics in consumption. Through the influence of coursework at higher education institutes, as well as through developing relationships and being exposed to fellow classmates, students are very susceptible to changing their interests and values (Crafford & Bitzer, 2009; Sabri et al, 2010). This often leads students to take on political and activist roles. This activism can be localized to university or college campuses, or have a more expansive reach on a national or global scale. Furthermore, these trends of student activism are seen globally, though they may focus on different issues or be conducted in various ways (Littler, 2008; Wilson & Curnow, 2013; Zeilig & Ansell, 2008).

Two examples of how student activism has played important roles on campuses, nationally and globally are the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, Zimbabwe and the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal. Students at these universities were very active in protests and demonstrations surrounding colonialism, globalization and neoliberal reforms. They actively participated in national elections and campaigns and fought against administrative and governmental reforms that cut back on higher education funding and services. This activism was not only based locally on campuses, but also extended to campaigns into rural areas to encourage voter registration, as well as had international ties to student groups and activism campaigns in Europe and the United States (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008).

Furthermore, within the conversation of ethical consumption, students in the United States have had strong ties to the Fair Trade movement. Students held numerous campaigns, protests and boycotts in order to demonstrate the demand for Fair Trade and to pressure universities to take responsibility in their consumption. Around the country, they worked in solidarity with the farmers and laborers who partnered with FairTradeUSA. Thus they played a vital role in bringing Fair Trade products to the forefront of the market (Wilson & Curnow, 2013). Fair Trade groups targeted students intentionally due to their purchasing power, as well as ethical motivations and their ability to spread the message and promote Fair Trade to other consumers. This gave the movement more legitimacy among students on campuses, and it hoped to establish “loyalty among potential retailers and consumers” (567). From 2003 to 2006, activists affiliated with the “United Students for Fair Trade” ran around 350 Fair Trade campaigns on college campuses. These campaigns and actions also worked to challenge food service providers to consider ethical consumption, particularly in establishing commitments to Fair Trade coffee.

Students are uniquely positioned economically because of their dependence on family or government funding, as well as their openness to trying new brands or trends and the role that higher education plays in encouraging activism. These examples of student activism demonstrate the mentality that is often found among students, despite claims of increased apathy and detachment from political and social movements (Pousadela, 2013; Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2005).

Further challenging claims of apathy among students is the number of student led protests that took place in the past year. In 2015, South Africa experienced the largest “unified student protests since the first democratic elections in 1994” (Southey & Costello, 2015). In Cape Town, the many universities in the city each experienced student movements including the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall campaigns. The Rhodes Must Fall campaign was sparked by a demand for the removal of a prominently placed statue of Cecil Rhodes on the University of

Cape Town campus. Its greater fight was for transformation on campus, including a call for more diversity among academic staff and the decolonization of the academic curriculum (Fairbanks, 2015). Similar protests were also held nationwide throughout the months of March and April. The statue of Cecil Rhodes was removed on 9 April 2015, and many transformation meetings and debates have been held on campus to encourage dialogue and transformation (Allie, 2015).

In October, the second major campaign started at the University of Witwatersrand, a university in Johannesburg, with the announcement of a 11-percent increase in tuition fees – fees that are already acting as a burden and barrier to access for many (Fairbanks, 2015; Nkosi, 2015). Thus the Fees Must Fall campaign acts as a poignant reminder of the many inequalities still present in South Africa, as well as the contradictory challenge of encouraging education as the answer to poverty without providing access to such opportunities for all persons (Boswell, 2015). These protests led to a massive shutdown of campuses around the country, with nearly all Cape Town universities experiencing closures of some sort. However, the Fees Must Fall campaign did not only include demands against tuition cost, but also cited various other issues on campus such as university's continued outsourcing of employees (Disemelo, 2015). After weeks of protests on campus and at political buildings, South African President Jacob Zuma announced that fees for all public universities would not increase for the 2016 academic year (Southey & Costello, 2015).

This all provides an additional layer to the student identity and climate of higher education, which is the placement of this research. It also illustrates why students are such an important demographic for study and demonstrates the unique position of students acknowledging their power in fighting for their values, beliefs and change. Thus opening the conversation to how activism and values play a role in student consumption habits. Furthermore, students represent an extended perspective on what it means to “care at home,” because of their differing lifestyles and living situations. By focusing on students, it changes “home“ to mean one’s self or possibly non-family flat or housemates, instead of a nuclear family construction. Therefore, expanding the understanding of how ethical practice can be represented. By engaging with this population for research, a new understanding can be gained of how ethics play in consumption under both through ethical objects and ethical action.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature on consumption is often split into various categories and under different academic subjects. However, it is clear that the conversations on consumption go much further than a simple statement of consuming is “bad.” By expanding the conversation of consumption

to include social, cultural and political interests, it creates a space for greater understanding and a richer exploration of the world. Furthermore, this expanded acceptance of consumption's multiple perspectives and angles, introduces the conversation on ethical consumption and how ethics and values play into the shopping choices and considerations of consumers.

The conversation on consumption, in general, and ethical consumption, in particular, has been demographically limited to a specific type of household. Therefore, the literature on students as consumers, as well as their role in activism, including that which relates to the conversation on ethical consumption, provides a valuable space in which to expand the demographics of this research.

Ethical consumption can be viewed in different forms and the division between ethical objects and ethical practice is a valuable categorization for analysis. This division is useful because of its parallels with the conversation on care at a distance, most widely associated with ethical objects, and care at home, most widely associated with ethical practice. The division further parallels the geographical divide between research focusing on Northern consumers, ethical objects and care at a distance, and the emerging literature focusing on Southern consumers, ethical practice and care at home. Nonetheless, these divisions are not always clearly cut, and thus it necessary to also consider how the categories overlap, challenge and relate to each other.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous assumption of ethical consumption being absent in the Global South is challenged when considering the perspective on ethical consumption where the ethics are presented through “care” and the action of consuming. This research aims to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption by focusing on the food and grocery purchasing choices of students attending selected universities in Cape Town.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Identify “everyday” food and grocery purchasing habits of Cape Town students.
- Explore how and why students made certain food purchasing decisions.
- Identify what role ethics play in the consumption habits of Cape Town students.

The following chapter details the research design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis and the limitations of this study.

3.2 Research Design

This research utilizes qualitative methods of data collection due to the nature of the aims and objectives. Qualitative methods provide a “specific empirical context” that contributes to a more holistic understanding of the research topic (Johnston, Szabo & Rodney, 2011: 295). Two qualitative methods are utilized to achieve the first two objectives, and the third objective is achieved through data analysis. The method to achieve the first objective is participant observation, and the method to achieve the second objective is semi-structured interviews. In order to expand the current literature outside the usual household, the demographic for this research is students. Twenty-eight participants were identified through snowball or referral sampling. These participants identified as living in Cape Town and attending one of the various universities in the area, including University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, Red & Yellow School of Logic and Magic and University of South Africa (UNISA). This section will describe the choice and use of the two methods.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a qualitative method that allows the researcher to explore certain cultural phenomenon through the lens of the participant (Roth, 2005). This method corresponds directly with the first research objective of this study: “to identify ‘everyday’ food and grocery purchasing habits of Cape Town students.”

In order to accomplish this, I first accompanied participants on a grocery shopping trip, observed and engaged with them as they did their “everyday” shopping. “Everyday” is stated in quotation marks, as it took on a different form for each participant. Some students shopped weekly, while others shopped bi-monthly or monthly. These shopping trips occurred according to the participant’s preference, at his or her regular grocery store and at the time and day of his or her regular shopping. This was to ensure the most authentic experience between the participant and researcher.

A short informal conversation was held prior to the shopping trip that explained the research as being on ordinary shopping and consumption habits, with little to no emphasis on the ethical context. This was to discourage participants from changing their shopping habits to choose more “ethical objects,” such as Fair Trade or organic. As this research’s goal is to identify the ethics in ordinary shopping, this exclusion of information was not done in deception but done to eliminate as much adaptive behavior as possible on the part of the participants. Notes were taken throughout the shopping trip on all aspects of when and how choices and decisions were made.

Also during the shopping trip, the participant and I briefly discussed different items and choices being made. The participant drove the majority of this conversation ranging from quick comments to long explanations. The purpose of this was to identify a non-prompted perspective on shopping preferences, choices and brands. After the shopping trip had been completed, a longer set of notes were compiled through the use of a template, which documents the participant’s assigned number (for privacy purposes), observation date, store name and location, a short overview of the shopping trip, potential themes and the full notes of the observation (See Appendices, Sections 2 - 3 for template and example).

3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

After the shopping trip, generally immediately after, the participant and I engaged in a semi-structured, in-depth interview exploring how and why certain products were chosen and why others were not chosen. Semi-structured interviews align with the second research objective of “explore how and why students made certain food purchasing decisions.” As the interview questions were semi-structured and based on the observations and data collected from the shopping trip, each set of interview questions were different. This allowed for a greater understanding of participants’ consumption habits, instead of attempting to compare and contrast choices or limiting themes and trends based on preexisting expectations. Nonetheless,

the discussions were guided to explore the ideas of “ethics” and “ethical shopping,” and the questions below are examples¹:

- Can you tell me about a shopping memory you have of a time yourself, a friend or family member chose to change shopping habits, based personal or political beliefs?
- Can you give me an example of times when you change your shopping habits? Such as around exams, at the start of term or when hosting a party. In these situations, how do your choices change?
- Thinking back to the grocery trip that we took together, can you tell me about how you made your choices? Do you think anything motivates your choices?
- During the grocery trip, you mentioned/did not mention buying certain items for a specific person. Why were you purchasing this item? Do you often shop for others?

Overall, these questions provide an opportunity to understand how certain responses relate, contradict or confirm actions that were observed during the shopping trip. This was useful because previous research identified a “word-deed gap” in consumers’ ideas on ethics and their choice of “ethical objects” (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010). So while, this previous research focused on only one perspective on ethical consumption. The “word-deed gap” can also be aligned to this research in understanding how participants identify their personal ethics and how these values are acted upon in shopping habits.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure the privacy and rights of the participants, ethical approval was sought and granted from the Faculty of Science at the University of Cape Town (See Appendices, Section 5). Because this research involves student participants, additional ethical clearance was needed from the Department of Student Affairs at the University of Cape Town. This was also granted (See Appendices, Section 6). Furthermore, in order to ensure the privacy and rights of participating students for universities other than the University of Cape Town, each additional institution was contacted. However, because the identification of universities is used only to ensure a diverse sample size and is not being used as factor of analysis, certain institutions did not require additional ethical clearance (See Appendices, Section 7 for the additional clearances given).

All participants also provided individual consent. Upon first reaching out to participants, I identified myself as a master’s student from the University of Cape Town, and I explained that I was doing research for my dissertation concerning the grocery shopping habits of students in

¹ A full list of baseline questions can be found in the Appendices, Section 4.

Cape Town. I again explained this information when we met in person the first time, and I answered any questions the participant had concerning how the information will be used. Once each of the participants agreed to participate in the research, he or she signed an electronic consent form through the website Survey Monkey (see Appendices, Section 1) and was assigned a participant number. The participant numbers are used to avoid the use of any names or identifying characteristics. This is to preserve the privacy of each participant.

3.4 Selection of Participants

The selection of participants for this research was based on students' enrollment at various tertiary institutions and their living in the Cape Town area, and snowball sampling was used as the primary tool for recruitment. This section discusses the recruitment and selection techniques and how snowball sampling was applied, but it also provides an overview of the current statistics of higher education in South Africa, as well as in the Cape Town area.

In order to contextualize the participant selection, it is necessary to consider the current state of higher education in South Africa. According to Wazimap, an online resource that compiles and codes demographic information on South Africa to assist media and research professionals in providing reliable and factual statistics, 4.5 percent of the South African population above the age of 20 has an undergraduate degree (2011). There are currently 23 public higher education institutions in South Africa, 6 are Technology Universities or Technikons, 11 are traditional universities and 6 are a combination of both technology and traditional. According to a report done by the Department of Education in 2013, there are 938,201 students enrolled in public higher education institutions, with 59 percent enrolled in contact programs and 41 percent enrolled in distance learning programs. The largest distance learning provider is UNISA, the University of South Africa. In addition, there are 50 Public Further Education and Training Colleges and 449 Private Further Education and Training Colleges (DHET, 2013).

The highest concentration of these individuals with tertiary degrees is in Gauteng and the Western Cape. This research takes place in the Cape Town surrounding area, which is located in the Western Cape. Therefore, it is also necessary to consider the current statistics of tertiary education within this province. In the Western Cape, 5.7 percent of the population older than 20 indicate that an undergraduate degree is their highest level of education, and 3.5 percent indicate that a post-graduate degree is their highest level of education. This undergraduate rate is 25 percent higher than the South African average, and the post-graduate rate is 1.4 times greater than that of the South African average (Wazimap, 2011). The public universities in the Western Cape are Stellenbosch University, University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology. There are also a number of private colleges

and institutions, as well as two UNISA regional centers, in Cape Town and in George (DHET, 2013).

This research is based on participants who identified as living in Cape Town or the surrounding area and who identified as students. The participant sample includes students from five universities and one specialty college. The universities are the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of the Western Cape, UNISA and Red & Yellow School of Logic and Magic. Students at all of these institutions, besides UNISA, were enrolled in on-campus programs at the time of this study.

The research proposal called for 20 to 25 participants from various universities in Cape Town, with the largest number of contributors come from the University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch University. Therefore, the percentage average for the different racial groups and gender groups at these universities were taken and applied to the sample minimum of 20 students. The results of this breakdown called for at least 10 participants to identify as male and 10 to identify as female, and that at least 9 participants to identify as white and at least 11 to identify as non-white, broken down as at least 5 students to identify as Coloured, 5 students to identify as Black African and 1 student to identify as Indian or Asian. The race categories mirror the language used by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013).

The participants for this research were recruited through snowball or referral sampling. This works when one or a few participants are identified through personal contacts or the contacts of a gatekeeper and then each of those original participants volunteer the names and contact information of other potential participants. In the case of this research, the original set of participants was identified through personal contacts at the University of Cape Town. From here, contacts at Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape, Red & Yellow School and Cape Peninsula University of Technology were referred.

One challenge that is associated with snowball sampling is ensuring that the participant sample will be demographically diverse in terms of university attendance, race and gender. In order to encourage a more diverse sample, when participants offered to refer others, they were also prompted by certain requests in terms of university attendance, enrollment status, gender and race. Nonetheless, the use of snowball sampling provides a useful entry point for finding participants, especially within the student demographic. Alternative participant recruitment options, such as going through a professor, residence hall or social club may have led to a skewing of demographics. Therefore, because a conscious effort was made in the demographic

breakdown of the students, as well as in asking for diversity in the referrals, snowball sampling was a suitable selection tool for this research.

3.5 Data Collection

This section will overview the data collection process for this research project. It will explain the participant breakdown building off the previous section on participant selection. It will then detail the data collection process for the two methods used in this research: participant observation through grocery shopping observation and semi-structure interviews.

In the end, this research consisted of 28 participants. Twenty-three participated did both the grocery shopping observation and interview and an additional 5 agreed to participate in only the interview. The reasons some participants agreed only to the interview is due mostly to time constraints and conflicting schedules. A couple of students only grocery shop when parents are traveling for work, and another student shops with her mother and did not wish to be joined. Table 1 shows the total breakdown of participants, as well the breakdown between full participants and interview only participants. Table 2 shows the breakdown of participants by gender and race. The first row is “Shopping” meaning the number of participants who were observed shopping, and the second row “Total” incorporates interview-only participants.

University	Total Participants	Full Participant	Interview-Only
UCT	16	13	3
SU	4	4	0
UWC	3	2	1
CPUT	2	1	1
Red & Yellow	2	2	0
UNISA	1	1	0
TOTAL	28	23	5

	Male	Female	White	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian
Shopping	10	13	15	4	3	1
Total	11	17	17	6	4	1

As discussed in the previous section, race and gender targets were identified based on a 20-person sample size in order to ensure a diverse demographic of participants. The demographic breakdown based on 20-person sample size is presented in Table 3. The first table (Table 3)

depicts the intended sample breakdown and the second table (Table 4) depicts the actual breakdown after all the research was conducted. While the original research proposal only called for 20 to 25 participants, additional participants were needed in order to achieve certain demographic goals. However, the excess of participants, particularly the interview-only participants, provided useful data.

	Male	Female	White	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian
Shopping	10	10	9	5	5	1
Total	10	10	9	5	5	1

	Male	Female	White	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian
Shopping	10	10	12 (+3)	4 (-1)	3 (-2)	1
Total	10	10	9	6 (+1)	4 (-1)	1

It is also important to note the imbalance between the university participant numbers. Students from University of Cape Town were the most available due to the nature of snowball sampling. However, another reason more UCT students were available is because the University of Cape Town is a high-ranking university, and therefore draws more “out of town” students than CPUT, UWC or Red & Yellow. Many students who grew up in Cape Town, at all of the participating universities, choose to live with parents or family members in order to manage the costs of higher education, and often these students did not do their own grocery shopping. Therefore, many of the students suitable to participate in this research were from outside of Cape Town and the Western Cape, and thus many of them attend the University of Cape Town. As for the low number of Stellenbosch University students in comparison to UCT, this is because participants were to attend Tygerberg campus or live in Cape Town. Most students attending SU live in Stellenbosch, South Africa, which is a city outside the area of research for this project. The next sections will overview and describe the data collection for each of the methods: grocery shopping and semi-structured interviews.

3.5.1 Participant Observation: Grocery Shopping Observation

When organizing the grocery shopping trips, participants identified which stores to meet and conduct the research. This was to encourage a more authentic shopping experience between the participant and myself. There are various grocery stores and supermarkets in Cape Town; however, the majority of the research took place at Pick n Pay stores. Though two participants shopped elsewhere: one participant shopped at Woolworths Food and one participant shopped at Fruit & Veg City. There over 20 Pick n Pay stores in Cape Town, but the Southern Suburbs

area of Cape Town is very popular for student housing, so therefore the majority of this research took place at the Pick n Pay in Claremont and the Pick n Pay in Rondebosch. Other Pick n Pay stores in which this research took place include the stores located at the V&A Waterfront and in Observatory, Bellville and Athlone. The Woolworths Food is located at Palmyra Junction in Claremont, and the Fruit & Veg City is located at Willowbridge North in Bellville.

The observation trips took place during the months of August and September 2015, with the majority being completed from 1 August till 23 August. Each observation trip was different and based on the participant and his or her preferences in shopping style. Notes were taken during the observation trip, and most participants also engaged in conversation during the shopping trips. Conversations primarily revolved around cooking and food preferences, as well as how being a student impacts shopping.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

One of the important characteristics for this research was being flexible in terms of working with participants' schedules, as well as in how the methods were applied. The original research plan called for interviews to be conducted a day or two after the shopping trip, allowing for time to read through observation notes and write participant specific questions. However, this was adapted based on feedback from participants saying that because of their busy and changing schedules, it was easier to conduct the interviews immediately after the shopping trip. So for most participants, interviews were conducted immediately after the shopping observation.

Questions were noted and flagged during the shopping trip, and then drawn upon during the interviews. So therefore, the interviews were still comprised on participant specific questions, as well as the standard set of questions. Furthermore, the original research plan called for 1-hour interviews. However, due to participant feedback and apprehension in agreeing to that time commitment, the interviews were cut to 30-45 minutes. Some interviews still ran for 1 hour, however, others only lasted 25 minutes. Overall, they averaged to be around 35 minutes.

Many interviews were conducted in a café located at the Pick n Pay Claremont. Other interviews were conducted on the University of Cape Town and University of the Western Cape campuses, in a shopping center lobby in Rondebosch, at the house of a participant, at my flat and at a few cafés and restaurants in the Southern Suburbs. They were recorded with an iPhone and later saved and backed up on a laptop and a cloud service, all of which are password protected.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data for this research was collected over six weeks from August to September 2015. Throughout the collection process, the data was analyzed for trends or themes, which were then

noted for later use. This section provides an overview of the data analysis for each method, as well as how the data was combined and analyzed to speak more directly to the project's aim as a whole.

3.6.1 Participant Observation: Grocery Shopping Observation

After each observation trip, the handwritten notes were transferred to a Microsoft Word template that was used to keep data organized and to provide a structure across all of the research. Key themes were identified on this document and research notes were made to mark specific examples of these themes. The themes related to answering the first objective of this research: "identify 'everyday' food and grocery purchasing habits of Cape Town students." Nonetheless, there were no set themes before the start of the research, so the pool of themes grew with each observation trip. After all observations were completed, the themes from each trip were compiled and sorted into larger categories. These categories emerged as: convenience, thrift and budgeting, care for self and health and the influences of a "student lifestyle." Within these categories, subcategories were also identified, and then examples were attached to each subcategory. Through this process, the "everyday" habits of students were identified to speak toward the first objective.

3.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

As for the interviews, they were transcribed and then analyzed through the identification of different themes that became apparent in the conversation. Often these themes overlapped with the themes from the grocery shopping observation notes. However for the first stage of analysis, the pooling and sorting of themes was done solely based on the interviews. This was to ensure that the analysis of this method was speaking directly to the second objective of this research: "explore how and why students made certain food purchasing decisions."

For the most part, the theme categories for the interviews corresponded with the data collected from the shopping trips. However, they came in a wider and broader scope and included personal definitions of ethics, morals and ethical consumption, as well as conversations on consumer education, which did not emerge in shopping observation notes. Consumer education relates to how the participants learned to shop and about ethics issues relating to grocery shopping.

Overall, there is a range of influences on student grocery choices. Some of these are more explicit such as brand loyalty, while others are strongly related to relationships and care at home. For the analysis of this data, categories and subcategories were identified and then

examples were attached to each grouping. This established a range of influences that represent many of the reasons students made their choices, thus speaking to the second objective.

3.6.3 Complete Data Analysis

After analyzing the data sets separately, they were analyzed together. The two sets of themes were reanalyzed within the context of the literature on ethical consumption, specifically the division of “ethical objects” and “ethical practices.” Within these two categories, the themes and trends from the observation trips and the interviews were considered and resorted. The interview questions that directly spoke to ethical views and personal definitions of ethical consumption played an important role in this analysis. The use of race and gender categories are used only to establish a diverse sample of students, and therefore the data analysis did not breakdown themes in this way. Thus the data analysis seeks to demonstrate themes for a categorization of students as a whole, and not for gender, ethnic, racial or religious groups in particular. In this way, this analysis supports the third objective of “identifying what role ethics play in the consumption habits of Cape Town students” and speaks to larger aim of the research.

3.7 Limitations

As with all research, there are various limitations to this study. The main limitations of this study relate to the demographic choice and sample size.

The first limitation is the demographic choice. As discussed previously, only 4.5 percent of South Africa’s population has a bachelor’s degree (Wazimap, 2011). So despite a growing number of people pursuing higher education within the Global South, the choice of tertiary level students presents a limitation due to its small scope in relating to the rest of the population.

One of the goals of this project was to expand this topic of research to an additional demographic within the Global South. This was based on the fact that most previous research on ethical consumption, as well as on consumption in South, has focused on the middle to upper classes and the idea of a “new” middle class emerging within South Africa (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

While students do present a valuable demographic choice due to their political and ethical awareness, as well as their consumer roles as being trendsetters and early adopters, they are also often associated with middle class status (Gill, 2012; Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). While some students from lower classes may attend universities, their numbers are limited, and thus there is still a general assumption that an undergraduate degree is a symbol of class and status (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). Nonetheless, despite the small percentage of tertiary students, and despite the middle class association, students do provide valuable information in terms of how topics such

as ethical consumption are being discussed within society, at home and on campus, as well as giving insight into what future consumers will be acting upon and with which issues they will be concerned.

Another limitation is due to the sample size. Twenty-three students were observed while shopping, as well as participated in a 30-45 minute interview, and an additional 5 students were only interviewed. The original goal of the research was to observe and interview 20 to 25 students from various universities or colleges in Cape Town. This goal was accomplished.

Trends and themes have been identified, and these provide important information that contributes to a better understanding of ethical consumption in the Global South. Nonetheless, the experiences described by the students in the study may be different to other students both in South Africa and in other Southern countries. Furthermore, there is something to be said about the type of students who are willing to participate in a research study. Therefore, it is necessary to consider that students who are more reserved about participating may exhibit a different set of trends or themes. Nonetheless, considering the aims and objectives of this study, the sample size is sufficient.

As discussed previously, the demographics and sample size were deliberate and based on the aims and objectives. Nonetheless, this section has thus identified and acknowledged the limitations of this research. With this additional information, a better reading and understanding of the research results can be gained.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

There is a limited amount of research on ethical consumption in the Global South, and the research that does exist tends to be theorized within a Northern context so that its application in the South creates the perception that Southern consumers lack ethics (Gregson & Ferdous 2015). In order to challenge the assumptions in the existing literature, this research has chosen to expand the definition of ethical consumption to incorporate the notion of ethics in practice and the idea of ethical consumption as it relates to care at home (Barnett et al, 2005a; Barnett et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). This research aims to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption by focusing on the food and grocery purchasing choices of students attending selected universities in Cape Town. The three objectives assist in adding to this understanding, and the previous sections have demonstrated how the chosen methods provide an opportunity for a thorough and successful examination. After the analysis of the research, various themes and trends were identified for each of the objectives.

The first objective of identifying grocery habits among students relies on the method of participant observation, and through companion grocery shopping between participants and myself, the following themes were identified: convenience, budgeting, thrift and care for self. The second objective is to explore how and why students made certain grocery choices, and the corresponding method is semi-structured interviews. There are a range of category themes for this objective from store and brand preference to care for community and concern for health. The third objective is to identify the role ethics play in these consumption habits, and it was achieved through the analysis of the data collected from the two previous methods. The themes for this objective relate more directly back to the literature review and are divided between the two perspectives of ethical consumption: ethical objects and ethical practices (Barnett et al, 2005a; Barnett et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015).

This research is located in South Africa in order to provide additional research on consumers, as well as to add to growing literature of ethical consumption in the Global South. It also focuses on an additional demographic of participants, students, which broadens the scope and conceptualization of this pool of literature. However, though the sampling took into consideration race and gender categorization and though this is not a comparative study, it can also be noted that there are no dominated themes confined to one category of participant. Finally, this research provides a more diverse understanding of how ethics are associated with food and food consumption by considering two of the perspectives on ethical consumption

(Castree, 2004; Miller, 1998b). Thus these different characteristics must all be considered when engaging with the collected data and exploring the overall aim of this research.

Overall, the aim of this research is to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption has been achieved. Based on this research, students do express ethical consideration in their consumption habits, based on both perspectives of ethical goods and ethical practice; however, they are more apt to act on the ethics of care at home than on the ethics of care at a distance. Furthermore, this research adds to the discussion on Southern consumption and ethics through the discussion of higher education's role in consumption habits, students' relationship with food consumption and the exploration of ethical consumption among students divided as ethical objects and ethical practice.

4.2 Consumption & Higher Education

Ethical consumption has a strong connection with student populations in the Global North because of the history of the divestment movement and the Fair Trade movement on campuses (Wilson & Curnow, 2013). In the Global South, students have a strong connection with politics, where, particularly in South Africa, university and college campuses play an important role (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). However, politics are often placed in a separate sphere to consumption and ethics. Nonetheless, these spheres are actually overlapping, and therefore it is necessary to acknowledge how ethics, consumption and politics interact among students (Popke, 2006; Littler, 2008). One of the greatest influences participants express is that of the student lifestyle. This is a distinct idea that students live and make choices in a different manner than other demographic groups, which also directly relates to why I chose this group for research. The following section considers how students express their identities as consumers, both when observed and when asked to consider the reasoning behind their choices – a task many participants have never considered.

The literature on the higher education industry discusses how there is a growing population of students. This population comes from more varied backgrounds than previously, and therefore they come with more varied opinions, experiences and expectations (Alcorn, Christensen & Kapur, 2015). Furthermore, it is through the backdrop of a campus and a classroom that students try new foods and test new brands or stores. The majority of participants from this study are living independently from their families, and most are living with other students or young professionals.

Participants often mention that living with peers and outside of the family unit has a great impact on their eating habits, from trying new brands and to new cooking styles. One participant states that when living with different people “you try out different things, like I'm

trying out meat free Mondays, because my flatmate is a vegetarian” (Participant 18, Observatory Pick n Pay, 19 August 2015). Another participant mentioned buying lentils for the first time because her roommate had shared a meal that included lentils. This is a food she had not been exposed to previously but decided to try based on the experience with her roommate.

Another influence on participants is academic coursework. Multiple participants, particularly those in the health or environmental studies fields, are influenced by the content of classes. Participants studying in the health field often mention how their courses give them a greater appreciation of how the body works and how different foods and nutrients impact the body. Participants in the environmental fields mention how their coursework and experiences with classmates encourage them to recycle, consider the sustainability of their food choices and even decrease or cut their meat intake. Participants outside these majors also expressed that courses have an impact on them, however the most drastic influences were in these two specific subject areas.

Furthermore, based on conversations held during grocery shopping trips and the conducted interviews, students’ shopping habits tend to be influenced by time and cost. Due to having a more flexible schedule, they often pair their shopping trips with other activities such as going to the gym or coming back from campus. There is a general dislike of having to shop during peak times and on peak days; this is due to the crowds, as well as, the frustration of low stock on the shelves. Shopping lists are not generally used on the day-to-day basis, but may be used when shopping for new recipes or when hosting events. There is also a conflicting trend between participants staying with familiar brands and products that they have seen at home, and with the desire to act on personal taste preferences and the influences from peers and housemates, which is similar to other studies conducted by Daniel Miller (2004). Store choice is strongly influenced by family and preconceived notions, much more so than brands. Therefore, students are more likely to change brands and even eating styles, such as limiting meat intake, than to change store preferences.

Cape Town students are significantly more drawn to Pick n Pay stores due to their balance of quality and price. It is also conveniently located near popular student housing neighborhoods, therefore possibly demonstrating an intentional location choice by Pick n Pay based on class, income and popular connotations. The movement between stores is primarily constrained to two other stores, Woolworths Food, if purchasing more specialty items or higher quality items, and Checkers, if purchasing non-perishable, bulk items. The role of convenience, ease of access and budgeting are the dominant reasons for store and product choice.

Convenience and the concern for time constraints are the most prevalent themes among participants. The reason for convenience is based on the perception that participants, as students, are short of time. One participant put it as the following: “The only thing for me is the convenience... [When we were shopping,] I was thinking about what the time would cost me in studying” (Participant 1, Vangate Pick n Pay, 6 August 2015). This concern for time management and the seeking of convenience includes both the store location and actual shopping patterns.

Students generally chose grocery stores located in the same neighborhood as where they live or in a space that was in transit between where they live and where they study. Many of the students who participated in this study live in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, and often these students chose to shop at the Pick n Pay located in Claremont, near a small shopping mall and inside the same building of popular fitness gym. Frequently when meeting students at the Pick n Pay, they would mention that they had just been working out, or that they usually do their shopping after going to the gym. Furthermore, the appeal of the store was due to the availability of free and generally available parking located underneath the shopping center. Being a very popular shopping, living and business area, parking can present a challenge, and therefore the access of this free parking garage is a particular draw for students. Furthermore, even participants who chose to shop at other grocery stores mention the Claremont Pick n Pay as the store to go shopping when other errands need to be run, such as doing clothing shopping at the mall across the street.

For the participants who did not shop at Claremont Pick n Pay, the role of convenience is still prevalent in their store selection. The opportunity to shop quickly and easily seems to be the determining factor. However, a few participants chose to shop at a store further from where they stay because of personal preferences towards a brand and due to preconceived notions of certain store quality. In these cases, they still mention that they made their store choice based on other convenience factors such as easy parking or the store being on the way home from campus or work. One participant explains how students have a more complex schedule than other shoppers by comparing how her parents and grandparents had the luxury of seeking out local producers and specialty stores:

“So getting home so late and then I have to get up so early, so for me, I'm not going to drive around looking for a place that is growing the stuff locally. Whereas my my grandmother and my family do. They have the time to do that” (Participant 11, Fruit & Veg City Tygervalley, 11 August 2015).

When shopping with students it became clear that most of them did not use grocery lists unless they were planning to try a new recipe, if company was coming to visit or if they were doing “big shops,” which generally occur at the start of term. Most participants of this study purchase the same items every week or month, and therefore they state that a grocery list is not needed. The reason for this repetition is often mentioned as a way to cut down on the time it takes to go shopping, as well as the declaration that they had previously identified meals that are quick and easy and have since kept with them in order to save time. This introduces the theme of convenience as being very prevalent in the actual shopping patterns and eating habits.

Even the actual food choices have a convenience factor to them, as they are often instant soups, canned food and quick cooking meals such as pasta and rice. One participant mentions how cooking in bulk and then freezing small portions acts as a time saver for her, and a few other participants mention having frozen meals from parents, often called “mommy meals,” as convenience factor in their eating habits, while other participants share cooking responsibilities with housemates in order to save time.

Nonetheless, there is also regular mention of looking for “premade” foods, and how these are often purchased from convenience shops or shops attached to petrol stations. Thus when grabbing a quick meal is the main objective, many participants state that they go to Woolworths Food. This grocery store is generally seen as being more expensive, but it has a wide selection of high quality, pre-made meals. Therefore, some of the most common reasons for shopping at Woolworths is convenience and the time saving factor. Thus because of the role that it plays in both the store and food selection, convenience has been identified as one of the main themes of this study.

Another theme that the majority of participants demonstrate is thrift and budgeting. Thrift is described as the resourceful usage of money with a specific concern for limiting waste (Miller, 2004). Participants express this concern for thrift through the attachment to bargains, their attention to unit prices and their concern for the wastefulness of money or food. These habits are also demonstrated in the changes of their habits when it comes to cooking for others, such as for their housemates, as a money and time saver, or for celebrations and hosted dinners.

While observing and speaking with participants during the shopping trips, students express a particular concern for a balance of money and quality, as well as the implication of food waste being money waste (Miller, 2012). Participants express this budgeting concern by comparing prices. However, often they have already done their comparison in prices and chose to stick with the “cheapest” brand now that they have completed their research. Nonetheless, participants are also quite specific on not compromising on quality. While a certain brand of

canned tuna was cheaper than another, the fact that the bargain tuna was in seasoned brine prevented the participants from buying it. Other products with specific quality connotations, such as “Mrs. Balls Chutney” or “Koo Baked Beans,” means that even with specials and bargains, participants are unwilling to sacrifice on the quality to which they have grown accustomed. Two participants tell of the household debate over this concern for cost and quality. One participant insisted on buying sachet milk, and the other was adamant on buying cartons of milk. While the milk in the sachets is cheaper, the associated hassle of storing, opening and refilling bottles with the sachets was deemed to be “such a mission” that eventually the one participant conceded to spending the money on cartons (Participant 13, Claremont Pick n Pay, 12 August 2015). Nonetheless, when it is known that two brands are similar quality, participants generally choose the discounted brand.

A similar dilemma exists among students when discounts or specials are based on quantity or the idea of “the more you buy, the more you save.” When noticing these specials, participants are often torn between buying extra of a product they may not need and getting a “good deal.” Often these participants pain over the changing of their brand preference, in order to save a bit of money. One participant chose to purchase a “family size” mayonnaise container because of the discount price. However, later, he also expressed concern that the mayonnaise will spoil before he can use it all, which, he thinks, will most likely negate the discounted price.

Another example of being concerned with waste relates to wasting money and how shopping at certain grocery stores can lead to spending more money on groceries just simply based on the brand name. This particularly relates to the grocery store choice of students, and how because of their budgets, the choice to shop at more expensive stores is seen as a waste of money and a lack of expression of thrift. This characteristic is occasionally also partnered with a willingness to split shopping between two or three shops in order to find the best prices for quality. Often these participants shop at a lower end grocery store such as Shoprite for canned and non-perishable goods, and then will go to Pick n Pay, a middle income store, for produce and other perishable goods such as milk and yogurts. Participants also split their grocery shopping between the middle-income stores, such as Pick n Pay and Checkers, where they will buy more of their staples or everyday foods, and the higher end grocery store, Woolworths Food, where they will go for specialty items or treats from themselves or friends. Within this research, there appears to be a popular association between Woolworths and quality. Therefore, it is often the first stop for participants when it comes to birthdays, celebrations and expressions of care.

There are noticeable differences between when participants shop for themselves and when they are shopping for others, and often the differences relate to price and quality. Some of the

participants make arrangements within their apartments or houses where they alternate turns cooking for each other. These shared meals are a common method of managing both time and money among the participants, and often a strict budget is put in place in order to prevent overspending on these meals. One participant has a “house captain” who plans all of the meals, budgeting the weekly costs and then assigns different house members to each of the days of the week. In this case, the house captain often did the shopping in order to ensure that the budget and ingredient were followed. However, for the week in which this research was conducted, the participant had been asked to do the shopping. She expressed anxiety in finding all of the ingredients and keeping to the budget, as the house captain usually shopped at a different store known for better prices. In another case, the participant was purchasing items for her shared dinner, as well as, her individual meals. She chose cheaper and lower quality items for the group meal than for her individual meals.

A specific example of this is two blocks of cheese that she bought, one was a generic, store brand of yellow cheese and the other was a branded block of Gouda. She chose the cheaper cheese not as a lack of care or respect for her housemates, but for a concern of managing finances and practicing thrift on their behalf. However, she personally prefers the higher quality cheese, and therefore is willing to spend slightly more for herself. This provides an interesting parallel to how consumers choose to increase their spending when shopping for others as an expression of care and ethics, a trend which is discussed in Section 4.4: Ethical Practice, as well as in other research on this subject (Miller, 2004; Popke, 2006).

An additional influence on how participants make their choices is brand and store association. Nearly all of the participants acknowledge clear distinctions between the grocery stores in Cape Town. They describe these differences based on class, price and quality, and most often participants are not willing to shop at stores outside their ordinary shopping. One participant stated: “I still think Checkers is seen as less reputable than Pick n Pay probably,” and when asked to expand on the statement, the participant said, “I have the perception that I would [get less quality], but I can't back that up with any actual experiences” (Participant 7, Claremont Pick n Pay, 15 August 2015). This demonstrates how many participants base their grocery store on certain associations rather on actual experiences.

The distinctions between grocery stores are most prevalent in the popular connotation of Woolworths being higher quality and representing more ethical practices. A participant, who specifically seeks out avocados from Woolworths, demonstrates the first part of this saying:

“They've hit the nail on the head. Consistency and everything... I'll buy avos in Woolworths because they are 100% every time. I've never had a bad avo from Woolworths. I do like Woolworths, and I wish I could shop there everyday, but I can't” (Participant 24, Claremont Pick n Pay, 23 August 2015).

Another participant expanded on the second part of this statement by explaining:

“I see Woolies² sort of supporting South Africa more than Pick n Pay, I don't know why...I also do feel a bit better, in terms of buying at Woolies. It's more expensive, but in terms of their corporate image, I do feel like they have an image of much more environmentally friendly” (Participant 16, Claremont Pick n Pay, 20 August 2015).

These two quotes demonstrate the general expectation of higher quality products and service found at Woolworths Food. However, other participants discussed the boycotts that are also associated with Woolworths Food due to the grocery store importing goods from Israel (BDS South Africa, 2015). Various participants mention knowing of the Woolworths boycott, and a few mention parents avoiding the store or specific products from Israel. However, only a few actively participate in the boycott themselves. Nonetheless, these experiences demonstrate how the store association of Woolworths has led many to both seek out their products, as well as, avoid them.

These associations with grocery stores also relate to specific brands, and they are often based on family preferences and what participants have grown up seeing in their homes. One participant acknowledges that he continually buys the same items from the first grocery list that his mom made him when he moved into student housing. However, others express that they were more willing to try different brands than their parents. Often this influence came from their peers and housemates, as a participant explains by stating:

“When I lived with my one digsmate last year, she was quite very health conscious, so I used to see like what she bought, and then try it, and then some of those things have gotten pulled into our routine. I find I'm quite influenced by the people I live with, by their eating habits, like if they have a good idea, then I'll start eating that” (Participant 16, Claremont Pick n Pay, 20 August 2015).

Taking on the responsibility of consumption, often for the first time, can be overwhelming for students. There are various influences on their choices and this leads to an interesting conversation on what role universities play in the teaching consumer and citizen topics,

² “Woolies” is the nickname given to Woolworths Food

specifically consumer rights, political consumption and the idea of consumer citizenship (Crafford & Bitzer, 2009). Personal experiences and academic coursework also have a large impact on how students view the world and their role as a citizen and consumer. Thus these aspects influence how students view ethics and ethical consumption. The next sections will describe and analyze the roles that both ethical objects and ethical practice play in the consumption habits of students in Cape Town.

4.3 Ethical Objects

The perspective of ethical consumption being based on the ethics of the object being purchased is the dominant perspective in the current literature, and it is also predominantly based on the Northern consumer—Southern producer divide. This has effectively excluded Southern consumers from the discussion. Nonetheless, it appears that while the extra cost of these foodstuffs is the leading limit to the act, at least in terms of free range and organic foods, students do express some ethical consideration within this context.

There are different categories of “food” that have been classified as ethical, such as Fair Trade, organics, non-GMOs and free range (Barnett et al, 2005a). However, within this categorization there is a split between the care for a distant other and the care for oneself. The care for oneself refers to the practice of eating organics and free range because of health benefits, and it is discussed in the next section on ethical practice (McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015; Barnett et al, 2005a). In this section, the focus is the ethics that are expressed for distant others or for overarching themes like sustainability and where the ethics are based in the object itself (Barnett et al, 2005a).

Shopping for organic, free range and non-GMO are examples of foods that have been given ethical value. The ethics is based on consideration for the environment and for the support of the distant farmer or company who has chosen to farm in this more “ethical” manner (Barnett, et al, 2005b; Tustin & Jongh, 2008). Free range is found at the most popular grocery stores, but is more dominant at the middle to high end chains: Checkers, Pick n Pay and Woolworths. The cost differentiation is the greatest deferral from buying free range meats, however, students do commonly choose free range eggs. The concern for animal rights and animal welfare are generally the determining factors in this choice, as is the opinion of being higher quality and better taste. Furthermore, many of the students who choose free range did so based on family habits they had adopted into their own shopping.

The conversation on free range eggs often moved to GMOs, the appeal of avoiding pesticides or chemicals and the role of organic produce in shopping habits. Organic fruits and vegetables are not often found at the middle-income grocery stores and are predominantly found at

Woolworths Food and specialty markets. The ethics rooted in non-GMO food items is more often the health aspect, but the support for GMO food items is the concern of being able to provide food security for South Africa. Nonetheless, students do not have a strong preference for organics, because it is often seen as not having any added value compared to standard produce. Without the impression of being higher quality or better taste, as seen with the preference for free range eggs, students are unlikely to purchase organic produce. Overall, the general impression is that there is not enough information or labeling on GMO or non-GMO products to make informed decisions, and that purchasing organics and free range is a privileged position because of the cost differential.

Another example of when cost becomes the determining factor against an example of ethical products in Fair Trade. Among the participants, Fair Trade is not well known, and those who are familiar only knew of such items from outside the context of their individual shopping. A few participants mention learning about Fair Trade through the academic setting in International Relations or Business courses. The majority do not remember seeing Fair Trade being offered at their grocery store, with one participant stating:

“I’m trying to think, for the items that I bought today, I’m trying to think if there were alternatives ... but I don’t think there were ... I’d say if the two were sitting together I would go for the Fair Trade” (Participant 4, Claremont Pick n Pay, 5 August 2015).

However, other participants who mention seeing Fair Trade marketed in other countries or in the context of other countries. Two participants remember seeing Fair Trade coffee being sold at the airport in Malawi, and another participant made specific reference to a brand of Ethiopian coffee that is Fair Trade. However, no participants purchased Fair Trade items during our shopping trips together. Two participants thought their coffee had been Fair Trade, because they purchased it from Woolworths Food, and based on the quality association with Woolworths, they assumed that such products would be certified. However, when they checked the label this was not the case.

Overall, when interviewing participants on Fair Trade, they express that they have limited knowledge of such items, and that they have an inability to spend more on such products because of their budgets. Another participant mentions a concern about the actual labeling of Fair Trade stating: “it is very difficult to consider if that’s Fair Trade. They might not have the Fair Trade stamp, but they might still be treating their workers quite well. And they’re employing people in this country which to me is a benefit” (Participant 7, Claremont Pick n Pay, 15 August 2015). This sentiment demonstrates how the Fair Trade emphasis on caring for the distant other does not have the same resonance within in the Global South (Gregson & Ferdous,

2015; Barnett, et al, 2005b). However, it also introduces another type of ethics, specifically based on the South African phrase of “local is lekker.”

“Local is lekker,” as one participant explains. “It means like things that are local are like better. Um, it's closer to your heart. It tastes better. It's fresher. It's just the way it is” (Participant 3, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 5 August 2015). This concern for shopping local is the most active way in which students express object-based ethical consumption. It is based on the perspective that local food is of higher quality and that there is value in purchasing it because it supports companies and shops within the community, as well as nationally.

Local food and the ethics of local food are different than the previous examples of ethical objects (Littler, 2008; Guthman, 2008). With Fair Trade, free range and organics, the value of ethics is based on the relationship of care at a distance, and often, care for an “other.” These relationships of care are seen as being more distantly located as the distant coffee, chicken and vegetable farmer (Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Varul, 2008). However, with localness, the ethics is still situated within the object itself, because in order to show the ethics, the object itself must be purchased, but the spatial relationship is more immediate or “closer to home.” It is precisely the fact that the food item has been produced locally that establishes its ethical value (Massey, 2004; Clarke et al, 2008; Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008).

There are a variety of reasons that students purchase local, from quality to cost concerns, but there is a definite appreciation of small-scale production of foodstuffs, such as homemade rusks, preserved fruits from farm stores, local or small scale chicken farming and even craft beer. Meat, specifically chicken, coming from local producers, even without free range labeling or marketing, is often deemed to be more of a bargain, as well as higher quality (Clarke et al, 2008; Jackson, Ward & Russell, 2008). There is also a stronger sense of trust between the consumer and producer, and in this way, there is also an expectation of receiving better service, as well as a better quality product. Thus the cultural significance of the phrase “local is lekker” demonstrates the role of ethics in this scenario. The ethics that are being expressed in these situations include wanting to support the local community and even seeing South Africa and its economy as the greater national community. It is further based on the ethical value of wanting to support those neighbors first before choosing imported foods.

Thus eating and shopping local does not only extend within a community, city or region, but it is also apparent in the conversation of national production. Students are more aware of the “Proudly South African” logo that is placed on different food items than they are with the Fair Trade label, though it is rarely mentioned as the deciding factor for purchasing. Furthermore, students express a deep concern for supporting South African industries as a way of supporting

the economy and their lives in tandem. So while the “Proudly South African” logo did not draw students to purchase the item, labeling that stated that the object was imported did deter a purchase. Imported fruits and vegetables were often listed as items to be avoided, due to the increased price often associated with imports, as well as, a perception of having less value for the South African economy and having a larger carbon footprint.

Nonetheless, during the interviews participants were more vocal about the lack of labeling on “local” foods, and that they are more likely to notice when items are labeled as imported, such as with vegetables at Woolworths Food. The choice to purchase local foods thus generally takes place outside the context of the chain grocery stores and more with smaller producers, farm stands and personal connections within a community.

“I think I’m rather attached to the support local thing,” explains the participant who first introduced the phrase local is lekker. “I like the idea that even in terms of farmers or shops that they look after their employees very well, and that, they need to make a profit, like it is capitalism, but that they don’t make a profit as the expense of their workers. It’s very much an equal relationship” (Participant 3, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 5 August 2015).

Some participants did also acknowledge how international corporations who produce items in South Africa also have an important value in the local economy, and therefore they thought these companies could sometimes also be grouped into the local category. Much like Fair Trade, the support of these local products can only be demonstrated through the choice of such foods (Littler, 2008; Massey, 2004). However, instead of the care for the distant other, which is how Fair Trade is defined, it is the care for immediate community, though this immediacy can also be nationally or at times within Africa as a whole.

The origin of products also led to the most dominant discussion on food boycotts. In conversations about boycotting companies and foodstuffs, the dominant concerns are food safety and politics based on import-export relations. Food safety is primarily based on personal experiences of being unsatisfied with the quality or experience of using an item. This often led to a change in brand or even shopping venue all together. The example of product boycotts for political reasons is confined to the current boycotting of Woolworths Foods. This is because Woolworths imports products from Israel; and because some South Africans view the Israel-Palestine conflict as an Apartheid state, they refuse to support Woolworths continued partnership with Israeli producers (BDS South Africa, 2015). Furthermore, the choice to boycott is often based on religious and political affiliations, and it is also often based on family conversations and the influence of media and peers, particularly through social media sites.

These product and company boycotts parallels the boycotts in the Global North. However, instead of being based on Northern companies being boycotted for poor treatment of Southern producers, especially farm workers and child laborers, it is a boycott done by Southern consumers toward a Southern company who is associated with a Northern producer. Thus it is an example that challenges the dominant literature even while positioned within the current paradigm of theorization.

Overall, many participants associate themselves as ethical consumers, and many participants also associate environmental, economic and social concerns to be part of this perspective. However, they are not necessarily acting on these ethical considerations through the choice of Fair Trade or free range or organics. Thus this does allow the conversation to shift to how ethics and ethical consumption is present in the actions of consumption, such as thrift and care for self, friends and housemates.

4.4 Ethical Practice

The most dominant example of ethical consumption within this study is based on the practice of consumption and how an action can have ethical value within it. In these cases, the choice and action of consumption is more based on personal values or circumstances, rather than the object itself. Examples of this are health or the care for oneself, care for friends through dinner parties, holidays or events and care for society, social issues and community support. As opposed to the ethical object, where a specific item must be purchased, ethical practice is less concerned with items being purchased and more concerned with the practice of consuming and the reasons why certain items are purchased (Castree, 2004; Miller, 1998a). The literature on this definition is less prominent, however, it does more closely relate with consumption in the Global South (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015). When asking participants for examples of ethics in consumption, the most common responses were an action-based ethics such as recycling or choosing to bring reusable grocery bags. Nonetheless, through the observation on grocery trips and the through the interviews, other ethical practices are demonstrated such as care at home, care of self and friends, thrift, and finally actions based on sustainability and alternative food networks.

The idea of ethical practice and care at home also differs from the previous definition, because the expression of care is base on a more immediate relationship, particularly between the consumer and the household (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). Many students do not live in the type of household usually identified for consumption studies. Students are often living in residence halls or in houses and apartments with their peers. Therefore, there could be an assumption that students are only buying for themselves and are

only concerned with how their decisions impact them personally (Miller, 2012). Instead, this research demonstrates how “home” can represent types of close-knit relationships and dependencies between friends and partners, and not just family. Furthermore, despite being distanced from a family home, students are still often receivers of ethics and care at home. Many students receive food packages from their parents, which are generally premade, frozen, home cooked meals. They are often favorites or comfort food, and this represents an example of how ethical practice and the category of “care at home” does not necessarily mean the immediate and current household as a physical structure. This extension of care at home can also include care for friends and housemates, care for oneself in terms of health and the consideration of thrift.

Expressions of care are most explicitly found in the relationships between friends. Despite expressing budgetary constraints, students are very inclined to “splurge” when it comes to celebrating their friends. Splurge purchases come most often in the form of treats or cakes to celebrate birthdays, as seen with other groups of consumers (Miller, 2004). When shopping for these items, students acknowledge the quality association with Woolworths Foods, and therefore in order to express their care for their friends, they will go shopping for the treats at this store. The appeal of shopping at Woolworths is because of the associated quality level, but also because of the connotation of Woolworths being more expensive and more selective. Therefore, by shopping here, it demonstrates a willingness to spend a bit more on the friend, and thus an expression of the friendship’s value. Outside of shopping for birthdays, dinner parties are also expressions of care among friends.

Participants often change their shopping habits when attending dinner parties and celebrating birthdays. This expression of care is done both when attending a gathering outside the home, say at a friend’s house, as well as when hosting events. When attending a hosted dinner, participants generally spend extra time and often extra money on a bottle of wine, an appetizer or a dessert to share among guests. Many students express that because of family upbringing, they feel obliged to bring a gift for the host, but in the same tone, they choose their gifts based on personal connections and relationship status. Closer and dearer friends receive nicer gifts than those of lesser connection, and when invited to dinner with friends of higher quality taste, there is a strong sense to reciprocate the generosity with higher quality or more expensive gifts. One participant expresses this by saying, “if you just go over to someone's house for supper, you bring something nice ... So, I would buy something extra that is not fitting in with what I usually shop for” (Participant 1, Vangate Pick n Pay, 6 August 2015).

A popular gathering to host is a braai, a type of cookout or barbeque. When asked about how his shopping habits may change when preparing for a braai, one participant said, “you want to treat them, possibly show off a little bit of your cooking skills, you know” (Participant 12, Claremont Pick n Pay, 12 August 2015). Another participant explains that the types of food cooked often depend on who was coming over, “like if [name of friend] is coming then, I’ll cook something nice, because when I go to her house she’s always got it laid out, and it’s all bought from Woolies, and it’s all pretty fancy, and I sort feel like I need to repay the favor” (Participant 16, Claremont Pick n Pay, 20 August 2015). Thus caring for guests in this way demonstrates how and why certain grocery habits may change and how different expectations and relationships can dictate and change shopping habits.

Another expression of care among friends is the acceptance of housemate’s personal preferences for foods when cooking together. The choice to cook together is often based on budgeting and saving time, however, being willing to adapt cooking recipes to include diets, such as vegetarianism, demonstrates personal consideration. While adapting recipes and styles of eating in order to continue sharing meals has individual benefits, it also is an expression of care and a willingness to compromise and adapt for the benefit of a housemate and friend. Building on this, a few participants also mention attempting to influence their partner’s shopping choices, specifically in terms of health consciousness and meat intake. Furthermore, a larger number of participants discuss how they have adapted their shopping habits in order to take into consideration the wants of their partners. Often these are small gestures of picking up juice or fruits, but such expressions of care can also be grand such as cooking an entire dinner for a partner in order to treat, spoil or celebrate him or her. Another participant discusses how despite not eating meat herself, she is willing to cook it for her partner when having dinner together. However, she does emphasize that this is done begrudgingly, and that she often tries to just cook vegetarian meals with hearty starches instead.

Furthermore, another participant explains the impact of partners coming over for dinner as such: “Last night was case in point, our one roommate had this girl over, who he was obviously trying to impress, like he had the whole thing. He had the appetizers, the mascarpone on crackers and olives and capers and red wine, and the main meal was rib eye” (Participant 12, Claremont Pick n Pay, 12 August 2015). The participant had previously expressed how the roommate usually limited his cooking and eating to basic meals, thus demonstrating an example of how relationships and care can influence consumption habits. Overall, these examples of how and why higher quality and more diverse or specialty foods were chosen demonstrate that expressions of care within friendships and dating relationships can dictate and influence grocery shopping choices.

Nonetheless, care can also be expressed towards oneself. Concerns for health is very common among students. This ranges from body image, to athleticism and to coping with academic schedules and exams. Health is often depicted as an individualistic experience, but it is through the care of the body that allows students to balance academic, professional and social demands (Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). Nearly all of the participants made some mention of or acted on a concern for health during the shopping trip, and the concern for health is both represented by the items purchased and the items not purchased. The habits observed range from reading nutrient facts on the back of products to seeking out specific types of bread and buying healthier snacks to keep them attentive while studying. This is especially true during exam times, when students are more stressed and drawn towards sweets. Therefore, many state that they make an extra effort to avoid treats and chocolates during exams and purchase healthier snacks instead.

One participant expresses serious concern about the amount of sugar that is going into food particularly breakfast cereals and yogurts. This led her to research the nutrient facts for every yogurt sold at Pick n Pay and compare the nutrients, specifically the sugar content. She expresses the same health concern about her bread consumption, and even chooses to shop at a different store when buying bread, because Pick n Pay does not carry 100% Rye. The bread choice is a common health indicator among participants, with various mentions of choosing brown or seed bread because of its health benefits, as opposed to white bread.

Another participant explains: "I don't really have time to go look for the cheapest thing, you know what I mean? But I always look at the back of the label, where the health content is, to see about sugar, saturated fats, and that kind of thing" (Participant 1, Vangate Pick n Pay, 6 August 2015). Nonetheless, participants also agree that it is much easier to choose the unhealthy items, such as prepackaged and heavily processed foods. Therefore, it takes a conscious effort to buy the healthy foods and stick to that pattern of healthy eating. Another participant explains, "I'm not a big dietician sort of person, but basically [I'll buy] things that will keep me going for a much longer point of time. So I'll eat a low GI as opposed to a white bread, or ... I'll eat rolled oats instead of processed" (Participant 9, Observatory Pick n Pay, 14 August 2015).

Purchasing fresh produce is another indicator of health consciousness. Often participants mention wanting to eat more fresh produce to improve their diets, but find it challenging to do so because of cost and quality. Therefore, frozen vegetables are chosen instead. Both genders express health consciousness in their habits and most participants point out that their shopping has become healthier as they become more accustomed and comfortable cooking for themselves. A few participants who regularly cook with their housemates begrudgingly

purchase a “more than usual” amount of vegetables, explaining that the other housemates are pressuring them to eat healthier. These participants do not have anything against healthy eating or vegetables, but simply found cooking them more challenging or time consuming. Nonetheless, they accept the requests from their peers.

However, care for self also relates to “treating” oneself, and how even with the best of intentions, snacks, chocolates and treats still sneak into the cart. This is based on a common trend of give oneself a “pick me up” or reward for a shopping trip well done (Miller, 2004). Generally, participants either purchase the treats at the end of a shopping trip, almost sneaking them into the cart, or later in the week outside the dominant shopping trip. “Chocolate, that’s always my weak fall. You get there, and I bypass [the chocolate] and then on the way out, I’m like ‘aww I just have to,’ and I go back quickly to grab one,” explains one participant (Participant 6, Bellville Pick n Pay, 7 August 2015).

Many participants express that mid-week trips to convenience stores are common practice. These trips are not to buy major items, but specifically to pick up quick meals and treats. Nonetheless, these trips to buy treats are still based on a care for oneself, despite their unhealthy association. This is because they are often seen as a reward or an escape from stressful days. Nonetheless, the treats for oneself are not always restricted to sweets, as a few participants pointed out. “I sometimes like going for the more expensive brands [of everyday foods] because I feel like I’m spoiling myself,” she explains, and to expand on this, she states, “I get the same stuff every time I go [shopping], but there will be every now and then, if I have like more money from like doing extra work and stuff, then I’ll always splurge a little bit” (Participant 3, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 5 August 2015). Overall, caring for oneself does not have to be limited to health and nutrient contents but also for treats and quality concerns.

Furthermore, among the participants there is a common perspective that free range meats and eggs have a higher health value, and those who did purchase these items agree that it is the concern for health that prompts this action, similar to other research (Miller, 2012; Clarke et al, 2008; Barnett et al, 2005a). Animal welfare is also a great concern for some participants, and when prompted, other participants agree that the care of farm animals should be considered as an ethical value. Nonetheless, in terms of ethics and health, the association is that free range meats are better for you, which parallels consumer perception in research by Jackson, Ward & Russell (2008). One participant told a story of experiencing adverse affects from hormones put into meats, and another participant shared a story of how her mother prevented her from eating eggs and chicken as a young girl, in order to avoid health repercussions from the hormones. These stories are both personal and localized and have no scientific evidence to

corroborate. However, they do represent an idea that is held within the sample size that certain ways of eating are healthier than others. In these cases, it is concern for health that convinces participants to practice their shopping in one way or another. Though, in the end, health can have a heavy cost on oneself, family and society, and therefore, by caring for oneself, it benefits more than just the individual.

Thus the concern for health is an expression of care and an expression of ethics that demonstrates the interconnectedness of different demands, stressors and passions of student life. Furthermore, this concern for health also demonstrates how the reason for a choice may differ but still result in similar habits, such as choosing to buy free range. In this way, similar choices and preferences can be based on two different sets of ethics.

Another example of ethical practice is thrift. Thrift, as a form of ethics, is based on the efforts to get the most for the least. However, it is not done solely on price but also for quality. Thrift is based on the idea of being able to make the most out of what is available (Miller, 2012). In the case of grocery shopping and food consumption, it is seen as spending money in a frugal way that allows the consumer to purchase needed and wanted items at the least cost. However, it also includes a consideration of quality per cost, as well as the basis of not wanting to waste, neither food through overconsumption nor money such as choosing the most expensive brands. The ethics of this thrift relate not to the object being purchased, but more precisely in the action of shopping, and in the considerations of quality and waste.

Monetary waste relates to the choice of grocery stores and how many students find it excessive, as well as unsustainable, to do all of their shopping at high end grocery stores like Woolworths Food. Therefore, this leads them to only shop at Woolworths for specialty items and for special occasions. When purchasing “basics” or “staples,” such as pastas, beans or canned tuna, many participants grab generic branded items such as the “No Name” brand from Pick n Pay. However, in the same vein, other participants express the balance of price for quality based on not wanting to waste money on a food that they will not finish or enjoy eating just because it is cheaper. This is expressed in the following quote from one participant who said:

“I’d much rather go and buy the one [double-cream yogurt] that is R2 and R3 more, because I’ll be eating this tub for who knows how long, and I’d like to enjoy a consistent quality throughout. I don’t want to be eating something and not really liking it, and I finish it for the sake of finishing it” (Participant 9, Observatory Pick n Pay, 14 August 2015).

Though participants did also express needing to find a balance in spending money on more preferred items with not wanting to spend excessively on groceries. “It feels wasteful,” explains another participant. “I make my budget last as long as it does, but it also feels so wasteful to go to Woolworths and pay like R20 a kilo more for chicken, when chicken just as good as in Checkers. It doesn’t seem worth it to me” (Participant 3, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 5 August 2015). This concern expressed by the participants demonstrates how waste in overspending for similar products can be seen as unethical. Another participant expands on this sentiment by stating: “I think that’s the thing for most of South Africa. There’s so much poverty, that I don’t see a lot people doing all their shopping at Woolworths and buying whatever they want” (Participant 2, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 3 August 2015).

Nonetheless, despite many participants alluding to shopping at high-end stores as excessive based on their current budgets, they did think it would be more appropriate when they are working and making their own money. This is because they had “earned” the money, and therefore, they should be free to spend extra on items that had previously been out of their budgets. However, the emphasis of shopping at these stores is generally put on the premade and specialty items, and therefore, it is not clear whether “staples” and everyday shopping items are significantly different in price at other stores.

In the end, thrift is an expression of ethics where the value is based on the practice and not the item. However, it can differ from the other examples, because in some situations it extends the reach of care. Instead of focusing on the immediate relationships of family, friends and self, it also considers the greater relationship of community, society and the world through the discussion of waste and social inequalities. Thus it parallels the care at a distance, but challenges the objectification of care and the “othering” of care, because it builds off direct connections both near and far. Another example of care having extended proximity is in the concern for society, specifically towards communities, social justice and environmental concerns.

Participants generally express underlying concerns for sustainability and the environment, as well as personal sustainability of budget and health. Buying too much when shopping creates a tension among students between their consumer power, the knowledge of waste and the current societal inequalities. Thus the knowledge of the current challenges within South Africa weighs heavily on these participants. Often they state a concern for not wanting to live in an excessive way or spend recklessly as part of their definition of ethical consumption.

Another societal concern is based on sustainability and animal welfare. Discussions on vegetarianism and limiting meat were present, though not central or predominant, during the

interviews, and the reasons participants choose to decrease meat intake represent some of the different influences in shopping and grocery store habits. “I don't have a problem with people eating meat,” explains a participant. “We are supposed to, I believe that. I just don't think we treat the animals right, so therefore we shouldn't. We don't deserve to eat them” (Participant 6, Bellville Pick n Pay, 7 August 2015). Often the reason for not eating meat is based on childhood experiences with animals, such as pet chickens or watching *Babe*³. However, others simply stated a distaste for meat, and the final reason is based on environmental sustainability.

“A lot of my considerations are kind of what are the impacts that these actions are kind of going to have in that sort of way, climate change and sustainability,” explains one participant. “I'm big into the idea that as one of a couple billion people, I don't have the right to kind of live outside my means and the population is only going to grow, so my impact needs to be as little as possible” (Participant 8, Rondebosch Pick n Pay, 10 August 2015).

So while these concerns are less immediate, they still represent some of the reasons of why and how students in Cape Town make their grocery shopping choices, as well as demonstrate an additional category of care.

There are a variety of reasons participants make their choices, and they are often a combination of ethical practice, ethical objects, as well as more explicit influences. This chapter demonstrates the complicated manner in which choices are made, and how they can change depending on the situation. Furthermore, this demonstrates how student consumption, as well as ethical consumption, are not as straight forward as many may expect. Thus a continued discussion of ethical consumption outside of dominant perspectives is needed.

4.5 Conclusion

There has been a general lack of research and theorization within the Global South concerning ethical consumption. Previous research done on ethical consumption has mainly focused on the Northern consumers and the role that their consumption habits have on the lives and economies of Southern producers (Barnett et al, 2005a; Barnett et al, 2005b; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). When consumer-based consumption research is conducted in the Global South, it has been done within the context of Northern ethics and consumption patterns. This means that the research primarily focused on the Fair Trade and organic markets, thus leading to conclusions that ethics are not expressed in Southern consumption (Gregson & Ferdous 2015; McEwan, Hughes & Bek, 2015). This research has sought to overcome two of these misleading

³ A popular family film from 1995 starring a pig that can herd sheep

obstacles by positioning the research in the Global South and using a Southern perspective, as well as opening the definition of ethical consumption to include ethical actions, such as “care” and “care at home.” In this way, the discussion on ethical consumption can be expanded to include Southern consumers and additional perspectives on ethical consumption.

Overall, the contribution of this research includes its discussion on ethics in the Global South, as well as the expansion of the demographic of study to include students. This research demonstrates how both perspectives of ethical objects and ethical practice are apparent in the consumption habits of these participants. They express great consideration of ethical topics from environmental sustainability to the care of friends and the efforts to avoid waste in both food and money, despite expressing budget constraints, and the fact that the participants are generally not buying for a household. Furthermore, this research explores the benefits of students as a sample group, due to their recent change in lifestyle and their susceptibility to influence from peers, coursework and branding. Thus by focusing on a demographic outside the traditional household, the research on ethical consumption can be further expanded.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the Study

The research on ethical consumption is currently very limited in both its theoretical and geographical scope. Food and grocery shopping is a useful entry point to demonstrate this, because it is both an everyday commodity, as well as a specialty item. Historically, the dominant perspective on ethical consumption focuses on the ethics of an object, and it is most often associated with Fair Trade, organics and free-range food items. The ethics of these items are primarily based on the care of a distant other and the division between the Northern consumer and Southern producer. Another perspective on ethical consumption is based on the practices of consumption, and how ethics is part of these actions. Examples of this are thrift and the idea of “care” at home.

By situating this research within the Global South and considering the subject through a localized lens, it expands the geographical scope of this literature. Previously, research on ethical consumption in the Global South has been limited to the first perspective of ethical goods. This has led much of the research to argue that there is a lack of ethics among Southern consumers, since they are not purchasing Fair Trade, organics and free range. This further demonstrates a shortcoming in the previous research, because it does not consider how ethical practices could be present in Southern consumption. Therefore, this research has focused on expanding the literature on ethical practices, Southern consumption and how these two subjects interact. This research also expands the literature on ethical consumption by focusing on an alternative demographic. Most of the research currently focuses on a “traditional” household family. However, this research demonstrates that other types of consumers also express ethics in their consumption, specifically individual persons living outside a family unit.

This research is done on a qualitative basis, and while the sample size and analysis is localized, it provides a strong basis for continued theorization of ethical consumption in the Global South. This research aims to add to the developing understanding of Southern ethical consumption by focusing on the food and grocery purchasing choices of students attending selected universities in Cape Town. The three objectives for this study are to identify “everyday” food and grocery purchasing habits through the observation of grocery trips with the participants, to explore how and why students made these decisions through semi-structured interviews and finally to identify what role ethics play in these habits through data analysis. Of the 28 participants who were interviewed, 23 were also observed while shopping, and six universities and colleges are represented in this sample.

In the end, this research provides insight on how students in Cape Town do consider and act upon both perspectives on ethical consumption. Participants are not familiar with Fair Trade, but most have experience shopping for free range and organics. Overall, there is a strong concern for animal rights and the environmental effects of meat eating. Nonetheless, ethical practice is more widely demonstrated among students, and this is very apparent through the concern of thrift and in the care for self and for friends.

5.2 Implications

This study has addressed a gap in the research by focusing on the perspective of ethical consumption being based on a practice instead of instilled in a product. By doing so, it demonstrates how Southern consumers do express ethics in their shopping choices. However, they are not focusing on the care of the distant other but on care at home. Therefore, the implications of this research are that it adds to the literature through its theorization within the Global South, its focus on an additional perspective of ethical consumption concerning ethics in practice and the discussion of students as a research demographic.

Previous research has been strongly based on Northern perspective and is conceived within a Northern context. Therefore, when research on consumption was conducted in the Global South, the results did not fully consider the actual actions, influences and ethics of the consumers. They were, in fact, just an example of how Northern theorization and research formats placed within Southern locations do not provide a holistic or justified perception of economic and social situations. An example of this is how few participants have actually heard of Fair Trade, and when it is explained to them, they question how local South African companies with strong employee relations fit into such a scheme. Thus the previously established North-South divide effectively excludes Southern consumers and Southern producers who sell to Southern consumers from the conversation on ethics.

Therefore, comparative studies and studies based on Northern theorization of ethical consumption are limited in providing any beneficial research on the Global South. If producers and corporations want to build a body of ethical consumers, they must not focus on the ethical products, but instead build on the concerns for care at home, specifically thrift and avoiding wastefulness, as well as the desire to support local and the environment. A SECTION HERE HAS BEEN DELETED. Furthermore, the implications of this research are that while there are perspectives that ethical consumption is actually hedonistic and based on the fetishization of commodities, the Southern consumers in this study challenge such claims by expressing ethics through the care at home. This can still be seen as hedonism, especially the argument on health and care of self, but it nonetheless demonstrates a more interconnected look at how choices and

products relate to social and environmental concerns. Overall, the students who participated in this study express strong ties to caring for loved ones, friends and partners. They also acknowledge how thrift and avoiding waste is both practical and ethical, and they even consider how their consumption habits reflect on current social and economic inequalities, and how this impacts their lives and their communities.

Together, this challenges the previous research that only identifies ethics through items such as Fair Trade, and it also challenges the binary relationship of ethical consumption. No longer are Northern consumers given all the power in the relationship of ethical consumption, and thus a continued theorization of Southern consumption, through a Southern theory lens is needed. Additionally, this research demonstrates that while cost and budgeting are key factors in shopping for students, it is not the only factor or influence. In fact, the ethical influence of both perspectives on ethical consumption are apparent, and much of this connection of ethics and shopping comes from experiences with academic setting, as well as living and studying with peers.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for future research are to continue the exploration of ethical consumption in the Global South and to continue to expand the research demographic of consumption. Religious influences and considerations were not a focus of this research, and therefore interview questions did not fully explore how such personal affiliations play a role in both one's understanding of ethics and one's consumption habits. There are participant-specific examples of this among the sample of students; however, it was not fully explored and could be an additional way to diversify the research participants and conversation focus. This study is done in a qualitative manner and focuses on a smaller sample. Therefore, a larger sample size, as well as, an appropriate quantitative element could be beneficial. Another demographic that would be interesting is "young adults," who are not studying and who may or may not have attended a university or college. Many of the influences on participants come from their gained experiences of living with different people and from their coursework. It would be interesting to see both how these experiences are carried with them after leaving the higher education environment, as well as, to see where ethics and influences lie for persons who do not attend tertiary institutions. South Africa has a very small percentage of people who earn a tertiary degree, and therefore this research is very specific to a certain group of people. An expansion of ethical consumption among young adults would give a greater impression of the current state of ethics in South Africa.

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Appendices

Section 1: Participant Consent Form

Researcher's Details:

Molly McMahon, *ACDI master's student at the University of Cape Town*
mcmahonms@gmail.com
072 557 1707

Nature of the research:

This research will be used for the dissertation portion of my master's degree with the African Climate & Development Initiative at the University of Cape Town. The aim of the research is to add to the developing understanding of consumption in the Global South, by focusing on the food/grocery purchasing choices of students attending selected universities in Cape Town.

This research will involve 20-25 participants from selected universities in Cape Town. The researcher will observe one grocery-shopping trip of the participant, and then she will interview the participant a few days after the trip.

How the information will be used:

The information will be used for the writing of a 25,000 to 35,000-word dissertation, as part of a master's program at the University of Cape Town. The final document will be available to readers in electronic format through the university library. There is also a possibility of this research being published in a research journal or book.

Participation in the research involves:

One observed grocery-shopping trip at the store and time of participant's choosing, which may include the researcher taking notes, photographs and recordings. One 60 to 90 minute interview held a few days after the shopping trip, which may include the researcher taking notes, photographs and recordings. Timing is based on participant's average shopping time, with the addition of the interview time. At any time, the participant may withdraw or skip a question without penalty.

Anticipated risks/benefits:

There are no anticipated risks or benefits for participating in this research.

Any costs or payment involved:

Costs consist of personal grocery shopping during the observation stage. There will be no payment or compensation for participating in this research.

By signing this form:

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I understand that I was selected based on referral sampling (a technique where future participants are recruited through their acquaintances).
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research, with the condition that my privacy is respected. I understand that I will not be personally identifiable, and all names and identifying characteristics will be changed to protect my privacy.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.
- I understand that the final document will be available in an electronic format through the university library. I also understand that this research might be published in a research journal or book.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

The researcher must supply you with an *Information sheet* which provides her contact details, outlines the nature of the research and how the information will be used and explains what your participation in the research involves (e.g. how long it will take, participants' roles and rights, including the right to skip questions or withdraw without penalty at any time), any anticipated risks/benefits which may arise as a result of participating, any costs or payment involved (even if none, these should be stated))

Has this been provided?	Yes		No	
Have you received verbal confirmation/explanations where needed?	Yes		No	

Section 2: Observation Documentation Form

Researcher's Details:

Molly McMahon, *ACDI master's student at the University of Cape Town*

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072 557 1707

Participant #:

Date:

Consent form:

Grocery store:

Overview:

Potential themes:

Full notes:

Section 3: Observation Documentation Example

Date: 18 Aug 15

Consent form: 18 Aug 15

Grocery store: PnP Main Road Rondebosch

Overview: This participant lives in a self-catering residence hall at UCT, she does one big shop every month and then will pick up the little stuff that she needs as she goes. She usually goes to the Rondebosch – Main Road PnP because it is convenient. Sometimes she'll go to the ShopRite in Mowbray for big shops because it's a lot cheaper and it's good for bulk products, but she would not buy produce there. She uses a shopping list in order to keep track of what she needs and to keep from wasting money.

Potential themes: thrift, buying for self, health

Full notes: We started in the produce section, and we discussed different brands that PnP carries. She states that because she can trust the PnP brand, and she knows that it's good quality, she feels comfortable buying it. It is also the cheapest, and that's how the price and quality balance out. When buying yogurt she was looking for what was on special because the PnP brand that she usually buys was R2 more expensive this week and that usually means that there's another brand that is on special. She could not find that brand and considered if it was just a good sale that it actually sold out really quickly. Nonetheless, there are certain brands that she trusts more, so for her double creamed yogurt she went straight for the Dairy Bell brand without analyzing the other prices because she knows she does not like the other brands. However, if there had been an increase in price of that yogurt and she was not comfortable paying, so she would just wait till the next time she was shopping and see if the price had gone down.

This is also apparent when buying her canned goods. She always has some in stock in her room, so she can be more particular with price on these items, and therefore can choose when and how many to purchase when she's at the shop in order to keep within her budget. She couldn't find the soup flavors that she prefers so she grabbed alternative ones, but first did look through the rest of the brands to see if they had the flavor she wanted.

She purchased sweetener. She says she's been using sugar all year but she prefers to use sweetener. She knows it's not any better for you than sugar, but she likes to alternate between both sugar and sweetener, as to not use too much of either and to make them both a bit healthier for her than just using one or the other. Milk was a similar situation where she chose a couple low fat and a couple full fat in order to balance the health concerns. She'll usually buy 6 packs but she's trying to save money so she's buying less milk. If she has less of something, she'll use less. This also came up with coffee. She's trying to cut down on her coffee, so she only buys the sachets of coffee instead a big container, because then there is less available for her to drink, and she'll drink it more sparingly.

We also discussed the role that studying plays on food consumption and how there can be a lot of emotional attachment to food when you're studying: to keep you awake, to help with stress/how it can cause you to stress like coffee and how being busy can cause you to buy unhealthy foods. She was shooting to have all her shopping under R400, so as we were checking out, she chose one of each item to ring through at the till and was carefully watching the price. She also had a smart shopper card. As it got closer and closer to 400, she began to consider which items were most needed and weighed price and need very carefully. In the end, she left one milk container and a couple of the soup sachets.

Section 4: Interview Questions

Researcher's Details:

Molly McMahon, *ACDI master's student at the University of Cape Town*
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072 557 1707

Participant #:

Date:

Age:

Gender:

University:

Consent form signed date:

Preliminary Questions:

1) How often do you grocery shop?

2a) Where do you prefer to shop?

2b) Is there any particular reason you prefer this store?

- Location?
- Price point?
- Selection?

3) How many people do you shop for on average?

- Only yourself
- House/digs mates
- Family

4a) Do you budget for your grocery shopping?

4b) How do you budget?

- By the week or month or trip?

4c) What tools do you use to budget?

- Grocery list?
- Application on phone?

5) How do you pay for your groceries?

- Bursary
- Parents
- Income

6a) Does anything motivate/influence your shopping?

- Health
- Fair trade
- Price
- Local food
- Organics
- Made in South Africa

6b) If multiple influence your shopping, how would you rank them?

Secondary Questions:

7) Can you tell me about a shopping memory you have of a time yourself, a friend or family member chose to change shopping habits, such as boycott a product or company, based personal or political beliefs?

8a) Would you say that your shopping experiences are routine with little variation? What does vary on a regular trip?

8b) Can you give me an example of times when you changed your shopping habits?

- Exams
- Start of term
- Throwing a party
- Hosting dinner
- Someone else is paying

9) Thinking back to the grocery trip that we took together, can you tell me about how you made your choices? Do you think anything motivates your choices?

- Customize additional questions specifically based on observations from grocery trip

10) I noticed that you used/did not use a grocery list during the shopping trip? How would you describe the role that your list played?

- Customize additional questions specifically based on observations from grocery trip

11a) During the grocery trip, you mentioned/did not mention buying certain items for a specific person. Why were you purchasing this item? Do you often shop for others?

11b) When you are shopping for another person, do your motivations or choices change at all? Why do you think this happens?

12a) For the observation, we met at NAME grocery store. Do you every shop at other stores/You mentioned you occasionally shop at a different grocery store? What makes you go to a different store?

12b) Can you give me a scenario of why you would go to a different grocery?

14a) How would you describe the difference between the various grocery chains in Cape Town?

14b) What about different produce markets or farmer's markets?

15) What are your general perspectives on issues such as:

- Fair Trade
- The trend of "eating local"
- Product boycotts
- Food safety
- Organics

16) Reflecting on your personal values, how would you rank your concern for issues such as:

- Fair Trade
- The trend of “eating local”
- Product boycotts
- Food safety
- Organics

17) After considering these different issues or classifications of goods, do you have any additional thoughts on how you made your shopping and product choices?

18) Do you have any additional thoughts or memories of a time when you, a friend or family member changed shopping habits?

19) How would you describe the phrase “ethical consumption”?

20) How do you think “ethics” or “morals” play a role in your shopping choices and habits? Do you think there is a difference between “grand” ethics and “everyday” ethics?

21) Do you have any additional thoughts, comments or questions to add to the interview?

Section 5: University of Cape Town, Faculty of Science Consent



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Faculty of Science

University of Cape Town
RONDEBOSCH 7701 South Africa

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Telephone: + 27 21 650 2786

Fax: + 27 21 650 3456

10 July 2015

Ms Molly McMahon
Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences

Examining ethical consumption through the grocery shopping habits of students in Cape Town

Dear Ms Molly McMahon

I am pleased to inform you that the Faculty of Science Research Ethics Committee has approved the above-named application for research ethics clearance, subject to the conditions listed below. You are required to:

- Implement the measures described in your application to ensure that the process of your research is ethically sound; and
- Uphold ethical principles throughout all stages of the research, responding appropriately to unanticipated issues: please contact me if you need advice on ethical issues that arise.

While the committee has approved your research proposal in terms of ethical considerations, a member of the committee made the following comment on your research design, which is passed on to you for consideration. The comment is to question whether a group of 20-25 participants is too few to be informative for this kind of study.

Your approval code is: FSREC 31 – 2015

I wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hill', written over a grey rectangular background.

Dr Richard Hill
Chair: Faculty of Science Research Ethics Committee

Cc: Dr Shari Daya, Supervisor

Section 6: University of Cape Town, DCA 100: Research Access to Students

	RESEARCH ACCESS TO STUDENTS	DSA 100
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NOTES

- This form must be **FULLY** completed by all applicants requesting access to UCT students/limited student information for the purpose of research/surveys.
- Return the fully completed (a) **DSA 100** application form by email, in the same word format, together with your: (b) **research proposal inclusive of your survey**, (c) **copy of your ethics approval letter / proof** (d) **informed consent letter** to: Moonira.Khan@uct.ac.za. Your application will be attended to by the Executive Director, Department of Student Affairs (DSA), UCT.
- The turnaround time for a reply is **approximately 10 working days**.
- NB: It is the responsibility of the researcher/s to apply for and to obtain **ethics approval and to comply with amendments that may be requested**; as well as to obtain approval to access UCT staff and/or UCT students, from the following, at UCT, respectively: (a) **Ethics**: Chairperson, Faculty Research Ethics Committee' (FREC) for ethics approval, (b) **Staff access**: Executive Director: HR for approval to access UCT staff, and (c) **Student access**: Executive Director: Student Affairs for approval to access UCT students.
- Note**: UCT Senate Research Protocols requires compliance to the above, **even if prior approval has been obtained from any other institution/agency**. UCT's research protocol requirements applies to **all persons, institutions and agencies from UCT and external to UCT** who want to conduct research on human subjects for academic, marketing or service related reasons at UCT.
- Should approval be granted to access UCT students for this research study, such approval is effective for a period of one year from the date of approval (as stated in Section D of this form), and the approval expires automatically on the last day.
- The approving authority reserves the right to revoke an approval based on reasonable grounds and/or new information

SECTION A: RESEARCH APPLICANT/S DETAILS

Position	Staff / Student No	Title and Name	Contact Details (Email / Cell / land line)
A.1 Student Number	MCOMM002	Molly McMahon	mcmahonms@gmail.com ; (072) 557 1707
A.2 Academic / PASS Staff No.			
A.3 Visitor/ Researcher ID No.			
A.4 University at which a student or employee	UCT	Address if <u>not</u> UCT:	
A.5 Faculty/ Department/School	Faculty of Sciences; Department of Environmental & Geographical Sciences; ACDI		
A.6 APPLICANTS DETAILS If different from above	Title and Name	Tel.	Email


SECTION B: RESEARCHER/S SUPERVISOR/S DETAILS

Position	Title and Name	Tel.	Email
B.1 Supervisor	Dr Shari Daya	021 6502873	Shari.day@uct.ac.za
B.2 Co-Supervisor/s			

SECTION C: APPLICANT'S RESEARCH STUDY FIELD AND APPROVAL STATUS

C.1 Degree (if a student)	MPhil Climate Change & Sustainable Development
C.2 Research Project Title	Examining ethical consumption through the grocery shopping habits of students in Cape Town
C.3 Research Proposal	Attached: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
C.4 Target population	Undergraduate and graduate students living independently
C.5 Lead Researcher details	If different from applicant:
C.6. Will use research assistant/s	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes- provide a list of names, contact details and ID no.
C.7 Research Methodology and Informed consent:	Research methodology: Ethnography & Semi-structured interviews Informed consent: Yes, participants will receive an overview document and will sign a consent form
C.8 Ethics clearance status from UCT's Faculty Ethics Research Committee (FREC)	Approved by the FREC Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With amendments: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (a) Attach copy of your ethics approval. Attached: Yes (b) State date and reference no. of ethics approval: Date 10 July 2015 Ref./Faculty: FSREC 31 – 2015

SECTION D: APPLICANT/S APPROVAL STATUS FOR ACCESS TO STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE (To be completed by the ED, DSA or Nominee)

D.1 APPROVAL STATUS	Approved / With Terms / Not	* Conditional approval with terms	Applicant/s Ref. No.:
	(i) Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (ii) With terms <input type="checkbox"/> (iii) Not approved <input type="checkbox"/>	(a) Access to students for this research study must only be undertaken <u>after</u> written ethics approval has been obtained. (b) In event any ethics conditions are attached, these must be complied with <u>before</u> access to students.	MCOMM002/ Molly McMahon
D.2 APPROVED BY:	Designation	Name	Signature
	Executive Director Department of Student Affairs	Dr Moonira Khan	
			Date of Approval 26 July 2015

Section 7: Stellenbosch University Ethical Approval



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14 August 2015

Ms Molly McMahon
Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences
University of Cape Town
Cape Town

Dear Ms McMahon

Concerning research project: *Examining ethical consumption through the grocery shopping habits of students in Cape Town*

The researcher has institutional permission to proceed with this project as stipulated in the institutional permission application. This permission is granted on the following conditions:

- Participation is voluntary.
- Persons may not be coerced into participation.
- Persons who choose to participate must be informed of the purpose of the research, all the aspects of their participation, their role in the research and their rights as participants. Participants must consent to participation. The researcher may not proceed until he is confident that all the before mentioned has been established and recorded.
- Persons who choose not to participate may not be penalized as a result of non-participation.
- Participants may withdraw their participation at any time, and without consequence.
- Data must be processed in a way that ensures the anonymity of all participants.
- Data must be treated as strictly confidential.
- The use of the data collected may not be extended beyond the purpose of this study.
- The use of SU student e-mail addresses, student numbers, including all other information by which an individual may be identified is limited to the purpose of this study and may not be shared with third parties.
- All the data related to this study must be responsibly and suitably protected.
- Individuals may not be identified in the report(s) or publication(s) of the results of the study.
- The privacy of individuals must be respected and protected.
- The researcher must conduct his research within the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013.

Best wishes,

 Signed

Prof Ian Cloete
Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning



Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning • Institutional Research and Planning Division
Privaatsak/Private Bag X1 • Stellenbosch • 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa
Tel. + 27 21 808 3967 • Faks/Fax + 27 21 808 4533



Section 8: Participant Location & Consent Table

Participant Number	Location	Consent	Observation date	Interview Date
1	Vangate PnP	X	1-Aug	6-Aug
2	Main Road Rondebosch PnP	X	3-Aug	3-Aug
3	Main Road Rondebosch PnP	X	5-Aug	5-Aug
4	Claremont PnP	X	5-Aug	5-Aug
5	Pinelands PnP	X	7-Aug	7-Aug
6	Bellville/Boston PnP	X	7-Aug	7-Aug
7	Claremont PnP	X	8-Aug	15-Aug
8	Main Road Rondebosch PnP	X	10-Aug	10-Aug
9	Observatory PnP	X	10-Aug	14-Aug
10	Main Road Rondebosch PnP	X	11-Aug	11-Aug
11	Fruit & Veg City Tygervalley	X	11-Aug	11-Aug
12	Claremont PnP	X	12-Aug	12-Aug
13	Claremont PnP	X	12-Aug	12-Aug
14	Woolworths Palmyra Junction	X	13-Aug	13-Aug
15	Observatory PnP	X	29-Aug	17-Aug
16	Claremont PnP	X	16-Aug	20-Aug
17	Main Road Rondebosch PnP	X	18-Aug	19-Aug
18	Observatory PnP	X	29-Aug	19-Aug
19	X	X	X	19-Aug
20	X	X	X	19-Aug
21	X	X	X	19-Aug
22	X	X	X	20-Aug
23	Claremont PnP	X	23-Aug	23-Aug
24	Claremont PnP	X	23-Aug	23-Aug
25	Claremont PnP	X	25-Aug	25-Aug
26	Claremont PnP	X	26-Aug	26-Aug
27	Waterfront PnP	X	31-Aug	31-Aug
28	X	X	X	12-Sep

Note: PnP is an abbreviation for Pick n Pay.