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REPORTS AND STUDIES

IN

SOCIAL SCIENCE
& SOCIAL WORK

FOOD CONSUMPTION
of Coloured Households

Price 1s-d.

No. SW 107

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

REPORTS AND STUDIES
IN
SOCIAL SCIENCE AND SOCIAL WORK

EDITED BY

EDWARD BATSON

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

1942

FIRST INTERIM REPORT

ON FOOD CONSUMPTION IN A SELECTED GROUP
OF COLOURED HOUSEHOLDS IN CAPE TOWN

BY PROFESSOR EDWARD BATSON

SOCIAL SCIENCE REPORTS AND STUDIES

NO. SW 107

The present Report describes a piece of work undertaken at the invitation of Professor J.F. Brock on behalf of the Union Department of Public Health. Its contents are based upon information concerning a random sample of 84 Coloured households drawn from all the Coloured households containing children under 16 in the Municipality of Cape Town. For six of the 84 households, the data obtained were insufficient for full analysis; the following statistics are drawn from the remaining 78 households.

During the period January 1940 to April 1941, but mainly in the latter part of the period, each of the 78 households was visited daily, excepting Sunday, for a week, by an expert investigator who obtained from the householder a full statement of all household expenditure and food consumption during the day preceding each visit. In this way, a full week's household budget and diet sheet was obtained for each household. Checks that have been applied suggest that, judged by the standards applicable to this rather difficult type of investigation, the information obtained has a high level of accuracy.

The sample of 84 households was a sample from a larger batch which will be analysed in due course. The 78 households constitute a small group which, while it is representative of the whole Cape Town population of Coloured families with children, is representative of this group within fairly wide limits of statistical error, which have not yet been exactly calculated.

The Poverty Datum Line referred to in the text is that calculated for the Social Survey of Cape Town in 1938-1939. The rise in the cost of living between this period and the period of the present family-budget survey is, in the present connection, negligible. Household incomes were affected by military pay in less than ten per cent. of the households of the present inquiry.

* This investigation is indebted in the first place to Professor J.F. Brock and the Union Department of Public Health for the opportunity of collaboration and for financial support; and to the householders who kept records and supplied information. And also to Mrs. E. Shackleton and Miss D. Wilkinson, who were responsible for most of the field work, and to Miss E. Hodes, who has computed certain of the tables. But in special measure to Miss E. Parlo, of the staff of the Social Survey of Cape Town, who has had charge of the work of coding and editing and has been responsible for many suggestions that have contributed materially to the progress of the work.

The total number of persons in the group of 78 households was reduced to a number of "equivalent adults" according to the following scale: child aged under 5 = 0.50 equivalent adults

5 to 9	0.60
10 to 15	0.85
woman aged 16 to 59	0.85
over 59	0.60
man aged 16 to 64	1.00
over 64	0.60.

The mean number of equivalent adults per household was 5.03; the frequency of households of different sizes is shown in Table 107.1 below.

Half the households had total incomes from all sources amounting to less than £140 per annum. The mean gross annual income per household was £159. 3. 7½. The frequency of gross incomes of different sizes is shown in Table 107.2 below.

After the payment of rent and the necessary transport expenses of earners, half the households had "net available incomes" of less than £110 per annum. The mean net available income per household was £124. 3. 10. The frequency of net available incomes of different sizes is shown in Table 107.2 below.

TABLE 107.1

FREQUENCY OF HOUSEHOLDS OF DIFFERENT SIZES

EQUIVALENT ADULTS COMPOSING HOUSEHOLD	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
OVER 1 BUT NOT OVER 2	1
2	19
3	13
4	17
5	18
6	8
7	7
8	3
9	2
TOTAL	78

TABLE 107.2

FREQUENCY OF INCOMES OF DIFFERENT SIZES

INCOME RANGE IN £	NET INCOMES	GROSS INCOMES
NOT AS MUCH AS 50	6	-
50 BUT NOT 100	28	19
100 150	25	21
150 200	4	19
200 300	9	12
300 400	4	3
400 500	-	2
unknown	2	2
TOTAL	78	78

Three-fifths of the households had net available incomes which were less than their "poverty datum lines" [see Reports of the Social Survey of Cape Town, No. SP 3]; i.e. three-fifths of the households were "in poverty". The frequency of "available income ratios" of different magnitudes is shown in Table 107.3.

TABLE 107.3

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NET AVAILABLE INCOME RATIOS

RANGE OF AVAILABLE INCOME RATIOS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS
UNDER 50 PER CENT.	6	8
50% BUT LESS THAN 100%	41	54
100% BUT LESS THAN 150%	19	25
150% BUT LESS THAN 200%	5	7
AT LEAST 200%	5	7
unknown	2	
TOTAL	78	100

Half the households spent less than £1. 2s. per week on food. The mean expenditure on food was £1. 5s. 3½d. per week. The frequency of food budgets of different magnitudes is shown in Table 107.4.

TABLE 107.4
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES ON FOOD

RANGE OF FOOD BUDGETS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS
UNDER 5s.	1	8
5s, BUT LESS THAN 10s	5	
10s, BUT LESS THAN 15s	11	14
15s, BUT LESS THAN £1	17	22
£1, BUT LESS THAN £1 5s	11	14
£1 5s, BUT LESS THAN £1 10s	9	12
£1 10s, BUT LESS THAN £1 15s	7	9
£1 15s, BUT LESS THAN £2	6	8
£2, BUT LESS THAN £2 5s	6	
£2 5s, BUT LESS THAN £2 10s	2	
£2 10s, BUT LESS THAN £2 15s	-	
£2 15s, BUT LESS THAN £3	1	14
£3, BUT LESS THAN £3 5s	-	
£3 5s, BUT LESS THAN £3 10s	1	
£3 10s, BUT LESS THAN £3 15s	-	
£3 15s, BUT LESS THAN £4	1	
TOTAL	78	100

The mean weekly food expenditure, which was not attained by 60 per cent. of the households, represents a mean weekly food expenditure of 5s 0½d per equivalent adult. Now the minimum cost of an adequate diet was assessed by the Social Survey of Cape Town in 1938-1939 at 7s 6d per week per equivalent adult.

The Social Survey Poverty Datum Line allowed 3s. of the weekly 7s 6d for meat, fish, and dairy products, 2s 3d for cereals and pulse, 7d for fats, 3d for sugar products, 1s for fruit and vegetables, and 5d for beverages. Table 107.5 shows the actual distribution of the total food expenditure of the 78 households in our present group.

The percentage distribution of expenditure in the group compares with that in the Poverty Datum Line as follows:

meat, fish, and dairy prod.	group	37%	PDL	40%
fats	..	9	..	8
cereals and pulse	..	27	..	30
sugar products	..	8	..	3
potatoes	..	5	..	
vegetables	..	7	13	13
fruit	..	2	..	
beverages, etc.	..	6	..	6

TABLE 107.5
DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD EXPENDITURE

GROUP OF FOODSTUFFS	WEEKLY EXPENDITURE IN PENCE		EXPENDITURE AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL FOOD EXPENDITURE
	PER HOUSEHOLD	PER EQUI- VALENT ADULT	
MUTTON	19.56	3.89	6.45
BEEF	12.92	2.57	4.26
PORK, BACON	0.53	0.10	0.17
MINCED MEAT	3.06	0.61	1.01
LIVER, OFFAL, BONES	2.68	0.53	0.88
COOKED MEATS, SAUSAGES	8.35	1.66	2.75
SOUP	0.33	0.07	0.11
MEAT, NS	16.85	3.35	5.55
MEAT	64.28	12.79	21.18
STOCKFISH	3.44	0.68	1.13
HAARDER	2.05	0.41	0.68
FRESH SNOEK	1.74	0.35	0.57
FRESH FISH, NEE	1.51	0.30	0.50
FRESH FISH, NS	5.31	1.06	1.75
[FRESH FISH	14.05	2.80	4.63
SNOEK, SMOKED AND DRIED	0.74	0.15	0.25
DRIED, CURED, AND SALTED FISH, NEE	0.58	0.12	0.19
TINNED FISH, FISH PASTE	2.40	0.48	0.79
COOKED FISH	0.62	0.12	0.20
[PREPARED FISH	4.34	0.86	1.44
FISH	18.39	3.66	6.06
CHEESE	4.33	0.86	1.43
EGGS	6.81	1.36	2.25
FRESH MILK	10.74	2.14	3.54
CONDENSED MILK	8.99	1.79	2.96
[MILK	19.74	3.93	6.50
DAIRY PRODUCTS	30.88	6.14	10.17
BUTTER	20.31	4.04	6.69
DRIPPING, TAIL FAT	1.88	0.37	0.62
FISH OIL	4.55	0.91	1.50
FATS, NEE	1.42	0.28	0.47
FATS	28.16	5.60	9.28

[TABLE 107.5 CONTD]

BREAD	41.78	8.31	13.77
FLOUR, MEAL	12.69	2.52	4.18
CAKES, ETC.	3.38	0.67	1.12
OATMEAL	1.99	0.40	0.65
RICE	13.55	2.70	4.46
MEALIE MEAL	0.58	0.12	0.19
PEAS, BEANS, LENTILS	5.95	1.18	1.97
CEREALS AND PULSE, NEE	1.17	0.23	0.39
CEREALS AND PULSE	81.10	16.14	26.72
SUGAR	17.54	3.49	5.78
JAM, JELLY, SYRUP, SWEETS	5.51	1.10	1.82
SUGAR PRODUCTS	23.06	4.59	7.60
POTATOES, SWEET POTATOES	15.4	3.07	5.08
POTATOES	15.4	3.07	5.08
GREEN VEGETABLES	6.44	1.28	2.12
ROOT VEGETABLES	5.89	1.17	1.94
TOMATOES, PUMPKIN, ETC.	6.13	1.22	2.02
TINNED VEGETABLES	0.44	0.09	0.14
VEGETABLES, NS	0.85	0.17	0.28
VEGETABLES	19.75	3.93	6.51
ORANGES	1.11	0.22	0.37
WATER MELON	1.19	0.24	0.39
BANANAS	1.02	0.20	0.34
FRESH FRUIT, NEE	1.17	0.23	0.38
DRIED FRUIT	0.31	0.06	0.10
FRUIT, NS	0.31	0.06	0.10
FRUIT	5.10	1.02	1.68
COFFEE	3.54	0.70	1.17
TEA	8.19	1.63	2.70
OTHER DRINKS	0.87	0.17	0.29
CONDIMENTS	2.15	0.43	0.71
SPICES, FLAVOURINGS	1.13	0.22	0.37
YEAST, BAKING POWDER	0.89	0.18	0.29
MISCELLANEOUS	0.58	0.11	0.19
BEVERAGES, ETC.	17.35	3.45	5.72

NEE = NOT ELSEWHERE ENUMERATED
NS = NOT SPECIFIED

Half the households spent from 16.8 to 42.0 per cent. of their gross incomes on food, half spent from 42.0 per cent. to 138.3 per cent. (This latter figure clearly belongs to a range in which the exceptional circumstances of a particular week, and not permanent conditions, determine the proportion of income devoted to food.) The mean percentage of gross income devoted to food was 43.5. Table 107.6 shows the frequency of food-expenditure ratios of different magnitudes.

TABLE 107.6

PROPORTION OF GROSS INCOME SPENT ON FOOD

PERCENTAGE OF GROSS INCOME SPENT ON FOOD	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
UNDER 10	-
10 BUT NOT 20	3
20 ... 30	19
30 ... 40	11
40 ... 50	22
50 ... 60	10
60 ... 70	6
70 ... 80	2
80 ... 90	1
90 ... 100	1
100 ... 110	-
110 ... 120	-
120 ... 130	-
130 ... 140	1
UNKNOWN	2
TOTAL	78

Half the households spent from 18.3 to 56.5 per cent. of their net available incomes on food, half spent from 56.5 to 106.9 per cent. (ignoring the special case referred to above). The mean percentage of net available income devoted to food was 55.6. Table 107.7 shows the frequency of food-expenditure ratios of different magnitudes based on net instead of gross incomes.*

* Where rent is paid monthly, 3/13 of the monthly rent charge has been debited to the weekly budget in calculations of the net available income.

PROPORTION OF NET INCOME SPENT ON FOOD

PERCENTAGE OF NET INCOME SPENT ON FOOD		NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
	UNDER 10	—
10	BUT NOT 20	1
20	... 30	8
30	... 40	11
40	... 50	8
50	... 60	16
60	... 70	17
70	... 80	4
80	... 90	5
90	... 100	2
100	... 110	3
SPECIAL CASE		1
UNKNOWN		2
TOTAL		78

We may suspect from the above comparison of actual food expenditures with the allowances in the Poverty Datum Line that most of the diets of the households in the group were inadequate. The Poverty Datum Line standard was a modified version of BMA Standard No. 2, and allowed for 3400 calories, 100 grams protein, and 100 grams fat per equivalent adult daily. In the following tables the adequacy of the 78 diets in our present group is judged by reference to these three standards. It should, however, be stressed that no test which ignores mineral and vitamin content is exhaustive, and that some of the diets which appear adequate by the calorie-fat-protein test may prove inadequate upon further analysis. The present budgets, and others, will be subjected to such analysis in a later Report in the present series.

On the basis of 3400 calories per day per equivalent adult, 87 per cent. of the diets were inadequate. Half the diets yielded less than 60 per cent. of the required calories. The mean percentage of the required calories attained was 69. The frequency of the different calorie ratios attained is shown in Table 107.8.

On the basis of 100 grams of protein per day, per equivalent adult, 82 per cent. of the diets were inadequate. Half the diets yielded less than 69 per cent. of the required protein. The mean percentage of the required protein attained was 75. The frequency of the different protein ratios attained is shown in Table 107.8.

On the basis of 100 grams of fat per day per equivalent adult, 80 per cent. of the diets were inadequate. Half the diets yielded less than 61 per cent. of the required fat. The mean percentage of the required fat attained was 68. The frequency of the different ratios attained is shown in Table 107.8.

It was shown above that the average expenditure per equivalent adult per week within the group was 5s 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, or 67 per cent of the Poverty Datum Line allowance. This percentage may be compared with the above mean percentages of requirements attained.

TABLE 107.8

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RATIOS EXPRESSING ADEQUACY OF DIETS

ATTAINMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF PDL STANDARD	NUMBER OF DIETS FALLING WITHIN RANGE WITH RESPECT TO		
	CALORIES	PROTEIN	FAT
UNDER 10	-	-	-
10 BUT NOT 20	-	-	2
20 ... 30	2	1	7
30 ... 40	6	3	8
40 ... 50	15	9	7
50 ... 60	16	12	13
60 ... 70	7	16	11
70 ... 80	10	8	8
80 ... 90	6	10	3
90 ... 100	6	5	3
100 ... 110	2	4	6
110 ... 120	2	3	2
120 ... 130	4	3	4
130 ... 140	1	3	-
140 ... 150	-	-	3
150 ... 160	1	-	1
160 ... 170	-	-	-
170 ... 180	-	1	-

Of the households below the Poverty Datum Line, 89 per cent. had diets deficient in calories; and of the households above the Poverty Datum Line, 83 per cent. had diets deficient in calories. Again, of the households below the Poverty Datum Line, 91 per cent. had diets deficient in protein, and of those above the Poverty Datum Line, 67 per cent. had diets deficient in protein. Again, of the households below the Poverty Datum Line, 89 per cent. had diets deficient in fat, and of those above the Poverty Datum Line, 63 per cent. had diets deficient in fat. It is clear that there is no simple and direct relationship between attainment of the Poverty Datum Line and dietetic sufficiency according to the standards adopted. The second Interim Report will analyse the relation between economic status and diet.

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