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**FOOD CULTURES THAT PROTECT: UNRAVELLING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND DIETARY PATTERNS**

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The way we eat has changed significantly during the modernization of societies. Cultural, economic, political, and social transformations have shaped contemporary dietary patterns as we know them. These changes have had positive effects, but negative ones are also evident, particularly regarding two concerns: On the one hand, those related to the effects of the “Westernization” of diet, with the consequent deterioration of health, and the unequal impact on the population, showing groups more affected by problems such as obesity, food insecurity, or difficulty following a healthy diet. On the other hand, those related to the loss of food culture fostered by the homogenization driven by modernity, transforming cultural patterns, values, and meanings that undermine the normative reference model that guides food choices. In this presentation, we take as our starting point the impact of modernization on food cultures and the unequal effects of social change. We hypothesize that habits rooted in a household's established food culture foster food management practices that

mitigate the inequalities caused by social change, with some food cultures and households proving more protective than others. This hypothesis is confirmed through a qualitative study of households in Brazil, the United States, Portugal, and Spain, with the aim of exploring changes in eating habits in societies with different food cultures that have undergone their own transformations.

Palavras-chave: eating habits; food culture; food inequalities; food models.