

**DOES FOOD IN HISTORY MATTER? EXPLORING 4TH YEAR HISTORY
EDUCATION STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE SPACE FOR FOOD IN THE SOUTH
AFRICAN HISTORY CURRICULUM**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nomkhosi Mightgirl Mhlanga, declare that

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As the candidate's supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation.

_____

Dr. M.T. Maposa

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the historical significance of food as a topic in school history, according to History Education students. The history curriculum is a contested space for content that is relevant to learners, and this has manifested itself recently in South Africa, with students calling for the revision of the curriculum as part of the quest for decolonisation of education. Nevertheless, there is no consensus on which content deserves to be included in the history curriculum. Acknowledging the role that food has played in the unfolding of history, this study was guided by historical significance as a conceptual framework for understanding History Education students' views on the space for food as a topic in the South African history curriculum. The study is qualitative in nature and is situated in the interpretivist paradigm. Open-ended interviews were held with a sample of eight 4th year History Education students. The findings from the data revealed that the participants advocate for the overt inclusion of food history in the South African History curriculum, either as part of the metanarrative or as a separate topic. They justify the historical significance of food for its influence on economy, politics, migration, social cohesion, identity, and as a nutrient. The conclusion is that the History Education students use their understanding of historical significance to argue that food is central to the narrative of humanity and should therefore overtly feature as a first-order concept in the school history curriculum.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Statement Policy
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
UWC	University of Western Cape
UP	University of Pretoria
UKZN	University KwaZulu Natal
CFS	Critical Food Studies
FAO	Food Agricultural Organisation
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
FET	Further Education and Training
EFIC	European Food Information Council
AHS	Avita Health System
USA	United States of America
SA	South Africa

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Introduction

Food is usually understood in relation to its consumption and the effects it has on human health. It is understood as a substance that is habitually associated with taste, the maintenance of a nutritious life, and physical growth (Rogers, 2020 & Kittler; Sucher & Nelms, 2012). When speaking of the importance of food, experts generally refer to the essential role it plays in providing the body with carbohydrates, proteins, and fats that are vital for furnishing the body with the energy it needs in order to function properly (Rogers, 2020). However, in South Africa, whether or not one obtains all such nutrients can be determined by certain circumstances. For instance, due to high temperatures in 2016, South Africa suffered droughts which consequently led to an inflation of food prices (Umraw, 2016). This posed a threat, especially for low-income families: it was a struggle for them to buy certain food products such as maize and potatoes (Umraw, 2016). According to Umraw (2016), during this period of drought, people in the country could not even afford to grow their own food; and it had become even impossible for households with low income to maintain basic nutrition. This concurs with Wheeler and Van Braun's (2013) argument that changes in climate worsen food insecurity, especially for people who live in areas exposed to hunger and malnutrition. However, the absence of natural disasters such as droughts does not necessarily guarantee food security: there can be other factors such as unemployment (Dodd & Nyabvudzi, 2014). The dire consequences of food insecurity show just how changes in food availability influence people's lives, thus making food central to the society.

Furthermore, according to Kittler et al. (2012, p.4), food defines and confirms the culture to which one belongs, because "eating is a daily reaffirmation of cultural identity". In this light, by continuously eating or not eating certain foods, one maintains one's belonging to a particular group in society. This signifies the role played by food in giving meaning to various aspects of society. However, defining one's true societal belonging through the food one eats can sometimes be problematic: some societies have undergone marked transformations, leading to changes in food preferences. For

instance, looking into South Africa's culinary heritage, Trapido (2017) argues that the true essence and status of the country's ethnic food has suffered due to colonisation and globalisation. Trapido (2017) asserts that, due to colonisation, what used to be ethnic and cultural food has been replaced with urban foreign dining ideas, in the process pushing ethnic food to particular occasions instead of being used for everyday eating. Trapido (2017) further argues that, as a result of colonialism, southern Africans no longer cherish precolonial cuisines. This makes it even more difficult for children to learn to adapt to their primordial societal belonging (Trapido, 2017). This culinary 'revolution' has left children in the present-day South Africa with limited knowledge about different foods, as seen by their perceiving ethnic food as meant for certain occasions only.

One of the ways in which children of today can know about different foods is through education, particularly through school history. This is supported by Trapido (2017), who contends that indigenous foods are important because they can help define what South Africa used to be prior to colonisation. In fact, history shows that food in general contributed immensely to what South Africa is today. Through school history, learners may develop an understanding of the centrality of food in society by studying how aspects such as food security or insecurity impacted past societies. Food is a phenomenon that cuts through all spheres of society, from economics to politics. As such, learning about food in history lessons would expose learners to these various spheres as learners ask questions and investigate how history has contributed to shaping these spheres in the past. This process of investigation would help learners develop critical thinking skills. Learners would compare evidence and uncover the contributions that have been made by food, in particular, historical phenomena such as the French Revolution or the Boston Tea Party.

Through food, communities can be either united, divided, transformed, or even taken over by others (Bingley-Pullen, n.d.; Smithfield, 2017; Twilley, Graber & Gastropod, 2016). For example, the colonial era began in 1652 in South Africa as a result of the Dutch establishing a food station at what is now known as Cape Town (Thompson, 2001). The original purpose of this station was to supply passing ships with fresh food (Thompson, 2001). One of the main items the passing ships were trading in was spices. This food station later developed into the Cape Colony. In 1910 the three other colonies of Natal, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State, joined the Cape Colony to

form the Union of South Africa. One can only wonder what South Africa would be like today had the food refreshment station not been established. This shows just how powerful food can be and the impact it has in shaping society. It is for this reason that Twilley et al. (2016) consider food an engine of empires and revolutions.

The foregoing background illustrates the importance of food in South African history in particular, and in history in general. Yet a quick search shows that there is not even one mention of the word “food” in South Africa’s Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for History (DoBE, 2011). This means that food is not considered a key concept, unlike other predominant first-order concepts such as colonialism, nationalism, liberation, and apartheid. This signifies a need to conduct this research aimed at understanding the significance of food in the history curriculum.

The past five years have witnessed a rise in debates on decolonising the education curriculum in the post-independence African society (Lebeloane, 2017). These debates date back to the 1950s and 1960s when some leaders in African universities contested for the promotion of decolonised universities and schools that are for Africa’s advancement (Lebeloane, 2017; Fataar, 2018). According to Fataar (2018), during the days of colonisation, the curriculum paid little attention to indigenous knowledge. Indigenous people were subjugated to White supremacy. Indigenous knowledge was not featured in the curriculum: it was “regarded as weak and untrustworthy, both in terms of theory and of methodology” (Smith, as cited in Mahabeer, 2020, p. 98). However, decades into democracy, the South African education curriculum has been criticised for still being designed in the Eurocentric way that was in place during colonialism (Mbembe, 2015). This is supported by Heleta (2016, p. 1) who states that “at most South African universities, epistemologies and knowledge systems have not changed considerably since the end of apartheid, but remain rooted in Eurocentric, colonial, and Western worldviews”. It is from these debates that the recent #RhodesMustFall of 2015 by university students on the decolonisation of the education curriculum emanated (Lebeloane, 2017). Some of the issues raised in these debates relate to the domination of English as the medium of instruction and the failure of basic education to prepare learners for higher education (Lebeloane, 2017).

Furthermore, according to Mahabeer (2020), it is pointless to protest for the decolonisation of the curriculum at higher education if less effort is put into the school curriculum. To Fataar (2018), decolonising the education curriculum involves selecting humanity's knowledge to be incorporated into the university and school curriculum. In the case of school history, these calls for decolonisation of South African education culminated in the Department of Basic Education proposing that history should be made compulsory by 2030 (Davids, 2016; Ndlanzi, 2018; Pather, 2018). This followed the demands made by the South African Teachers Union (SADTU) who view history as a solution to the establishment of knowledge aimed at producing patriotic South African youth (Davids, 2016). The minister of education appointed a history task team to manage the implementation of compulsory history in the further education and training (FET) phase; and to manage and strengthen the knowledge in the history curriculum (Davids, 2016). This implies that there is a need for the history curriculum content to be revised through sieving and selecting. However, the question would be which content to include and which to exclude. It is within the context of this revision that one can question whether there is any space for the role that has been played by food in shaping the past. In attempting to answer this question, this research focuses on 4th year History Education students' views on the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum.

1.2. Problem Statement

Food has always played, and still plays, a significant role in society. This is evidenced by the background outlined above, which shows that through food, much can be understood about societies. The type of food people eat, how they eat it, and how they behave around it enables them to communicate messages about their passion, personalities and background, without even saying a word (Almerico, 2014). As a result, food has impacted people, while at the same time, being impacted by history. Even literature reveals that food has many roles in society such as the maintenance of culture and keeping it from diminishing, symbolising different aspects for different people, indicating societal class differences, and accompanying leisure time for others (Le, 2017; Asi; Teri, 2016; Toivonen, 1997; Ramalingum & Mahommodally; , 2014; Schmalz, et al., 2019). Food also enables one to understand personal beliefs as well as those of other people (Stajcis, 2013). This suggests that, from learning about food,

much can be understood about why things are the way they are and why people act in a certain way.

Regardless of the plethora of literature highlighting the significant role played by food in the society, there is still a dearth of scholarly work in place on food as a topic in school history. Food is normally studied from a natural sciences perspective which usually views food as a nutrient people need in order to survive (Ranadheera, Baines & Adams, 2010). This is even reflected in the South African school curriculum in which food, as a topic, is still not explicitly identified as one of the first-order concepts to be studied (DoBE, 2011). There is more to learn about food beyond its nature as a nutrient. This can be achieved through studies conducted from a humanities perspective, thus filling the gap in the knowledge on food in school history. This shows the need for more research on food as a topic in school history.

1.3. Focus and Purpose of the Study

This study directs its focus on the space for food as a topic in history within the South African History curriculum. It views the matter of food as a first-order concept, and investigates the significance of food in history in the history curriculum, through employing historical significance as a conceptual framework. As such, the purpose of this study is to explore views of 4th year History Education students on the importance of food in history before developing an understanding of whether, how, and why the history of food should be studied as a first-order concept in the South African History curriculum.

1.4. Location of the Study

This research was located at an institution of higher education in greater Durban within the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The majority of students currently studying at this particular institution are Black, with a minority being White, Indian and Coloured students (UKZN, 2017). The majority of students in this institution also come from disadvantaged backgrounds (UKZN, 2017). However, they have attained requirements for admission into higher education, and those of them taking History Education as a major are expected to have an understanding of history, its teaching and learning, and the impact and significance of socio-economic phenomena. In 2021

the university was ranked in the top 2.5% universities best in academic achievement in the world (UKZN, 2022).

1.5. Rationale and Motivation

My interest in pursuing a study on the phenomenon of food in history was motivated by the *Critical Food Studies* (CFS) research project, which is a collaborative transdisciplinary humanities approach programme involving the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the University of Western Cape (UWC) and the University of Pretoria (UP). One of the requirements of this project is that the study be specific to the phenomenon of food. In addition, the decision to be part of the project was motivated by the scholarship that I was offered, that would cater for all the necessities required for conducting this study. As part of this CFS project, this study contributed history education perspectives to the study of the phenomenon of food.

As noted in the background to this study, the concept of food seems not to attract significant attention from a historical and history education perspective. Food studies are predominantly found in the natural sciences discipline (Ranadheera, Baines & Adams, 2010; Alimi, 2016 & Slavin, Tucker, Harriman & Jonnalagadda, 2013). There is a dearth of literature on the phenomenon from the humanities perspective and history education in particular. Hence, this study, aimed at exploring the importance of food in history from the humanities perspective, is needed in order to bridge the gap that exists in the representation and understanding of the phenomenon of food. As also mentioned earlier, food is an important aspect of society, meaning that it deserves to be thoroughly studied from both a humanities and natural sciences perspective. From perusing the content in the CAPS for history, I realised that the subject of food is ignored, while other political and social concepts are given prominence. The findings from this study can assist history students to develop an understanding of the place of such a significant concept in the history curriculum. The findings provide curriculum planners with views of some of the stakeholders, in this case history students, in terms of food in history and whether it should feature more prominently in the history curriculum.

1.6. Research Questions

This study is guided by the three research questions which determined the data-generation methods. These are:

1. What are 4th year History Education students' understandings of the historical significance of food?
2. What are 4th year History Education students' views on food as a topic in the South African History curriculum?
3. How do 4th year History Education students explain their views on food as a topic in the South African History curriculum?

1.7. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To conceptualise 4th year History Education students' understandings of the historical significance of food.
2. To understand 4th year History Education students' views on food as a topic in the South African History curriculum.
3. To understand 4th year History Education students' explanations of their views on food as a topic in the South African History curriculum.

1.8. Historical Significance as a Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by historical significance as a conceptual framework. As will be shown in Chapter 2, I employ historical significance to understand the inclusion of food as a first-order concept in the South African History curriculum.

Historical significance refers to the procedure that historians use to decide which information should be studied as part of history (Vivancos & Ferre, 2018). It guides the choice of historians when deciding which historical phenomenon is significant and deserves to be studied in history lessons. Historical significance is the foundation of historical inquiry, because it helps to establish the meaning of aspects of past events (Peck, 2009). It is impossible to study everything that has happened in the past; however, through employing historical significance, one can select historical information in a procedural manner (Lomas, 1990; Seixas & Peck, 2004). Because historical significance is a procedural second-order concept, five different categories are used to decide whether a phenomenon deserves to be studied. These are as follows:

The first category is importance. Here the significance of the phenomenon is studied, together with the influence it has had on the people who experienced such (Partington, 1980). Within this category, researchers need to consider who the occurrence had an effect on, why the people who experienced it deemed it important, and also, to consider how it has affected those people.

The second category is profundity, which examines the level at which the phenomenon has affected people's lives (Partington, 1980). Under this category, historians focus on events that have affected people's lives. Based on this category, a historical phenomenon is said to be significant if it was able to change people's lives during that time (Levesque, 2005).

The third category is quantity, which focuses on the number of people affected by the event. For this category, when trying to determine the significance of the event, historians are concerned about whether it has affected everyone, many people, or only a few people.

The fourth category, which is durability, focuses on the duration of the event which has affected people's lives (Partington, 1980). Here historical significance is determined by how long the event has continued to affect people's lives and produce major changes over long periods in the lives of many people (Seixas, 2006). However, one also needs to bear in mind that events that occur within a short period can also produce long-lasting effects (Partington, 1980).

The final category is relevance. Here, to determine the historical significance of a given phenomenon, historians examine its relevance in helping people understand either the past or present. This is by using evidence representing the phenomenon (Partington, 1980).

It is after considering the above-mentioned criteria that historians can make a sound decision on what should and should not be featured as history. What makes historical significance an appropriate framework for this study is that it enabled me to verify if the views of the participants on the significance of food and its space in the history curriculum are motivated by its contribution to shaping the past.

1.9. Methodology

A total of eight 4th year History Education students was communicated with, asking them to express their views on the inclusion of food as a topic in the South African History curriculum. The following research methods were used to conduct the study and elicit data from the students.

Given that the study was concerned with participants' views, the interpretivist paradigm was employed. This paradigm was employed in order to understand the various interpretations of the importance of food in history through the lenses of the participants (Alharthi, 2016). The research questions were answered based on these interpretations by employing interpretivism (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

The approach which this study followed is qualitative. This is because the data presented in this paper is non-numeric; it is presented in the form of words based on the conversations held with the participants (Ronald, Jackson, Darlene, Drummond & Camara, 2010; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

In this study, phenomenology was employed as a research style to allow for the centrality of the participants' personal views on the space for the topic of food in the South African curriculum (Ronalds et al., 2017). Through employing this style, the patterns in the views expressed by the participants were noticed (Cresswell, 2013).

The sampling method that was used in this study is snowball sampling. This sampling method helps to locate the desired participants regardless of the hindrances that were presented by the nationwide lockdown that was in place during the period of the research. Eight participants were recruited for this study on the basis that they were 4th year History Education students pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree.

Data was generated using semi-structured interviews. As such, questions that were asked were open-ended (as shown in appendix D), thus allowing the participants to express themselves freely and allowing for the generation of rich, in-depth data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cachia & Millward, 2011). Qualitative questionnaires were emailed to students prior to their telephonic interviews. Data was analysed inductively because the study is exploratory in nature (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

For ethical considerations, permission to conduct the study was acquired from the gatekeeper; and consent forms were signed by the participants. A detailed explanation

on ethical issues is provided in Chapter 3. Trustworthiness was strengthened by detailed descriptions of the data collected: this was assured by the establishment of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, as proposed by Shenton (2004).

1.10. Outline of the Study

This study is organised into six chapters which are as follows:

1.10.1. Chapter 1

This chapter is an introduction to the study. It contextualises the study and discusses the centrality of food in society. The rationale and motivation for the study and its focus and purpose are discussed in this chapter. The chapter also provides an outline of the research questions and research objectives that the study aims to achieve. A brief explanation of historical significance as a conceptual framework is also provided in this chapter.

1.10.2. Chapter 2

This chapter of the study reviews literature on the phenomenon of food and provides the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter is made up of four themes relating to food. The first theme develops an understanding of the concept of food. It tries to understand 'what' food is by looking at its nature and the manner in which it is consumed. The second theme explores the various meanings that are attached to the concept of food. Seven different meanings of food are discussed, which are: food as a nutrient, food as culture, food as symbolism, food as a societal class indicator, food as medicine, food accompanying leisure, and food as security. The third theme reviews literature on the role played by food in history. This includes the role food has played in economic, political, and social history. The fourth and final theme in this chapter reviews food in school history, focusing on the school curriculum in general and the school history curriculum in particular. After the literature review, the chapter then explains historical significance as a conceptual framework for this study.

1.10.3. Chapter 3

The chapter presents the methodology that was employed in this study. Detailed explanations are given for choosing interpretivism as a paradigm and for locating the study within the qualitative approach. Phenomenology is explained as a research style

used and the way it links to the study is described. Also, snowball sampling is explained, giving the reason that it was employed. Reasons for employing semi-structured interviews and analysing data inductively are provided in this chapter. The chapter ends by explaining ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the study.

1.10.4. Chapter 4

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Six different findings emanated from the data generated. These have been presented in themes, which are: food as influential to economies, food as influential to politics, food as influential in migration, food as a unifying commodity, food as identity, and food as nutrient. In terms of the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum, the chapter shows findings on whether there is space for the topic of food in the curriculum, and the nature of its inclusion.

1.10.5. Chapter 5

This chapter presents a discussion of findings in relation to the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two. These findings are discussed, bearing in mind the research questions.

1.10.6. Chapter 6

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study based on the findings discussed in Chapter 5 and makes recommendations regarding the inclusion of food as a topic in the South African History curriculum.

1.11. Conclusion

This chapter served as an introduction to this thesis. Therefore, details on its background, location, the rationale, problem statement, focus, and purpose of the study and a brief outline of the research design and conceptual framework have been discussed. To shed more light on the study, in the following chapter, literature on the phenomenon of food in history is reviewed; and the conceptual framework adopted for this study will be explained.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, this study was introduced, and its background was discussed in detail. The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature on previous research on the phenomenon of food in history, while explaining historical significance as a second-order concept in history education. A literature review is an objective layout of previous research on the phenomenon under study (Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan, 2008; Fink & Arlene, 2014). The literature review is structured to allow for the smooth flow of ideas and to add value to the research being conducted (Van Wee & Banister, 2016; Cronin et al., 2008). There are various types of literature reviews that can be employed. These include the theoretic, thematic, chronological, and methodological. The thematic literature review has been employed in this chapter; hence the literature is organised based on themes that are associated with the phenomenon being studied (Labaree, 2009). It is worth noting that the literature reviewed in this study is not limited to South Africa. As such, with its focus on food, the study explores literature on themes such as the concept of food, meanings attached to food, food in history, and food in school history. Thereafter, the conceptual framework of historical significance is explained.

2.2. The Concept of Food

Food is a substance consumed by living organisms including humans. For the purpose of this research, food is explored in relation to humans only. Quddusi (2018) views food as the third-most important item that human beings need in order to survive, after water and air. Food consists of various chemicals essential to maintaining life, and therefore, food forms part of the significant substances that humans need in order to remain alive. It is obvious that people need to eat food at intervals: bodies have digested their last meal and need energy in order to continue functioning well (Gastrointestinal Society, 2020). Therefore, people eat food to satisfy their hunger so that they can maintain life.

Food exists in different forms such as plants and animals, and it varies from liquid to solid substances. For this reason, food can be consumed through eating and drinking. However, the physical form of food does not necessarily define the way it should be consumed. This is because solid foods can be processed into liquids, while liquids can also be processed into solid form (Thompson, 2019; Food Crumbles, 2020). Further, solid foods are perceived as more important than liquid foods because they give more energy and they last in the stomach longer than do liquids (Jones, Lee & Mattes, 2014; Houchins, Tan, Campbell, & Mattes, 2013).

The manner in which food is consumed also varies. While some food substances are consumed raw, others need to be cooked before they are digested. Food is usually cooked so that it is safe to eat. This is because some food products, such as red meat, contain food-poisoning bacteria which can cause sickness if consumed without cooking (European Food Information Council, 2010). Also, cooking food brings out chemicals and flavours not readily available prior to cooking (EFIC, 2018). Regardless of the dangers that come with eating uncooked meat, some people prefer eating certain types of meats raw (Preiato, 2020). Such meat includes salmon and sushi, and raw mince combined with raw egg.

2.3. Meanings attached to Food

This section examines several meanings attached to food; the phenomenon being conceptually understood differently by different scholars. The section is divided into seven subthemes that discuss meanings of food. Thus, food as a nutrient is discussed as the first subtheme, focusing on the various essential nutrients' food provides the body in order for it to function properly (Rogers, 2010 & Burgess, 2004). This is then followed by food as culture which views the role food plays in maintaining culture from one generation to the next (Kittler et al., 2012; Almerico, 2014; Asi & Teri, 2016). Thereafter, food as symbolism is debated, focusing on the various symbols it represents for different people. Food as a societal class indicator is then pondered as a subtheme by scrutinising how food helps to identify the societal class to which one belongs. Thereafter, food as medicine is discussed in relation to how it can be used to treat and prevent diseases. Following this, literature on food eaten during leisure time is explored. In concluding the meanings attached to food, food as security is discussed

as the last subtheme, reflecting on how it serves as security to those who have access to it. All these various subthemes indicate the role played by food in giving meaning to different aspects, thus making it central to society.

2.3.1. Food as a nutrient

Food is mostly understood as a substance consumed by humans in order to provide the body with nutrients to keep it functioning well (Rogers, 2020). When digested, food provides the body with nutrients that supply it with energy which can be used to engage in physical activities and to maintain concentration (Rogers, 2010, Hutchinson, 2019, and Psychology Campus, n. d; Barrell, 2020). Burgess (2004) and Rogers (2020) emphasise the role played by nutrients in maintaining growth, improving the immune system, and repairing the body, thus keeping it healthy. However, it is significant to note that nutrients vary, and so do the roles they play in maintaining one's health. Nutrients are normally divided into two groups – macronutrients and micronutrients (Burgess, 2004).

Macronutrients are nutrients that the body needs in large quantities. According to Brundage (2015), these consist of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. Brundage (2015) asserts that most of the energy the body needs in order to function properly comes from carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are easily broken down and used by the body as the main source of energy (Brundage, 2015). Organs such as the heart and kidneys rely on these nutrients in order to function as intended. In the absence of carbohydrates, other micronutrients such as fats cannot be broken down (Brundage, 2015). These types of nutrients are found in starchy food products like potatoes and fruit. Carbohydrates are found in both sweet and starchy foods (Brundage, 2015). Steber (2018) argues that carbohydrates help the individual to remain replete for a longer period, because they are not easy to digest. In contrast, Maffetone and Laursen (2017) argue that reducing the intake of carbohydrates reduces tiredness and improves overall health. This explains why one feels tired after consuming large amounts of carbohydrates. Similarly, Ludwig, Hu, Tappy and Brand-Miller (2018) highlight that consuming large amounts of carbohydrates can lead to weight gain which can create health problems. For this reason, people who are aiming to lose weight usually eat small amounts of foods high in carbohydrates.

The second type of macronutrients is proteins. These produce and repair tissue for growth and they maintain bodily functions (Brundage, 2015). As stated by Brundage (2015), bodily systems such as the immune and digestive system require protein. When there are no carbohydrates available, proteins provide the body with energy (Brundage, 2015). This kind of nutrient is found in food products such as meat, poultry, dairy, and fish. Malowany et al. (2019) comment that proteins also help to build muscles. This explains why people (especially athletes) wanting to build their muscles generally prefer eating food high in protein.

The third element of macronutrients is fat. Fat as nutrients “store energy, cushion organs, makes certain hormones, absorb fat soluble vitamins, and helps with cell membrane integrity” (Avita Health System, n.d., p. 2). There are various types of fats, the first being trans fat. This type of fat comes from food that has been exposed to hydrogen either through baking or frying. The second type of fat is saturated fat which is identified as having a negative effect on cholesterol level. A high level of cholesterol can increase one’s chances of heart disease (AHS, n.d.). By consuming less saturated fat one limits the chance of heart diseases. Unsaturated fats are much healthier as they are in liquid form. These are found in foods like avocado and tuna.

Micronutrients consist of minerals and vitamins (Burgess, 2004). These include iron, zinc, and various other vitamins. Iron helps to promote growth of red blood cells which in turn enable muscles and the brain to function properly (Burgess, 2004). For this reason, people with red blood cell shortage are encouraged to eat food high in iron. Zinc is essential for growth, reproduction and for keeping the immune system functioning well. Nutrients such as vitamin C assist in the absorption of iron (Burgess, 2004). The above understanding which considers food as a nutrient is mostly employed in natural science studies.

2.3.2. Food as culture

Culture implies a body of shared values, attitudes, and practices that are acknowledged and exercised by a particular group of people in the community (Kittler et al., 2012). The role played by food in culture is that it preserves its essence and keeps it alive from generation to generation (Le, 2017). The food preferences people have tell stories about them. According to Almerico (2014), people’s food preferences are mostly associated with their culture. Together, Kittler et al. (2012), and Almerico

(2014) assert that food can be understood as a definition of one's cultural identity. Almerico (2014) stipulates that food is an essential aspect of one's background and cultural development. Furthermore, Kittler et al. (2012) argue that, since food preferences are strongly associated with culture, the manner in which people think, behave, and treat certain types of food is a reaffirmation of their own culture. Such has either been instilled from early childhood or learnt at an older age. Similarly, Asi and Teri (2016) argue that for some people, food serves as a means to cultural maintenance. In the same light, Boutaud, Becut and Marinescu (2016) affirm that the way people carry out food-related activities on a daily basis is a reproduction of the cultural aspects of their lives. Thus, one could agree with Stajcic (2013, p. 5) who avers that "the meaning of food is an exploration of culture through food". To Stajcic (2013), food enhances one's understanding of their beliefs and those of others. Food ties many people to their culture, therefore promoting a sense of belonging (Loveland, Smeeter & Mandel, 2010; Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, Baker, 2005). This suggests that examining one's food habits can reveal much about their cultural background.

Different cultures have developed various beliefs in relation to food. Some of these beliefs are associated with a strong feeling towards gender in terms of preparation and serving food. For instance, Kittler et al. (2012, p. 17) note that "in some cultures women are prohibited from eating specific food or are expected to serve the largest portions and best of food to the men". This view is also supported by Ma (2015), who notes how males tend to be given more food than females. Such beliefs are dominant in the Zulu culture in South Africa, amongst many others (Sikhakhane, n.d.). Other beliefs regarding gender that are promoted by culture include serving large pieces of meat to men following the idea that steak is masculine, while salad is feminine (Kittler et al., 2010). According to Ma (2015), even when it comes to food preparation, in some cultures, it is deemed appropriate that women handle the process. For example, in some Chinese societies, it is the woman's responsibility to ensure that her family is well fed by purchasing and cooking food for them (Ma, 2015). Such thinking is promoted by theories such as functionalism, a theory that emphasises gender roles in food preparation and distribution. It is from beliefs of this nature that gender biases emanate. According to Goethe (2018, p. 1), "food is culture, and everything — especially gender — is affected by culture". Goethe (2018) argues that sometimes the kind of food people eat is not associated with health, but it has been influenced by

shame and guilt that has been instilled by the society based on beliefs relating to gender biases. As a result, some people, especially women, eat certain foods to meet the standards that have been set by the society in determining beauty (Goethe, 2018).

Furthermore, food plays a role in maintaining cultural values from one generation to another (Le, 2017). For instance, in some cultures, adults are served food before children in order to maintain respect for elders (Ma, 2015). However, while some of these practices may be effective in maintaining cultural values such as respect, some have a negative impact on health. For instance, Ma (2015) and Kittler et al. (2010) explain how, in some societies, men are served large portions of food, in order to maintain their role as leaders and heads of families, while other family members eat less. For children, this can lead to malnutrition, which causes diseases and even mortality (Pérez & García, 2013; Lepowsky, 1987).

Culture is also created and indicated through a body of shared practices (Kittler et al., 2012). According to Fisher (n.d.), a practice is a manifestation and reproduction of shared understandings. Food is central to the manifestation and reproduction of some of these practices. For instance, when celebrating thanksgiving, which is a popular practice in the United States of America (USA) and Canada, families gather to feast on a variety of foods (Silverman, 2020). Various kinds of foods ranging from appetisers to desserts are served during the celebration. As food plays a central role in this practice, one could argue that the practice would fade or even die without it. Another example that highlights the role of food in maintaining shared cultural practices is Christmas. In South Africa, Baker's Choice Assorted biscuits are eaten to celebrate the holiday and they are usually sold in stores during this festive season because of their importance during this time. It is almost as if "Christmas isn't Christmas without Baker's" (Abel, 2017, p. 1).

Although for the sake of this discussion culture has been presented as something that is maintained by food to stay unfiltered over generations, it is worth noting that it is a dynamic aspect that is sometimes influenced, thus can change. This could be a result of migration as people are exposed to new ways of life.

2.3.3. Food as symbolism

For some societal groups, food serves not only nutritional needs, but symbolic purposes. Here the food choice of people is not determined by their class or economic

status; rather, it is determined by the meanings that their societal groups have attached to particular foods. According to Asi and Teri (2016), particular food items symbolise different aspects for different societal groups. For instance, some foods may be viewed in relation to particular taboos because of what they represent (Asi & Teri, 2016; Kittler et al., 2012). A taboo is a socially constructed belief that forbids people from associating themselves with a certain object, place, or practice (Ekwochi, 2016). According to Ugwa (2016), food taboos assist in uniting people of the same culture and maintaining their identity and sense of belonging. An example of this symbolism can be seen in Uganda. Before the 1960s it was taboo for pregnant Banganda women to eat salt and hot food because it was believed that salt might burn the unborn child (Raschke, 2005; Asi & Teri, 2016). In some areas it is a taboo for pregnant women to eat high-protein food, believing that eating such foods may lead to prolonged menstruation for a female child, causing their infertility (Chakona & Shackleton, 2019). This belief is dominant in countries like Nigeria where, according to Agwu (2016), during pregnancy, some women do not eat meat and milk because it is believed that this will influence the child to be a thief. Resulting from such beliefs, some people ultimately avoid food with nutrients that are essential for their health, which causes malnutrition or health complications (Chakona & Shackleton, 2019). This shows just how influential food can be in determining how people live in society because of what food symbolises to them.

Furthermore, in some cultures it is a taboo to eat certain animals because they serve as totems. A totem is an animal that symbolises something significant to members of a certain group of people (Mandillah & Ekosse, 2018). Due to the value that totems have, they are treated as sacred and holy by certain people. For example, in Hinduism, a cow is regarded the “the giver of all desires” they refrain from harming the animal, especially one that produces milk because one who does will in hell for many years (Agoramoorthy & Hsu, 2012, p. 7). Certain scriptures of Hinduism such as the Laws of Manu, however, do not prohibit the eating meat (beef) but rather encourage people to avoid it as doing so brings reward (Agoramorthy & Hsu, 2012). This shows that people’s beliefs about food vary: what is valuable to one culture may not be valued by another. Furthermore, to the Tswana society, a vulture (*the lenong*) is a totem to Tswana clans following the belief that it is a symbol of “dignity, perseverance, mystery, vigilance and patience” (Mandillah & Ekosse, 2018, p. 205). As a result of the

symbolism held by the vulture to the Tswana clans, it is forbidden for them to eat it. It is believed that if a Tswana person eats this bird his or her body will swell.

2.3.4. Food as an indicator of societal class

Sometimes the meanings attached to food are influenced by class divisions that exist in society. Societal class can be understood as groups of people who share the same economic status (Gaur, 2019). Societal classes include upper class, middle class, and lower class. Upper class people may eat differently from those in the lower class. For this reason, Toivonen (1997) views food as an excellent indicator of differences that exist between different societal classes. As a result, there are certain foods that are perceived to be either for 'rich people' or 'poor people'.

High food prices make it difficult for those in the lower class to access food that is perceived as quality. As a result, they purchase food that is '*cheap*' or more affordable to them. A study by Miller et al. (2016) shows that people in low-income societies consume less healthy foods. Miller et al. (2016) argue that this is because habits are mostly associated with affordability rather than preference. For instance, taking a glimpse into the past, Almerico (2014) and McIlvenna (2019) highlight that during the 1780s in France, dark bread was traditionally consumed by people in the lower class of the economy not because they preferred it over white bread, but because it was what they could afford to purchase. Thus, food can be understood as an indicator of one's class (Miller et al., 2016).

People in the upper societal classes are most likely to consume foods that are both healthy and 'fancy' such as red meat, cereal, and a variety of seafood, while those in lower classes are obliged to concentrate on the basics such as maize meal, beans and chicken. This is confirmed by Kittler et al. (2012, p. 15), who stipulate that "protein foods are most associated with status"; thus, those in the upper class can afford expensive foods such as prime beef. Eating such foods may mean that one belongs to the upper class; however, this is not always the case. In addition to buying food, people who belong to the upper class often dine in expensive restaurants, a privilege not afforded to those belonging to the lower class (Bartash, 2016). On the contrary, Fearnow (2017) argues that, although financially stable, some people in the upper classes do eat in cheap restaurants. This therefore signifies that one's societal class can change over time. As people advance or regress financially, their food preferences

may also have to change. In this manner, food can be understood as a substance that determines the social economic class to which one belongs. Accordingly, the food you eat may indicate your social class.

2.3.5. Food as medicine

The past few years have witnessed a rise in professional interest towards medicinal foods (Ramalingum & Mahommodally, 2014). This is because food has the potential to “promote health, improve general well-being and reduce the risk of developing certain illnesses” (Ramadan and Al-Ghamdi, 2012, p. 40). The role played by food is not limited to satisfying hunger and providing nutrients: it also provides the body with bioactive ingredients that help prevent or minimise diseases (Ramalingum & Mahommodally, 2014).

Pondering medicinal foods that help treat diseases, Smart (2015) explains that consuming ginger in the form of tea or chewing it in its raw form can help to combat nausea and to treat abdominal and menstrual pains experienced by women. Smart also notes that turmeric powder can be used as a treatment for inflammation and brain-related diseases. Furthermore, the sweet potato can be seen as a medicinal food. Mohanraj and Sivasankar (2014) echo that, although some parts of the vegetable are not sweet, they have significant medicinal properties. For instance, among the Akaz of Ghana, sweet potato leaves are perceived as a treatment for Type 2 diabetes. In places such as Kagawa in Japan, sweet potatoes are eaten raw to treat hypertension and anaemia (Mohanral & Sivasankar, 2014).

Furthermore, some foods help to prevent exposure to certain diseases. While not everyone relishes organ meat as part of their diet, organs such as liver are popular for their medicinal benefits as prevention for certain diseases. For instance, the liver is the most nutrient-dense organ meat, and is a source of vitamin A which helps to maintain healthy eyes, and prevents diseases that can lead to inflammation (Seymour, 2017). People who want to avoid health conditions like anaemia treat organ meat such as liver as an important part of their diet. Furthermore, counted amongst the most effective preventions of chronic diseases is barley. According to Yang, Zeng, Yang, Pu and Du (2016), barley can help prevent Type 2 diabetes and it reduces obesity. It also reduces risks of having cancer and lowers blood pressure (Yang, et al., 2016).

2.3.6. Food accompanying leisure

Food is an essential commodity that people need in order to maintain life, as suggested by Quddasi (2018). However, “for those who have ready access to food, it has increasingly become a source of entertainment...a regularly commodified leisure pastime for many” (Schmalz, Joyner, Duffy, Bricker & Blomquist, 2019, p. 2). For this reason, Bentham et al. (2016) affirm that overeating has become a leading issue in health problems such as obesity. This is supported by Schmaltz et al., 2019, p. 7) who argue that it “encourages harmful eating behaviours such as eating for entertainment or distraction, eating to cope with negative emotions and/or stress, and mind less eating”. When selecting food, some people consider taste, or the effects food will have on their physical appearance.

Food can be used for entertainment which can be understood as the act of creating amusement (Rodrigues, 2017). According to Wurtman (2013), food is entertainment for the role it plays in celebrations, festivities and as a tool to lure people to attend events. He argues that if it were not so, there would not be a variety of restaurants, or it would not be used by magazines to attract readers. Instead of entertaining guests with a variety of dishes, restaurants would simply offer the same menu *ad infinitum* (Wurtman, 2013). At events, whenever people are bored by the speaker, they are most likely to entertain themselves by eating what is on their plates (Wurtman, 2013). Similarly, many people relish a bowl of chips or popcorn while watching a movie. Here, people do not eat because they are hungry, but because they desire something to chew on while they pass the time.

People often consider aspects such as taste rather than nutrition when consuming food (Breslin, 2013). According to Wurtman (2013), some people do not know what it is like to starve, and so they eat for taste. A child is likely to either accept or reject certain foods because of their taste (Wurtman, 2013). Wurtman (2013) further argues that altering ingredients to produce pleasant tastes is less often noted in foods that people should be eating (healthy foods). Some people have therefore developed a mindless obsession with ‘big foods’ instead of eating to fuel the body (Schmalz et al., 2019). Big foods refer to unhealthy foods that are high in sugar, salt, and fat, replete with preservatives to promote their longevity (Schmalz et al., 2019). Usually, such food tastes good which is why some people prefer them over healthy foods.

Some people eat certain foods because they want to maintain a particular physical appearance. Here their aim in consuming food is not solely satisfying hunger but for developing and maintaining a certain bodily appearance such as a flat stomach and large muscles – they may want to avoid being ‘full-figured’ (Sakamaki, Amamoto, Mochida, Shinfuku, & Toyama, 2005; Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2019). Some people diet, avoiding eating food that may have a negative impact on their physical appearance. Such behaviour is influenced by what society deems beautiful. For example, a person who wants to have a flat stomach may prefer reducing their intake of foods that are high in carbohydrates. A person aiming for a more masculine body may increase their intake of food high in protein. According to Taylor (2017), eating food high in fats can lead to an unpleasant facial appearance. For this reason, some people avoid consuming food high in fat in an attempt to retain their facial beauty. This is common amongst females. Nevin and Vartanian (2017, p. 2) add that “individuals described as eating low-fat foods are evaluated more positively on measures of attractiveness, conscientiousness, and morality compared to individuals described as consuming high-fat food”.

2.3.7. Food as security

Security is not limited to only having enough weapons to fight a war, or having a stable economy – security also extends to having enough food to establish and sustain a society free from hunger. A country may have adequate weapons or finances, but without food it is impossible for it to function properly. This goes hand in hand with Quddusi’s (2018) claim that food is the most important factor after water and air. Food security plays a significant role in ensuring stability in the society. However, food security can be affected by various aspects which include natural disasters, diseases, and conflicts.

The achievement of food security in society is sometimes influenced by factors such as natural disasters resulting from climate change. According to Porter et al. (2014, p. 490), food security is achieved when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. Unfortunately, climate change has the potential to prevent this envisioned food security within society (Wheeler & Van Braun, 2013). This is because climate change and access to food are indirectly linked; the case of food security differs from one household to the other (Wheeler & Van Bruan,

2013). In simple terms, if not enough food is produced due to climate change, it means not everyone will have access to their food “preferences for an active and healthy life” (Gibson, 2012, p. 20). With climate change, food prices increase, making it impossible for some people to afford certain food products. This is acknowledged by Umraw (2016), who highlights that in 2016, the increase in temperatures led to droughts in South Africa. This researcher argues that, as a result of these droughts, some people, especially those with low income, could not afford to purchase certain food products because food prices had greatly increased (Umraw, 2016). Furthermore, as natural disasters cause destruction on agricultural production, the number of people in need of food assistance has increased, thus leaving communities in food insecurity (Conforti, Ahmed & Markova, 2018). For instance, the earthquakes and floods experienced by Nepal in 2015 led to a sequence of landslides. These landslides eventually caused damage and loss of agricultural production, leaving many communities without adequate food supply (Conforti, Ahmed & Markova, 2018). Climate change thus leads to natural disasters which in turn “create poverty and increase the prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition” (Tirivangasi, 2018, p. 1).

One of the dimensions used by Porter et al. (2014) when defining food security is utilisation. This places emphasis on the availability of food that is safe to eat (Schmidhuber & Tubeillo, 2007). When trying to analyse this dimension, Schmidhuber and Tubeillo (2007, p.1) argue that “it is not enough that someone is getting what appears to be adequate quantity of food if that person is unable to make use of the food because he or she always fall sick”. This means that having access to food but not being able to utilise it due to diseases can act as a barrier towards having a hunger-free society. Food security is not only characterised by having access to food; it is also about having access to food that is safe to consume (Schmidhuber & Tubeillo, 2007). In 2017 an outbreak of the food-borne listeriosis disease posed a threat to human life in South Africa. About 2019 deaths from the disease were reported between January 2017 and June 2018 (World Health Organization, 2018). According to Mahmoud (2018), the outbreak of this disease placed food security on the verge, in that many tons of contaminated food products were discarded. Countries such as Mozambique, Malawi, and Uganda banned any form of imported meat from South Africa (Mahmoud, 2018) and this had a negative impact on food security. Food security was no longer a matter of having a certain quantity of food as many may assume. It was about having

access to food that is safe and healthy for one to eat as expressed by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (as cited in Porter et al., 2014).

Factors such as wars and conflicts also have an effect on food security. This is illustrated by Hitzhusen and Jeanty (2006, p. 4), who affirm that “conflicts tend to affect security by creating food shortages, which disrupt both upstream input markets and downstream output markets, thus deterring food production, commercialisation and stock management”. Hitzhusen and Jeanty (2006) state that, during wars, farming activities cannot be conducted as required. This leads to a dramatic decrease in food production. The above authors further argue that in times of conflict, the countries involved face seizure or destruction of food stocks and livestock, which then prevents them from supplying other regions with food. This leads to food insecurity for the unarmed people. Armies extort the food of ordinary people and destroy whatever remains, to expose their adversaries to hunger (Hitzhusen & Jeanty, 2006). Furthermore, during wars, people are displaced (Bruck, 2019). In some instances, farms are abandoned, resulting from farmers fleeing the unsafe environment caused by conflicts: this leads to a reduced food supply. For example, during the El Salvadoran civil war in 1980-1992, many people were displaced, and many farms were abandoned (Segovia, 2017). This in turn led to a decrease in food production, resulting in food insecurity. Also, as people flee from their homelands, they may be exposed to food insecurity where they go (Bruck, 2019). Brinkman and Hendrix (2011) add that food insecurity can either be a catalyst for conflicts or a consequence thereof. This is explained by Brinkman and Hendrix (2011) who write about how civil conflicts and riots can result from food insecurities caused by an increase in food prices. For instance, “the bad harvest in 1788 led to high food prices in France, which caused rioting and contributing to the French Revolution in 1789” (Brinkman & Hendrix, 2011, p. 7).

Food has also been associated with job security in that, due to its production numerous people gain employment. Job security can be understood as the state of being employed and knowing that you are unlikely to be dismissed (Oxford dictionary, 2010). According to Townsend et al. (2017, p. 3), puts that “in many countries, the food system provides more jobs than any other sector”. This commodity therefore reduces job insecurity because of the high demand its production requires. Regardless of the large numbers of people employed in the food-production sector, Christiaensen and Brooks (2018) assert that employment is not always guaranteed in this sector. To

emphasise this, Christiaesen and Brooks (2018) discuss how the number of people in sub-Saharan Africa employed in the food-production sector has dropped over time. Such acts as a threat to food security, as postulated by Dodd and Nyabvudzi (2014). Food can thus impact job security to a certain extent.

2.4. Food in History

As seen in the previous discussion in this chapter, food is central to many aspects of human life. Food has contributed in no small measure to shaping the past. To understand the various ways in which food has contributed to shaping the past, this theme is divided into three subthemes. Although discussed separately, there are overlaps between these theme are interrelated as somethings that is economic may end up being political and what is social may affect the political and economic spheres. The first subtheme is food in economic history. This focuses on how food has influenced the various spheres of the economies of the past, including how food was produced, supplied, and consumed in bygone societies. The second subtheme focuses on food in political history. Under this subtheme, aspects of the way in which food has influenced politics in past societies will be explored. Finally, the role that food has played in social history will be discussed in detail.

2.4.1. Food in economic history

An economy includes the production of goods and services, their consumption, and how they are supplied to society (Kenton, 2019). According to Kenton (2019), this is to fulfil the needs of people who live within society. Food is a commodity whose contribution towards the economies of the world cannot be denied. This is made clear by Godoy (2015), who writes about the great impact sugar and tea had on the economy of Britain in the 1760s.

Looking into its production, food has played a remarkable role in the economies of many societies. During the age of hunter gatherers, nearly 40 000 years ago, food was produced through gathering wild plants and hunting wild animals (Hillel, n.d. & Ji Yun, 2012). The mode of food production was communal during the time as there was no emphasis on private land ownership (Schmalz et al., 2019). However, the genders played different roles in food production. While women produced food through gathering wild plants and preparing food for everyone, men produced food through

hunting for wild animals. Small animals were killed using traps, and large ones were killed using poison, bows and arrows.

Even with the advent of farming, many societies continued to use innovative hunting as a way of food production. For example, up to the 1700s, the Tswana farmers of southern Africa dug pits in the wild; they would then drive herds of wild animals towards the pits. The animals would fall into the pits and die, and those that did not die were easy to kill after they had fallen into a pit. This provided the people in that society with food. It was the chief who determined the apportioning of the meat (Johanneson et al., 2014). This method of hunting was used by many other pre-colonial African societies.

Farming, as a new form of food production, was introduced in different places at different times (Hillel, n.d.), but it is said to have evolved in Egypt and Mesopotamia (Britannica, 2020). This form of food production involved growing crops and domesticating animals for food, which allowed people to produce surplus (Peet as cited in Schmalz et al., 2019). In Mesopotamia, farming began around 8000 BC, about 10 000 years ago (British Museum, n.d.). Farming in Egypt began during the Predynastic Period, 6000-3150 BCE (Mark, 2017). People in Egypt grew crops such as barley and wheat; and they depended on the Nile River for watering their gardens (FAO, 2020). For instance, in northern Europe food production was introduced about 6000 years ago, resulting from the movement of people (Welsh, 2022). In southern Africa it was introduced by Bantu speakers on their arrival in the region towards the beginning of the Common Era, about 2000 years ago. The Bantu societies grew crops such as millets and sorghum, which originated from the Sahel region in Western Africa; and they domesticated animals including sheep and cattle from northern Africa (Schmalz et al., 2019). Resulting from the continuous need for food, over time, countries started developing technologies to improve food production. Countries included Britain who, between the 17th and 19th centuries, invented the seed drill and threshing machine to create an efficient food-production system (Lumen, n.d.). The development of new technologies required that raw material such as iron be mined and traded with the companies that needed it for the production of certain technologies. Food production therefore extended its impact to other sectors of the economy, such as mining and trade.

Food supply can be understood as an act of making a service or product available to society. In the past, food supply has played a significant role in maintaining economies of societies. As mentioned above, in the hunter gatherers' societies both men and women supplied their society with food which they obtained from the wild. Because they were nomadic in nature, their food supply was determined by their surrounding environment which changed from time to time (Britannica, 2019). Men would go out for days tracking game and when they had found and killed it, they would return home with it to share with everyone (Omaar, 2016). After the Neolithic revolution, food travelled from place to place to supply colonial settlements (Schmalz et al., 2019). Trade was a mode of food supply, and through it, empires were built and communications between countries were established. For instance, in ancient Greece, slaves were traded for salt; and explorers carried salt with them as a trading commodity (Saltworks, 2020). The same thing happened during the trans-Saharan slave trade in which sub-Saharan Africans were enslaved and bartered for salt (Kehinde, 2013). Further, in South Africa, intermittently from 1488, the interaction between the indigenous people and Europeans was based on food, bartering products such as cattle, as there was high demand for these onboard ships (Jahanneson et al., 2014). After the long travel from Europe to the East or from the East to Europe, Europeans would stop at the Cape for fresh food supplies from indigenous people (Ebrahim, Haw & Jardine, 2018). This food supply established a means of communication between the indigenous people and Europeans. After leaving the Cape Colony in resistance to the British control, some Boers supplied their societies with food such as grain and cattle which they had traded with the Basotho Kingdom at the Caledon River region (Johanneson et al., 2014). Some staple foods in the present-day South Africa are not indigenous to the country, but were introduced by Portuguese explorers in the 15th century. These include maize-based foods such as 'pap' which is made out of maize meal produced from corn native to Mexico (Karon, 2018). Altogether this shows how people in past societies maintained a food supply which, in turn, made food a 'service' to them, thus emphasising its impact on the economies of the time.

Food supply has not only depended on cordial engagements between groups. Some societies achieved food supply through raids, especially when two or more societies were at war and the stronger group would conquer and take everything, including food

that belonged to the other. In the 19th century, in South Africa, the Griqua, who were descendants of the Dutch and indigenous people, launched cattle raids on local African kingdoms near the north of the Orange River where they lived (Johanneson et al., 2014 & Eldredge, 1992). They then used the cattle they raided to supply European farmers (Eldredge, 1992). In their time of need, when the Sotho were fleeing from amaHlubi, their rival in war, they maintained their food supply through raiding other chiefdoms (Eldredge, 1992).

Some societies also gained their food supply through tribute. Here, people did not have to fight or strive for food supply; instead, it was freely offered to them out of respect for their prestigious positions in the society. An example of such tribute is Moshoeshoe of the Basotho Kingdom during the 1820s who willingly gave cattle to King Shaka of the Zulu in the hope that he would leave the Basotho in peace (Johanneson et al., 2014). In other cases, Moshoeshoe used food as a peace offering to those he had defeated. For instance, after defeating the Ndebele he sent fat oxen to their chief with a message stating, "Supposing that hunger has brought you into this country...you may eat them on your way home". (Johanneson et al., 2014, p. 157).

When studying consumption in past societies, one realises that people of different societal structures ate differently, certain people having access to certain types of food. The question of food consumption was a matter of affordability, as suggested by Miller et al. (2016). For instance, prior to the French Revolution of 1789, bread was an essential part of their diet for peasants; most peasants relied on bread for food because other forms of food such as meat, vegetables, and dairy products were too expensive for them to afford. Peasants ate only dark bread – white bread was a luxury only those in the upper classes could afford (Almerico, 2014; Mcilvenna, 2019). During that time peasants paid their tax in agricultural goods. As such, they used most of their grain production to pay taxes, therefore having minimal leftovers to feed their families and saving some to plant the following year. According to Mcilvanne (2019), bread likely counted for 60-80 per cent of the budget of wage-earners' families in the ancien regime, so that even a small rise in grain prices could spark tensions and riots would take place. It is from this that Lynn (n.d.) perceives buying bread today in France as buying a piece of history.

During the Middle Stone Age, about 150 million years ago, hunter gatherers in East Africa developed many ways to prepare food before consumption. Counted amongst the most significant methods they used to prepare food is heating it. Ji Yun (2012) and Dbrecher (2016) remind that cooking or roasting food, especially meat, softened it, and made it easy to chew and digest. With the Neolithic revolution, food consumption habits started to change as people were introduced to various forms of food. For instance, in places like Sudan, the people rarely ate cattle meat as it was used for financial transactions; therefore, they still relied on wild animals for food (Ji Yun, 2012). What they ate from the cattle was milk which they kept in gourd containers. Milk was either consumed in its fresh state or fermented and made into butter and sour milk. Butter was then used to prepare and add flavour to other food (Ji Yun, 2012). Furthermore, when Europeans arrived in South Africa, spices were introduced as part of food preparation before consumption. Ingredients such as hot peppers, salt, black pepper, anise, and garlic were used to spice food, adding flavour to it (Oktay & Sadikoglu, 2018). In addition, originally, Europeans in South Africa consumed dumplings with jam as a dessert (Oktay & Sadikoglu, 2018); however, this changed as their traditions were infused with those of other people such as Africans, amongst others. In current society dumplings are served as part of the main meal, cooked in the stew. This highlights the impact of food in the economies of the past through its service in giving meaning, transforming the society.

2.4.2. Food in political history

The influence of food in historical politics was significant. According to Carlson (2017), due to food-related matters, numerous governments were overthrown. Literature explains how salt, for example, acted as a leading inspiration for governmental revolutions (Carlson, 2017; Pletcher, 2019; Nelson & Ken, 2020). In the same light, Twilley, Graber and Gastropod (2016, p. 1) affirm that salt was once “the engine behind empires and revolutions”. When examining the cause of the French Revolution, we understand that one of the factors was the gabelle, which was a form of tax paid in salt. The clergy and the nobility were exempted from the gabelle: this inequality led to a widespread growth of salt contraband. Grievances were later expressed in the Estates General in 1789 just before the revolution (Augustyn et al., n.d.). It is for this reason that Llewellyn and Thompson (2019) identify the gabelle which was introduced into 15th century France, as one of the causes of the French Revolution (1789-1799).

The revolution resulted in the overthrow of the feudal monarchical system. The role of salt in politics was also seen in the British Empire, when, according to Pletcher (2019), the British monarchy imposed a salt tax on its colonial subjects as a way of ensuring, not only revenue, but also political stability. This was the case in 19th century India, when the British imposed the Salt Act of 1882. The law prohibited Indian people from producing or selling salt, and forced them to buy the highly taxed product imported from outside (Pletcher, 2019). In response to this law, Mahatma Gandhi led a 240-mile march known as the “Salt March” in India on 12 March 1930 as a form of resistance. According to Pletcher (2019), thousands of people were arrested owing to the resistance against the Salt Act; however, in the end, the resistance to this legislation contributed to Indian independence.

An additional example of food acting as a factor in political revolution is the Boston Tea Party of 1773. During the Boston Tea Party, 340 chests of tea weighing about 45 tons were thrown into the water. This was a form of resistance to the Tea Act which had been imposed on American colonists by the British government with the aim of easing its financial burdens. As a result of the Boston Tea Party, the British government passed the Coercive Acts which in return united the colonists, leading to the second Tea Party in March 1774 and the first continental Congress. In the continental congress the opponents discussed ideas on how to resist British oppression, setting out The Declaration and Resolves. Britain did not capitulate, and this sparked the American Revolution between 1775 and 1783 (History, 2019). This also highlights the contribution made by food in shaping the politics of different parts of the world throughout history.

The final example relates to South Africa, whose colonisation started with the establishment of the refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. What was meant to serve passing ships with fresh food led to a whole new revolutionary change in the country. As argued by Bingley-Pullen (n.d.), Smithfield (2017) and Twilley, Graber and Gastropod (2016), food can lead to countries being taken over by others or being completely transformed. In the case of South Africa there was both a taking over and a transformation (Thompson, 2001).

Furthermore, food has also been used as a weapon to fight a war. Having control or not having control over food commodities can either strengthen or weaken a rival.

Although food may not lead to total destruction of infrastructure in like manner as guns and bombs, it can still have an enormous impact on war. For example, during the South African War in 1899, as part of the scorched-earth policy, Kitchener used food as a weapon to fight the Boers (Johanneson et al., 2014). According to Johanneson et al. (2014) and Van den Bergh (2012), the purpose of the policy was to deprive Boers of all food supplies, weakening them. In line with the scorched earth policy, Britain destroyed all crops that belonged to Boers, burnt their farmhouses, and either seized or killed their livestock. This led to the establishment of concentration camps to shelter homeless Boers which made it easier for Britain to control them. Many women and children died of malnutrition while in concentration camps as there was no adequate food supply, especially for infants (Heyningen, 2010). Johanneson et al. (2014) assert that over time, British no longer took Boers into concentration camps; instead, they left them to wander around homeless. All this weakened the Boers; by 1902 almost 7000 soldiers had died and some had surrendered. As a result of the scorched-earth policy, on 31 May 1902, the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, giving all authority to the British. Depriving Boers of food drove them to their knees in surrender to British power. The scorched-earth policy has been applied in many wars in the past including the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1938, World War Two (1939-1945) and the Gulf War in 1991.

In some cases, food has been used as a weapon to disorientate an enemy during war. For instance, during the American Civil War, products such as cayenne pepper were used as a weapon. According to Hasegawa (2008, p. 1), dried cayenne pepper had an ability to “irritate the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and air passages...obstructing sight, causing violent sneezing and coughing”. When cayenne pepper had been dispersed for enemy soldiers to inhale, they were not able to maintain steadiness while emitting prolonged sneezes. As they were blinded by the effect of the cayenne pepper, they were not able to aim and shoot their opponents. This made it easy for their opponents to take them down. Food poisoning was also practised as a tactic of war. It is believed that local women would bake and poison pies that they sold to Union troops camped at Hutchins in Warren, Ohio. This was evidenced by a letter written by John Kay, a Union soldier, explaining how selling pies was banned in the camps after one soldier was poisoned by a woman (Connell, 2015). Fulton (2016) further adds that after incidents of food poisoning, soldiers learnt how to cook for

themselves. In their correct state of mind, soldiers would have not consumed the poison; but because poisoned food was disguised, they consumed it without knowing. Also, in some cases, societies were raided and attacked for food as explained above in the theme on food in economic history.

2.4.3. Food in social history

Social affairs can be well understood as an umbrella term for economics, and cultural and political dimensions of society (Harstorf, 2016). According to Harstorf (2016), it is difficult to understand these three dimensions in isolation from one another when trying to study food in social affairs. This is because society is made up of economics, politics, and culture through which people function. Therefore, when studying at the social aspect of food in history one needs to view all three dimensions, since they all form the social structure.

Firstly, viewing the dimension of culture in history one can glimpse the historical background of Christianity and food. During the first millennium AD, food served as a unifying aspect for Christians (Albala, 2011). According to Albala (2011), Christians during that time developed a ritual practice called the agape feast that was designed to encourage social harmony and brotherhood. Food became an indicator of societal beliefs cherished by people with common values or belonging to a particular culture or religion.

Secondly, viewing the economy as a dimension of social affairs in history one can see the role that food has played as means of financial security in society. For instance, while salt may today be taken for granted as it graces our dining tables, salt contributed significantly to the economies of the past. According to Saltworks (2020), salt is one of the most valued food commodities in history that has acted as a cornerstone in the economies of many countries. Considering salt as a service to the community, Smithfield (2017) adds that due to its undoubted contribution to the economy, salt once served as a currency in places like ancient Rome. The word salary is derived from the word for salt, which served as currency in various places and times in history, such as it did in Egypt (Smithfield, 2017). Moreover, one of the first known taxes was levied on salt by the Chinese emperor Hsia Yu in 2200 BC (Saltworks, 2020).

Thirdly, food has played a leading role in the political dimension of social affairs in history. As mentioned, through food, revolutions have occurred, and governments

have been overthrown (Carlson, 2017). All the above points to the argument that food is one commodity that influences almost the whole social structure, which makes it an important aspect of historical society.

2.5. Food in School History

From the above literature, it is evident that food has played a significant role in the past and it still does in current society. Much can be understood about society through food, from culture to socialisation. To understand food in relation to school history, this section explores two different subthemes. The first subtheme focuses on the school curriculum; and the second explores food in school history. The first subtheme, which examines the curriculum, is divided into three parts. The first part explains what a curriculum is based on views expressed by various scholars. The second part discusses the three different components of the South African curriculum which include knowledge, skills, and values. The last part explains the various first-order and second-order concepts that make up the South African curriculum. Thereafter, the second subtheme, food in school history, is discussed.

2.5.1. School curriculum

There is no single definition of a curriculum. Scholars understand the concept of curriculum differently, from their personal points of view (Kelly, 2009, Jansen, 1990 & Pinar, 2004). According to Kelly (2009, p. 7), a curriculum can be understood as “all learning which is planned and guided by a school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school”. However, it is important to note that, although it is the school that puts the curriculum into practice, the school curriculum is selected unilaterally by the government. This is evidenced by Jansen (1990), who views the curriculum as a “phenomenon that is never neutral in that it reflects society’s ideals and aspirations as informed by the societies past experiences and is often a product of the state”. It is from this that Dlamini (2019) argues that decisions on how the curriculum should be designed and what it should consist of are informed by the goals and policies of the nation for the attainment of its ideological beliefs. The curriculum is a political policy guided by the politics of the nation (Dlamini, 2019). As Pinar (2004, p. 3) articulates, “curriculum inquiry occurs within national borders, often informed by governmental policies and priorities (as well as national cultures) and is thereby nationally distinctive”. Similar sentiments are expressed by Fathi and Maleki (as cited in Madadlou & Gharaaini, 2014) who highlight national values and heritage.

The curriculum is therefore a tool through which the government can reproduce the kind of society it aims for (Dlamini, 2019).

The curriculum currently used in South Africa is known as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), introduced in 2012. The curriculum was developed after the amendment to the National Curriculum Statement to improve implementation (DoBE, 2011). Each subject in South Africa has a CAPS specific to it. For instance, the content in a Natural Sciences CAPS is different from that in the History CAPS. However, though different, both are in line with the national curriculum design (Hellberg, 2014). The purpose of the curriculum is to equip learners with knowledge, skills and values essential for “self-fulfilment, meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country” regardless of their differences, providing them with access to higher education, preparing them for work place, and to provide employers with workers who are competitive for the work place” (DBE, 2011, p. 4).

The South African curriculum is made up of knowledge, skills and values that need to be instilled in learners in the process of teaching and learning. The curriculum intends to produce learners with skills that will enable them to identify and resolve problems and make decisions based on critical thinking (DBE, 2029). The values that make up the South African curriculum, such as democracy, social justice and equality, have been drawn from sources such as the country’s Constitution (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2018). Although skills and values are important, what is directly relevant to this is knowledge of the curriculum. Knowledge refers to an understanding that is attained from being educated (Hellberg, 2014). After every lesson or at the completion of the grade, learners are expected to have acquired a certain amount of understanding of the particular subject. This is usually tested through classroom assessment both formal, and informal. Informal assessments are made continuously during the year, and formal assessments at the end of the term or year (DoBE, 2011).

History knowledge in general can be categorised into first-order and second-order concepts. First-order concepts can be understood as knowledge or content relating to historical phenomena (Sandahl, 2015). These concepts can be understood as themes or topics on historical phenomena (Sandahl, 2015). Such concepts are focused on providing learners with information on matters occurring in the past. Levesque (2005) refers to these as stories and events of the past. Examples of first-order concepts are

slavery, nationalism, and revolution. Second-order concepts are those that “arise in the act of doing historical inquiries”. Such are significant in investigating historical phenomena (Levesque, 2005, p. 2). According to Sandahl (2015), second-order concepts assist historians to interpret, analyse, and organise information about the past. The above-mentioned researcher views second-order concepts as tools for transforming students’ level of thinking from consumers of factual knowledge to high-level critical thinkers who can analyse knowledge about the past (Sandahl, 2015). Lee and Ashby (as cited in Seixas, 2010) view second-order concepts as ideas that enable people to understand history; they shape the manner in which people study the past. This is supported by Seixas (2015) who echoes that second-order concepts provide us with instruments of assessing history which in turn develops our historical understanding. Examples of second-order concepts are historical significance, historical empathy, and cause and consequence. Henceforth, based on understandings of historical concepts, if food, as a topic, were to be included in the history curriculum, it would fall under first-order concepts because it provides information on the phenomenon. Goodson (1989) has argued that usually curriculum designers exclude the various stakeholders in the process of construction of the curriculum. Goodson (1989) calls for teachers to be considered in this process as they are responsible for carrying out the curriculum. This validates the sample of this study as it aims to understand history student teachers’ views regarding the current history curriculum.

2.5.2. Food in the school history curriculum

There is a dearth of literature on food as a topic in school history; however, it is found in subjects such as Life Orientation and Natural Sciences (Bester et al., 2013). Natural sciences tends to look at topics such as *food chains and food webs*, while life orientation scrutinises *factors that influence choice of personal diet*. At *The Feast Podcast* on Quora in 2017, Carlson emphasised that food is a critical element in education; therefore studying about it is equally critical. This suggests that its introduction into school history is of great significance. Carlson believes that studying food is imperative. Introducing the knowledge of food from a historical perspective would promote interactional learning amongst learners as they ask questions about historical events. Similarly, when talking about how he uses menus in his classroom, Rosinbum (2019) adds that teaching food as a topic in school history enlightens pupils

no matter the topic being taught. Carlson (2017) and Rosinbum (2019) both agree that teaching food in history promotes a broad understanding that covers economic, social, and cultural history as aligned with one another. This could be because it examines food production, its costs, ownership, and its distribution to society. Although these are not scholarly views, they help shed light on the significance of food as a topic in school history, and they motivate for more scholarly research on this issue.

Since the curriculum can be considered a political policy, as stipulated by Pinar (2004) and Dlamini (2019), the inclusion of food as a topic in the curriculum is ultimately a political decision. Therefore, one may argue that, for the concept of food to be included in the South African History curriculum it needs to be in line with the national aspirations. Its contradiction with any of the national aspirations would disqualify it from forming part of the history curriculum.

The dearth of literature on food in school history proves that there is a gap in terms of research on food within the history discipline. Most of the literature available explores food from the natural sciences perspective. In conducting this proposed study a humanities approach to food will be developed, thus adding to the current body of literature. This motivated this study aimed at viewing the phenomenon within the history discipline.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework refers to various connected ideas or concepts that together form a knowledgeable understanding of a given phenomenon (Jabareen, 2009). According to Christiansen and Bertram (2014), these concepts act as a guide for the research. Unlike a theoretical framework, a conceptual framework provides a “less well-developed explanation for events” (Jansen & Vithal, as cited in Thilakdhari, p. 19). As such, the conceptualization in this study is based on literature, and will help establish a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of food in history.

This research is grounded on the concept of historical significance. Historical significance is a procedural concept used by historians to decide which events to study and why they should be studied (Vivancos & Ferre, 2018). This suggests that, through employing historical significance, historians select particular first-order concepts that they believe are important. Such includes first-order concepts such as nationalism,

democracy, and revolution that have been included in the South African History curriculum. According to Peck (2009, p. 42) “historical significance is the cornerstone of all historical inquiry; without it, stories from the past become jumbled assortments of facts and are rendered meaningless”. Lomas (1990) concurs that it is almost impossible to understand the past without the concept of significance. This is because one cannot study, teach, or write about everything that has happened in the past; therefore, one needs to consider the past based on the significance of historical events (Lomas, 1990; Seixas & Peck, 2004). Furthermore, since historical significance is a second-order concept that is employed within the history discipline, Lee and Ashby (as cited in Seixas, 2010) argue that it can help shape people’s historical understanding, which in this case is in relation to the phenomenon of food.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is impossible to study everything about the past (Seixas, 1994). Therefore, historical significance means that, when inquiring into the past, historians separate what they find deserving of study from what they feel does not deserve to be studied (Seixas, 1994). Of course, historians have different views, their beliefs on what is historically significant differing (Lomas, 1990 & Seixas, 2006). The concept of historical significance will help us understand why 4th year students may have varying views on the significance of food as a topic in the history curriculum. Lomas (1990), Seixas and Hunt (as cited in Harcourt, Fountain & Sheehan, 2011) and Seixas (2006) highlight that the importance of events may change over time; an event could be deemed significant due to its connections to other events. This suggests that the level of historical significance according to each student in relation to the history of food may not be fixed, but be determined by various aspects.

Furthermore, scholars have offered various criteria to determine the significance of a historical phenomenon (Partington, 1980; Philips, 2002; Counsell, 2004 & Levesque, 2005). Thus, the conceptual framework this study will be grounded on its historical significance as explained by these scholars. There are five categories that can be used to determine historical significance, which will be discussed below.

The first criterion is importance. Partington (1980) highlights that it is important to peruse the significance of the phenomenon and the influence this has had on the people who experienced it. This is regardless of whether their judgment on what is important can be justified. According to Partington (1980), it is almost impossible to

understand the people of the past unless we understand what mattered to them and why this was so. At this stage, Levesque (2005) encourages researchers to ask questions such as who was affected by the event; reasons that they perceived it important; and how it affected people's lives. For example, to determine the significance of the theme on the 'road to democracy', in South Africa, one would need to consider the importance of the events that took place around the people who lived there during the time.

Secondly, the criterion of profundity examines the level at which the phenomenon has affected people's lives (Partington, 1980). Here the focus is directed towards the events that changed people's lives rather than those that did not affect lives in any way. For example, a person trying to determine the profundity of the establishment of a refreshment station at the Cape may need to decide how this affected and changed the lives of the indigenous people of South Africa. Here researchers try to understand whether the event was superficial, or whether it changed the lives of people who lived there during the time (Levesque, 2005). In doing so, researchers need to bear in mind that profound change did not occur evenly in human life in different places and times (Partington, 1980).

The third criterion is quantity, which views the number of people that were affected by the event. Here the researcher should inquire whether the event has affected everyone, many people, or whether it affected only a few people (Levesque, 2005). Again, studying at the colonisation of South Africa, one should analyse whether this affected everyone or just a few indigenous people. However, Partington (1980) also notes that the emphasis on effects such as the number of deaths resulting from an event can create difficulties when determining historical significance; some events may result in fewer deaths, but still cause profound effects. For example, the death of Chris Hani, who was the leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of uMkhonto weSizwe in 1993 (just one person) had such a profound effect that it shook the whole country, just as the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 in which 69 people were killed.

On the criterion of durability, Partington explains that the researcher should look at the period or duration of time which the event has affected people's lives. In the same light, Seixas (2006, p. 3) states that "significant events include those that resulted in

great change over long periods of time for large numbers of people". However, Partington (1980) also argues that one needs to note that sometimes short-lasting events can produce long-lasting effects. When trying to determine the durability of a historical phenomenon, we should consider questions such as "How durable was the event in time? Was the event lasting or only temporary?" (Lévesque, 2005,p. 1).

On the final criterion of relevance, Partington notes that one needs to assess the extent of the contribution made by the event to our historical understanding, using evidence. Here historical evidence and events are compared to identify similarities, thus leading to a sophisticated knowledge and appreciation of the past. For this criterion, the researchers identify the relevance of the event to our understanding of the past or present, and whether it is significant for us. For example, to determine the relevance of studying the establishment of the refreshment station at the Cape in 1652, one would need to consider how studying about this theme helps with a better understanding of present-day South African society.

Some of these criteria are interrelated and overlap each other. For example, profundity is interrelated to quantity in that the level at which a phenomena affect people can also be verified through knowing the number of those people. If it affected a large number of people, it means it had profound effects. This framework helps in answering the research questions and elaborate the participants' views on the significance of food as a topic in the curriculum based on what they have learnt, observed, and believe as history students. In addition, significance is a history education concept, which makes it relevant to this study. By employing this concept, the study does not only contribute to the discourses of food, but also to the conceptualisation of historical significance.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, literature based on the various aspects relating to the phenomenon of food have been discussed. Understandings on the concept of food have been explained in detail. This has been followed by an exploration of literature on the many meanings attached to food. Thereafter, the role played by food in history was discussed. Food as a topic in school history was then probed. As part of this chapter, the conceptual framework focusing on historical significance has also been explained. The following chapter presents the methodology on how the study was conducted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, research literature on the phenomenon of food was explored, focusing on the meanings attached to food, food in history, as well as in school history. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research tools that were employed when the study was conducted. The study was guided by a methodology specific to the work, thus meeting the desired requirements for conducting an academic research. The paradigm, approach, research style, sampling, data generation, data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness is elaborated in detail. The research on which this thesis is based was conducted between February 2020 and February 2021. The study focused on one institution of higher education in KZN. This was a small-scale qualitative study perusing the numerous perspectives held by 4th year History Education students on food as a topic in the South African history curriculum.

3.2. Paradigm

A paradigm can be understood as the lens through which the researcher views the world and engages in research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The paradigm determines the kind of questions that should be asked in the process of the study – what can be investigated, the methods of data collection to be employed, and how the findings should be interpreted (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). A paradigm is a worldview or ideology shared by scholars, on how issues should be understood (Kuhn, as cited in Perera, 2018).

In this study, the interpretive paradigm was employed. Interpretivism, which was arrived at as a response to positivism, rejects the idea that there is one truth that exists independently from human senses (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Researchers working within this paradigm believe in “socially constructed multiple realities” (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p 55). They reason that it is not possible to know reality is that reality is not discovered; instead, it is created through socialisation (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). According to Cohen et al., (2007), working within the interpretive paradigm enables the researcher to understand the world through the lenses of the individuals

concerned. Similarly, Deetz (1996) affirms that the phenomenon is understood based on the meaning that has been assigned to it by the participants. Thanh and Thanh (2015) further explain that, in the interpretive paradigm, the researcher responds to the research question by interpreting the participants' views. As posited by Rehman and Alharthi (2016), the aim of interpretivism is not to prioritise or accept one interpretation as correct, but to understand the multiple perspectives and interpretations of one phenomenon.

By adopting the interpretive paradigm, I was able to develop an understanding of the various interpretations by participants on the history of food in the school history curriculum as proposed by Alharthi (2016). Thus, the interpretive paradigm was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to explore and interpret the views expressed by the participants, eliciting desired in-depth data. In doing so, I was able to generate data that responds to the research questions on food history in relation to the South African history curriculum as per the research title. In addition, the paradigm provided me with a guideline on the appropriate methodology for my study.

3.3. Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study are linked to the interpretive paradigm and qualitative research approach that have been adopted. Ontological assumptions are focused on the nature of reality or what constitutes reality (Scotland, 2012; Goertz, & Mahoney, 2012). Ontology assumes that reality is individually constructed, thus there are many different interpretations of reality (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, in line with the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach, the ontological assumption of this study is that reality differs from one person to another, as suggested by Scotland (2012). Based on this ontology, the study assumes that there are multiple realities, reality being subjectively constructed by those concerned (Al-Saadi, 2014). In this regard, the study acknowledges that participants' views on the inclusion of food history in the South African curriculum might vary.

Epistemology can be understood as an inquiry on what makes knowledge, how it is produced, and how it can be accessed (Moon & Blackman, 2017). In the same light, Scotland (2012, p. 9) infers that "epistemological assumptions are concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge...they are concerned with how knowledge can be

created, acquired and communicated". Similarly, Crotty (2003, p. 3) defines epistemology as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know". According to Roots (2007), epistemology assumes that, much as reality can be shared amongst people, it is still independent for each person. Therefore, the epistemological assumption of this study is that knowledge can be personally founded, and it can be shared through similar experiences which in turn allows for the creation of more knowledge.

3.4. Approach

A research approach refers to an investigative tool that a researcher employs based on their philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2014). In this research, these philosophical assumptions are ontology which assumes that reality is individually created; and the epistemological assumption that reality needs to be interpreted in order to discover knowledge (Pretorius, 2018). The research approach is essential for every study because it provides the researcher with guidance for the methodology necessary to employ for the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

This study employed a qualitative approach to research. A qualitative approach to research involves a social inquiry that is based on nonnumeric data presented in the form of words derived from conversations with participants (Jackson, Ronald, Darlene, Drummond & Camara, 2007). The research conducted employing this approach produces findings "not arrived at by statistical procedures" (Rahman, 2016, p. 103). Draper (2004, p. 642) notes that a qualitative approach "is concerned with the nature of human experiences and what these phenomena mean to these individuals". Jackson et al. (2007) add that working within the qualitative approach enables the researcher to generate more information on the studied phenomenon.

Thus, employing this approach to this study was appropriate; the study aimed at understanding the phenomenon of food history as expressed by 4th year History Education students. In addition, employing this approach helped to generate data that is rich and descriptive in nature. The study therefore represented the views of participants regarding the inclusion of food history in the South African History curriculum.

3.5. Research Style

A research style, sometimes referred to as a research design, can be understood as a way of tackling research (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). The research design justifies the selection of the research methods that have been adopted by the researcher for collecting data. According to Dlamini (2019, p. 124), “it is a strategy for gaining knowledge that provides an understanding of the various steps adopted by the researcher and the rationale for his/her adoption in conducting the study”. For this reason, the research style is significant in the research, as it helps to understand how the research has been conducted (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

The research style that was employed in this study is phenomenology. “Phenomenology is a multifaceted philosophy that defies simple characterisation” (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 23). Phenomenology prioritises subjective descriptive knowledge given by participants based on their perspectives (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 23). According to Aspers (2009), when working within the phenomenological approach, the participants’ perspectives are treated as central to the research. Researchers working within this style “reject the idea that the only legitimate knowledge is that which social scientists discover by ignoring the perceived world of everyday human experience” (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 23). Also, when working within this approach, researchers direct their attention to what the participants have in common concerning the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). “The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (Creswell, 2013, p 76).

Through employing phenomenology, I was able to develop an understanding of the several meanings that 4th year history students have assigned to the importance of food history and its inclusion in the South African history curriculum. Employing phenomenology as my research style enabled me to put aside doctrines on food history, and view the matter from the participants’ point of view as suggested by (Gallagher, 2012). In addition, phenomenology assisted me to adjust to new issues and ideas on food history as they emerged (Dudovskiy, 2018).

3.6. Research Methods

3.6.1. Sampling

Sampling refers to a technique used for selecting people to take part in the study as participants (Taherdoost, 2016). Much needs to be considered when deciding which people to include in a study. This comprises aspects such as the setting, knowledge of the people selected as your sample, and the population they represent. However, representativeness is not always a primary concern for researchers working within the interpretive paradigm because they seek rich, in-depth data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

The population this study represented was all 4th year History Education students estimated to 190 students. However, because it is almost impossible to study the whole population (Taherdoost, 2016), in line with the qualitative approach, participants in this study were selected using snowball sampling. According to Pandey and Pandey (2015), snowball sampling refers to participants for the study selected by other participants due to the scarcity of the desired population. (Taherdoost, 2016, p 22) defines snowball sampling as “a non-random method that uses a few cases to help encourage other cases to take part in the study, thereby increasing sample size”.

During the time in which this study was conducted, South Africa was undergoing a nationwide lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it difficult for me to locate the desired participants for my study. Therefore, employing snowball sampling was a suitable style. I managed to acquire the number of desired participants for this study without jeopardising or breaking the rules given during the crisis. Participants were recruited by communicating with a few of my contacts on social media, WhatsApp, who are registered for History Education. These students eventually led me to other History Education students until I had gained an adequate number of participants for my study. A total of eight participants was recruited for this study on the basis that they were 4th year students taking History Education as their major module in the Bachelor of Education degree course during the period of the research. According to Creswell (2013), a range of 5 to 25 participants is required when working within phenomenology. This not far from Alase (2017) who puts that the sample of a phenomenological study can consist of 2 to 25 participants. The understanding offered by both Creswell (2013) and Alase (2017) justify the size of this study as it consisted of eight participants. Factors such as race, gender and economic

class were not considered in the selection of the sample for the study. Working with a sample of eight participants allowed me to generate manageable, yet sufficient data, as I managed to reach data saturation. The choice of selecting 4th year History Education students was motivated by that they had undergone 3 years of acquiring knowledge on school history, therefore, they are representative those with sufficient university history education.

3.6.2. Data generation

In line with the qualitative approach, in this research, data was generated using semi-structured interviews. "A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few predetermined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance" (Pollock, 2019, p. 1). An additional set of questions was asked during the course of the interview to allow for the delivery of matters mentioned by participants (Cachia & Millward, 2011). Thus, conducting semi-structured interviews enabled me to generate in-depth data based on the participants' perceptions.

The interview questions were open-ended (as shown in Appendix D). Open-ended questions are broad questions that are discursive and answered by giving details (Dossetto, 2020). Having open-ended questions allowed the participants to speak openly, giving me the opportunity to probe for further information (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cachia & Millward, 2011). The qualitative questionnaires (Appendix D) for the interviews were emailed to participants, and where clarity was needed on their response, an additional interview was held telephonically with each participant on different days and times, based on availability. What motivated the use of questionnaires instead of face-to-face interviews was the Covid-19 national lockdown which prohibited people from leaving their homes. Each interview lasted from 5 to 20 minutes. These interviews were in the form of a conversation, hence allowing the participants to speak openly, and enabling me to probe for further information (Statistic Solutions, 2017). The language that was used for all the interviews was English, because this is the language that all participants understand.

3.6.3. Data analysis

Data analysis can be understood as the process of “establishing patterns in the collected data” (Dlamini, 2019, p. 144). Thematic data analysis was used as a method of analysing data inductively in this research. Inductive data analysis was used to analyse data because of its open-ended and exploratory nature (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Using inductive data analysis allowed me to start analysing data from the raw data that had been collected during interviews, moving to broader generalisations (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Using thematic data analysis, raw data that had been generated was organised into themes (Labaree, 2009).

The first step of analysing data involved transcribing from an audiotape remarks expressed by participants. In this step, all the information released by participants was noted without any interpretation by the researcher. The information was then organised into computer files as suggested by Creswell (2013). Each interview had its own transcription. After transcribing, all the transcriptions were saved in separate folders each with a different name to avoid mixing the participants' views. Thereafter, I read through all the transcriptions to make sense of the perspectives delivered by participants, as echoed by Creswell (2013).

Having read and made sense of all the data, I was able to select ideas that emerged from the raw data (Hall, 2021). This was then followed by the process of coding in which I coded the information into different categories (Creswell, 2013). Here I sought patterns that existed between the ideas. All the ideas similar to one another were combined into a single category (Hall, 2021). Each category was then labelled as suggested by Creswell (2013). These categories formed themes from which the findings of this study have been drawn (Hall, 2021). Themes can be understood as “broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Thus, in the final report, data have been organised based on the thematic method of data analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical issues were considered before the research was conducted, during the research, and after the research (Creswell, 2013). To ensure these ethical considerations before the study was conducted, I first requested permission from the

gatekeeper (Creswell, 2013). This was done by submitting the proposal for the study to the registrar of the university. The gatekeeper's permission (Appendix A) to conduct the study was then granted (Appendix A). Thereafter, I drafted the informed consent forms (Appendix C) guaranteeing the primary ethical considerations. I then applied for the ethical clearance (Appendix B) with protocol number HHREC/00001874/202 which I obtained from the institution's ethical office, as suggested by Creswell (2013). Thereafter, participants were contacted and the purpose of the research and its procedures explained to them. Given that all the participants clearly understood what the research was about, its procedures, and what was expected of them, they gave their consent before the data was generated (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007; Jelsma & Clow, 2005).

During the research, ethical issues were still taken into consideration. To avoid creating disruption as Creswell (2013) provides, or causing inconvenience in the lives of the participants, interviews were scheduled based on participant availability. Further, to minimise the power imbalances that existed between me and the participants, during the interviews participants were constantly reminded to express themselves freely. During the process of analysing data, ethical issues were considered by noting all the perspectives given by participants in relation to food history (Creswell, 2013).

After the study had been conducted, ethical consideration issues indicated the manner in which the findings were presented in the final report. Thus, the study was non-maleficent, as the identities and personal information of participants were treated with confidentiality (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This was ensured by using pseudonyms in place of the participants' names, as suggested by Jelsma and Clow (2005). In addition, after completion of the study, the progress of the study was communicated to the participants in comprehensible form (Creswell, 2013). Finally, to ensure beneficence, a few pointers pertaining to the inclusion of food history in the curriculum have been suggested in this report (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

3.8. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was strengthened by detailed descriptions of the data collected. It was further reassured by the establishment of four aspects, namely; credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Shenton, 2004).

Firstly, credibility was established in this study. According to Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Shenton, 2004), credibility is a highly significant factor for strengthening trustworthiness of a study. Credibility involves examining “how congruent are the findings with reality” (Shenton, 2004, p 65). To ensure that participants are honest in the information they give, participants were given an opportunity to refuse to participate in the study (Shenton, 2004). This was done so that only those who sincerely wanted to participate would take part. All the participants were encouraged to state their views by my emphasising that there is no wrong or right answer (Shenton, 2004). In addition to this, continuous debriefing sessions were held with my supervisor on the study; and this helped me to broaden my ideas and notice the flaws that existed. Nonetheless, the transcripts were checked and rechecked to ensure that they coincided with the audio recordings of the participants. Through the establishment of credibility, the research findings were linked to the views on the inclusion of food history as expressed by 4th year History Education students in reality.

The second criterion that was established to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study is dependability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability results from the establishment of credibility. Shenton (2004) provides that to improve the dependability of the study, details on how it was conducted should be clearly explained for future purposes of research and readers’ understanding. In this study, this has been clearly shown in the methodology sections above. In addition, dependability was strengthened by an inquiry audit that was conducted by my supervisor on the study to ensure that the findings are accurate and based on the data collected.

The third criterion that was addressed in this study with the aim of strengthening its trustworthiness is confirmability. Under this criterion, Shenton (2004) stipulates that the researcher must ensure that the findings of the study represent the participants’ views rather than any personal preferences. In this study, confirmability has been achieved through detailed, in-depth data based on the participants’ narratives rather than on researchers’ biases (Statistics Solutions, 2017).

The final criterion that was established is transferability. Transferability examines the degree to which the findings of the research can be transferred to a different case or context (Merriam, 1998). The reason for this is that qualitative studies only involve a small number of participants; therefore, the findings cannot be applied to different

situations as they are (Shenton, 2004). However, Stake (1994) and Denscombe (as cited in Shenton, 2004) posit that, because the studied group is an example of a broader population, transferability should be considered. Thus, although the findings of the study cannot be generalised, they can be transferred to a different context that has characteristics similar to the one studied (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Firestone (as cited in Shenton, 2004) add that, to enable the readers to transfer the findings, contextual information on the study should be provided. In this study, such information has been provided in the introduction. Nevertheless, to allow the readers to compare the findings of this study with other situations, rich information on food history has been provided in Chapter 2 which scrutinises the literature on the phenomenon (Shenton, 2004).

3.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology for this qualitative research has been discussed. This has been achieved by outlining the research tools that were employed to conduct this research. Each tool has been clearly elaborated on, considering it appropriate for the research. The aspects of interest on how ethical considerations were observed have been provided. Finally, the four aspects that were used to strengthen trustworthiness have been clearly outlined.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the methodology of the study was explained. The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study. These findings are presented in line with the three research objectives outlined in Chapter One. The first objective of the research was to conceptualise 4th year History Education students' understandings of the historical significance of food. The second objective was to understand their views on food history in the South African History curriculum. The third objective was to understand the explanations of their views on food as a topic in the South African History curriculum. Participants stated their views on the space for food history in the curriculum and each gave explanations in support of the views, hence fulfilling the second and third objectives. Because they are closely related, the findings for Objectives two and three have been presented under one section, outlining participants' views on the space for food history in the South African curriculum, giving reasons for their views.

4.2. Participants' Understandings of the Historical Significance of Food

Although different, the views presented by the participants showed that they are all convinced that food has played a significant role both in past and present society. The understandings expressed by participants on the significance of food varied: some did not only focus on the significance of food in the past but also looked at its significance in current society. On one hand, some participants clearly narrowed their views to the '*historical significance*' of food as per interview questions. These participants pointed out the various roles that have been played by food in the past in numerous societies. They did this so as to give reasons for them perceiving food to be historically significant and worth featuring in the South African History curriculum. On the other hand, some focused their attention on the current society; hence their views were not fully historically informed. These participants did not only direct their attention to the '*historical significance*' of food, rather, they presented its significance in our current society. However, given that this is a qualitative study in which the subjective views

expressed by all participants are crucial, even those whose responses were not historically informed will be presented.

Altogether, the following themes emerged from the findings: ¹Food as influential to economies, ²food as influential to politics, ³food as influential on migration, ⁴food as a unifying commodity, ⁵food as identity, and ⁶food as nutrient. These six themes will be discussed in detail in this section.

4.2.1. Food as influential to economies

The data revealed that participants considered food to be historically significant because of the influence it had on economies of ancient societies. This view was clearly put by Participant C who stated, *“food tells us a lot about a society in the past...including how people... managed to create a food supply, often under difficult circumstances”*. Hence, food has been found to be the bridge through which people are able to understand how people in the past lived and managed life over the years.

One economic aspect which the participants identified as having been influenced by food is food production. On this aspect, Participant H referred to the Khoisan, pointing out that, during precolonial Africa, food was produced through hunting and gathering. What can be understood from this is that participants are aware of how, before the Iron Age, the Khoisan relied solely on nature for food production, from eating wild edible plants to game meat. A similar view was held by Participant F who concurred that *“precolonial African people relied on hunting and gathering”*. Participant F further explained that this reliance on hunting and gathering, however, changed following the *“inventions of iron smelting by the Bantu people”* in southern Africa. This explains how the introduction of iron smelting changed the process of food production, as food was no longer attained through the process of hunting and gathering alone. Participants argued that new inventions were established with the intention of increasing food production. This view was echoed by Participant H who, when contending for the significance of food in shaping the past, asserted that *“the industrial revolution is evidence of that fact. The introduction of new technologies for agriculture and farming...all due to food production and demand”*. According to Participant H, food production can be counted amongst the key aspects of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century during which machinery was invented with the aim of maintaining food production and keeping up with its demand. In the same light, the participant adds that

“during colonisation of South Africa in the 1960s agricultural tools were developed to make farming much easier... instead of ploughing using cows, which made the work much easier” (Participant H). A similar view was held by Participant B who, without being specific about a particular period, concurred that, *“there have also been a demand for technologies which will accelerate production whilst matching the food demand”*. According to Participant B, the increased demand for food resulting from the increased population has had an impact on the establishment of new technologies aimed at the improving of food production.

According to the findings, food is also historically significant because of its economic contribution in strengthening businesses interactions between and within nations. For instance, Participant F stated that:

...food brought together people of different countries, for instance if we can look back to precolonial African history we can discover that South African people traded with the middle east in items like barley, sorghum and grapes. Societies exchanged with neighbouring communities on items one community needed from the other (Barter trade system).

This is evident in the impact food has had on bringing people together for business reasons aimed at extending their access to the commodity through trade. In the same light, Participant H elaborated that in some societies the food supply was maintained through the system of trade. The participant argued that the domestication of animals and cultivation of plants is what has led to the introduction of the existing systems of production and consumption of food. Participant F further made an example of Mapungubwe, a precolonial kingdom which was located in present-day Limpopo province, South Africa. The participant explained that Mapungubwe's ownership of large harvest goods in the area gave her an advantage in trading with other societies (Participant F). According to Participant F:

...if we look at Mapungubwe's trade route...the people of Mapungubwe were wealthy and farmers with cattle...They produced large harvest that allowed them to trade with other countries [sic]. From about 1220 to 1300 Mapungubwe became a trading centre, people of Mapungubwe traded with Arabia, China and India through the East Africa harbours.

From this, the participants explain that relations were established between the Kingdom of Mapungubwe and other societies. It is from such a perspective that Participant F views food as historically significant in establishing new relations between societies. This was also supported by Participant H who, without being specific about a certain space and period, outlined that *“through trade, food builds stronger relationships with abroad countries”*. These perspectives help highlight the input made by food in strengthening relations between nations. This view was further echoed by Participant H who affirmed that *“it is through food trade that South Africa has a good relationship with countries like the United Kingdom”*. In the same light, Participant F conferred that *“food introduced African people to other people from other places or countries. African people traded food with each other and people from other countries”*. According to Participant F, locally, *“this strengthened the relationship between different tribes in Africa”*.

Some participants emphasise the contribution of food in shaping the current society economically, as its production helps to create more job opportunities for those in need. Participant F asserted in agreement:

...food production requires farmers to hire workers who will work in farms, in this case food production create employment opportunities in many societies, especially in developing countries since agriculture is the backbone of this country's economy

(Participant F)

Through the lens of Participant F, in the current society food influences the economy because its production requires that people are hired for labour. This results in having a decrease in unemployment which in turn has laudable effects on the economic sector. As affirmed by Participant F, agriculture is a pillar of the economy in a country, South Africa. A similar view was held by Participant G who states:

...The production of food requires manpower, in this case, food has contributed to shaping the economy in this manner by providing employment and income for those in need in the society. Food supply has increased over the years which means that the suppliers have accumulated more profit thus contributing towards the country's GDP and other economic sectors. Consumption has also been growing thus

increasing the demand for food production and supply which means more jobs are being created in the society and the country's economy is growing rapidly.

(Participant G)

To Participant G, because the consumption and demand for food keeps increasing there is also a continuing need for manpower to produce it. This then becomes a positive aspect for the economy as more people gain employment. In turn, this has made a significant contribution to the growth of the country's economy; and more profit is made by suppliers from selling food, due to its unending demand. This view was further supported by Participant B who argued that *"the farming sectors of the food industry have also been one of the most significant sources of employment which will lead to a healthier overall local economy and allows more businesses to thrive"*. In addition, Participant D states that, through food production, people in the society are united to form agricultural groups, creating job opportunities and stimulating the economy. Due to this contribution made by food in the economic sphere, participants were convinced that food is indeed significant in the society.

Still on the impact of food on the economies, the findings have revealed that participants acknowledged that some countries have established ideas on how food should be consumed with the aim of increasing and maintaining their economic stability. This idea was highlighted by Participant H who pointed out that some countries have introduced other countries to various food commodities simply so as to become the suppliers. According to Participant H:

... when tea was produced in China, it was consumed without sugar but because the Europeans wanted to introduce and populate sugar to the world, they added it to tea. It is because of this act that today almost everyone worldwide consumes tea with sugar... To increase the global supply of sugar, there was the establishment of plantations, particularly in the Caribbean and Brazil.

Here the participant was explaining a strategy of stabilising the economy whereby one country introduces a food commodity to another with selfish intentions. The

introduction of sugar to the world by Europeans is seen as a ploy to increase the demand for the commodity in other countries. Having a huge demand for the commodity meant that European empires had more countries buying sugar from them, in turn boosting their economies. In addition to this, Participant H asserts that *“the way we consume some of the food today is because of the historical influences|”*. The participant argues that some of the ways we serve our food today are the result of such influence of some countries over others with the aim of increasing their domination and economy (Participant H).

The findings also revealed food to be historically significant because of its impact on the economies through slavery and the slave trade. This is said to be for economic reasons as economically powerful countries used slaves from economically inferior countries, for labour. For example, Participants H and D claim that, due to the continued demand for food, African people were enslaved and transported per the Atlantic slave trade. With the introduction of serving tea with sugar by European superpowers (as discussed earlier), African slaves were taken to work in the Caribbean and Brazilian sugar plantations (Participant H). Furthermore, through the lens of Participant G, is southern Africa, specifically, the need to for cheap labour on farms to maintain food production promoted slavery in the region. From this, it can be understood that some people were stripped of their freedom of choice and decisions in life in order to maintain food production at low costs.

The findings presented above explain that the participants were convinced of the impact of food on the economies in both the past and the present.

4.2.2. Food as influential in politics

The findings reveal that participants are of the view that, due to its centrality in society, food has had an impact on world politics, thus making it a significant aspect of society. Given the significance carried by food, domination over fertile land has been a case of contention in societies. Participant H outlined that *“looking at the transformation in the Southern Interior after 1750, many raids and wars were done with the intent of having access to fertile soils to produce food”*. ... Participant H confirms that the ownership of large pieces of land by the White minority in the current South African society all began with the desire for land fertile for farming. As a result of this desire for fertile land, following their arrival in South Africa, the White minority forced Black people out of

their fertile land. According to Participant H, *“the taking away of African natives’ land was basically for agricultural reasons”*. This shows that they did not just desire land to settle on, but land that would prove to be beneficial in maintaining a stable agricultural production so that they would not run out of food. According to the participant, *“food has made the society aware that having a piece of the African soil is as precious as having gold”* (Participant H), and so they fight over its domination realising the amount of income they can generate from cultivating it.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that, according to the participants, food has proven historically significant as it has influenced superpower countries to take over other countries. Participant G states that, because of the demand for food, the Cape was colonised and turned into a settlement. Participant G explains that the purpose of building a refreshment station by the Dutch in 1652 was for food, with the area later converted into the Cape colony. According to Participant G, in the process of the colonisation of southern Africa, Black people were stripped of their rights and enslaved to work for the colonisers. The participant argues that colonisers *“enslaved black people to work in food production with little or no wages”* (Participant G). The participants argued that, because of food, the way of life of indigenous people was permanently changed as they were treated as inferior to the colonisers in their own land. Resulting from the establishment of colonial settlements, they no longer had control of their lives, as they worked for the colonists and were not rightfully compensated.

Moreover, also outlined as the historical significance of food is the role it plays in influencing different groups to form alliances. This view was outlined by Participant H who asserted that, in order to keep their relations in terms of maintaining access to food, some countries resorted to forming alliances with other countries. According to Participant H, through food trade countries were able to *“build an alliance and support one another even politically”*. This suggests that what was meant to be business engagement ended up with political *‘strings attached’* in order to maintain access of food supplies. As examples, the participant stated that:

...In the Early 1970s [sic] during the transformations in Southern Africa, King Moshoeshoe gave King Shaka Cattle for the sake of peace and protection. There were also cases whereby King Moshoeshoe would

slaughter a cow and extended his invitation to his neighbours. Small chiefdoms would offer cows as tribute or peace offering to powerful chiefdoms around them.

(Participant H)

The above serves as evidence that, through employing food as their tool, countries and kingdoms have been able to obtain support from one another. Also, food has also been used to maintain peace in communities. Regardless of misquoting 1970s instead of 1820s, participant H is actually correct about King Moshoeshoe use of food to maintain peace. Therefore, food is said to be historically significant because of its ability to make or break peace in society.

4.2.3. Food as influential in migration

What also emanated from the findings as a reason for viewing food as significant is its ability to influence the migration of people between different places. For instance, Participant D suggested that *“people of the past had to migrate in search for food, thus that led to the change of lifestyles because people had to adopt into somewhere else’s lifestyles”*. Hence, he argues that it was the need for, and supply of, food that determined the peoples’ migration. Similarly, Participant F maintained,

...food made the people of the past to move around. African hunters and crops farmers often moved around due to change of seasons...African people who relied on farming and hunting as a source of food were forced to move to another place which have fertile soil to plant crops.

According to Participant F, food has also had an impact on determining where people reside based on its availability. From this perspective, migration can be understood as having been driven by the need for survival, particularly because accessing food demands them to do so in order to survive, thus making it a significant commodity in society. When looking at permanent migration, Participant F added that Africa’s indigenous people started farming because of the need for a steady food supply, which in turn changed their lifestyle as they established permanent villages. According to the participant, after the introduction of iron smelting, Bantu speakers started growing their own crops which *“then resulted to changing the society way life, people started to learn how to farm, and they were able to produce their own food and settle into permanent villages”* (Participant F). Food then became significant as it determined the shift from

temporary to permanent migration. In the same light, Participant G emphasised that food also drove people to travel all over the world. This view was explained by Participant G in this way:

...food had a huge impact in influencing the lifestyle of people who lived in the past, for example, Europeans would travel to India for spices and along the way stopped in the Cape to build a refreshment station.

Through the lens of Participant G, firstly, the lifestyle of the people who inhabited the Cape was changed permanently when the colonisers (who were in a quest for spices) stopped there and introduced colonialism. This shows how food is historically significant because of the various impacts on the indigenous Africans' initial way of life. Secondly, the participant argues that the quest for spices in India in the 15th century is evidence of the historical significance of food, since the search for spices (amongst other reasons) resulted in Europeans migrating to other countries and changing the lifestyle of the original inhabitants.

Still on the influence of food on migration, Participant H had a similar view to that of Participant G. The participant stated that in the Middle Ages, it was the quest for spices that drove the voyages of Vasco da Gama and Columbus to find India. The participants concurred that the historical significance of food is based on the continuous need for its supply, which has led to the establishment of new communities. Here Participants E and F concurred that the need for the supply of fresh food by ships travelling past the west of southern Africa led to the establishment of the refreshment station at the Cape in 1652. This resulted in permanent migration of Europeans into the Cape. The need for food supply was one of the driving forces for the establishment of the station.

Findings suggest that food is deemed historically significant because following colonisation; it has led to the migration of people from their home countries. For instance, after southern Africa was colonised from 1652, many people for various reasons migrated from their homelands to the colony. This view was clearly elaborated by Participants D and G who point out that, during the colonisation of southern Africa, Europeans migrated to 'settle' in the colony. Further, Participant D affirms that, resulting from the Atlantic slave trade, a number of "*African descendants [sic]*" were displaced throughout the world all for agricultural purposes. Participant D adds that Indians were brought into South Africa as migrant indentured labourers on the sugar

cane plantations. According to Participant D, “[The] *British went to India and brought Indians to SA to grow crops*”. As a result of migration, Indians were also introduced into South Africa, thus furthering the process of establishing a multiracial country.

These findings serve as evidence of participants’ views on food having influenced migration in the past, thus making food historically significant.

4.2.4. Food as a unifying commodity

The data also revealed that food can be seen as significant because of the role it has played in uniting people and communities both in the past and in the present society. According to Participant D, *“the importance of food in the current society; is that it unifies the society. The elderly women or anybody within the society can form a team and practice agricultural farming”*. The point raised by Participant D here is that food influences people to work together towards a common goal. Similarly, Participant H expressed that, during ceremonies, guests did not only feast, but they also provided services that would help to make the ceremony a success. This included the men participating in slaughtering the cow (Participant H). During the ceremony, the participant stated that *“men and women knew their role as they were taught what should be done and how it should be done. Knowing the way things are done became a way of defining or providing your manhood or womanhood”* (Participant, H). As a result of working together, whether in preparing food or feasting at ceremonies, people were united; and lessons on manhood and womanhood were passed on, thus making food significant in unifying people. According to the participant, such traditions are still being practised in rural communities such as Estcourt and Bergville, which are located in present-day KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In addition to this, from ancient times to the present day *“community members also did not come empty handed but rather brought food that will assist the event to be a success which was a sign of good gesture. It was bad to come empty handed and you were viewed as someone who has no morals nor respect”* (Participant H). Food was used to socialise people into the norms of the society, thus making it historically significant.

Without being specific on the period they were referring to, some participants affirmed that food had an impact on uniting families. Here the participants echoed that, through family gatherings and ceremonies, family members are brought together over feasts. This view was highlighted by Participants F and H who emphasised that food brings

family and friends together. According to Participant F, *“food can also play a big part in bringing together friends and families during special events”*. Similarly, Participant H affirms that *“food allows society to unite and bond over a pleasurable event. It can unite...families as it provides a cool atmosphere and a sense of belonging”*. The participants assert that it is from these gatherings that families are able to pass down generational values and teachings to the younger generation.

Furthermore, the participants perceived food to be significant in that it was used to establish peace where people had been divided. For example, according to Participant H, in the past,

...food was used as a peace offering to enemies...if a son had sinned against his father and wants to be forgiven, they would slaughter a goat or a cow and prepared various delicious meals to be consumed by the family and community members were also invited to feast...the consumption of the meal created bond...certain kingdoms made peace and ended the war through the exchanging of food and feasts.

Participant H commends food on having the power to draw people together regardless of their differences. Food can be viewed as a commodity that can establish new beginnings when family members have not seen eye to eye (Participant H). This is not only the case in blood relations but continues to be the case even with community members as it has the ability to unite them, ending strife (Participant H). According to Participant H, sharing food and eating together creates bonds between family members or people of different perspectives. Therefore, Participant H highlights food as historically significant in promoting unity.

4.2.5. Food as social identity

With much attention directed towards the present society, the findings in this theme revealed that participants also consider food to be significant in identifying the societal group to which one belongs (Participants H, E, and D & C). Participants contend that, what people choose to eat is usually influenced by their class. Therefore, the type of food people eat shows the socio-economic group to which they belong. Participants showed a relationship between food and affordability, meaning that people eat what they can afford to purchase. For instance, according to Participant H, *“in the 21st century food defines our class and identity especially now that the food prices have*

increased rapidly, people by what they can afford. The choice of food you consume is often defined by your financial strength". The participant elaborated that in present-day South Africa, even the company one keeps can be influenced by the "*type of food, or choice of restaurant one chooses*" (Participant H). This suggests that food has an impact on a persons' social circle in terms of who they choose to be friends with. A similar view was held by Participant E who articulated that "*income do influence people's choice of food because in a society those who are rich will eat food that is more expensive while those who are in need will eat normal food*". Participant H further argued that:

...it is rare to find someone who is a billionaire buying groceries in stores like Boxer but 90% of the people you find there have something in common, they are of the same class in terms of income and have similar backgrounds. This therefore creates division of classes in society, one associates with the one who meet their standard.

The participant is convinced that different stores cater for different classes in society (Participant H). The participant argues that food affordability differs for people belonging to different classes of society (Participant H). According to the participant, people who belong to the working or middle class eat differently or rather eat different foods from those in the upper classes (Participant H). It is for such reasons, that food is perceived as assisting in identifying the financial divisions that exist in society.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that food also can be linked to several ideas that surround gender and age in the society. This view was posited by Participant H who stipulated:

...In rural places like Estcourt the position you are in or rather the role you are playing goes hand in hand with the type of meat you get. For example, men eat the cows head, intestines and soup, women eat the spine and backside of the cow and children get whatever is left. Whenever there is a ceremony, one knows where to sit by just looking at the type of meat placed. One therefore develops a relationship with the person next to him and knows his/ her associations.

According to Participant H, food also assists to identify the divisions in the current South African society in terms of gender positions and age. It is evident that based on

their gender and age, people eat different kinds of food (Participant H). The participants assume food to be a substance that assists in identifying the financial divisions that exist in society.

Moreover, participants affirm that food connects people to the nation or country to which they belong. Participants consider food to be the link that connects people with national groups. This was highlighted by Participant C who asserted that *“food can be nostalgic and provide important connections to our family or our nations. Food can be a bridge that helps immigrants find their place in a new society”*. From this it can be deduced that, even when people are far away from their homes, they can still connect with their families or home countries by cooking recipes belonging to them. In doing so they keep the good memories of their home countries despite being far from them. Hence, food always keeps people united with their families or countries.

Participants also asserted that food links people with the culture and religion they belong to. For instance, according to Participant C, *“food is also tied to religion and ritual”*. Participant C elaborated that certain cultures such as Hindus avoid eating beef because cows are sacred to them. Others argued that food *“plays a big role in helping us identify the different cultures and heritages that exist in the modern society”* (Participant G). This view was further supported by Participant F stating that,

...food is an important part in symbolising different culture and national uniqueness. This means in the present society food symbolize different group of people who are coming from different cultures and nations...values and beliefs.

This shows not only how food helps us to identify the different groups that exist in our societies but also to be able to understand those differences. Thus, analysing the manner in which people behave around food one stands to obtain a broader and deeper understanding of those persons' culture or background.

4.2.6. Food as a nutrient

The most general finding that is not limited to history was the significance of food in providing nutrients. This was highlighted by Participant B who affirmed that for generations, food has and still is taken to be important in the society for the role it plays in providing the body with *“health”*. Through the lens of Participant B, food is an important aspect of society because it *“helps us stay alive”*. Therefore, due to the

nutrients it provides, food is a commodity of great significance to society because life would be impossible without it.

In addition to food being a source of life, participants view it as important for providing the body with energy. They argue that food carries nutrients that, when consumed, provide the body with energy to carry out physical activities. This was reported by Participant A, who stated that food is important to every human being “*due to the fact that food is a source of energy, so people are dependent to food for functioning*”. Participant A stressed that in the absence of food humans would not be able to survive. Participant E affirmed:

...in science we have learnt that energy is the ability to do work and in order to have energy then you need food in your system so that you can work...so, food make our society functions as people get energy and are able to go to work and perform all their duties without food our society will be unable to survive.

Participant E offered that it is scientifically proven that the human body requires energy in order to be able to carry out tasks. Thus, Participant E argues that in the absence of food, humans would not be able to perform their expected roles in society and this would result in society’s dysfunctionality. Therefore, the participants considered food an important aspect of the society because it carries nutrients that energise the body.

In addition to providing the body with energy, food was also acknowledged to be beneficial in sustaining people’s mental health. The participants argue that the nutrients provided by food also help the human mind to function properly, thus enabling the performing of day-to-day activities effectively. In other words, a person needs these nutrients to stay focused. This view was echoed by Participant F who argues that:

...food is seen as very important since it plays very vital role in helping us to maintain a proper health and help all our body to function effectively for instance food help to increase mental functioning which help us to focus in everything that we are doing...food is seen as a source of energy since it provides us with energy which assist us to concentrate in everything that we are doing in the daily bases.

Moreover, participants contend that food provides the body with nutrients that help to fight different diseases, thus keeping their bodies healthy. This view was given by Participant A who, when asked about the significance of food said, *“food is important to the community as it helps fight diseases in our bodies”*. This view was further supported by Participant F who concurs that food assists in maintaining body weight and fighting diseases.

Altogether, the findings have shown that fourth year History Education students perceive food to be significant both in the past and present society for various reasons. Participants’ view is that food is significant because of the influence it has on the economies of any given society. The participants argue that food is significant because of the impact it has on politics through encouraging domination. They further state that the commodity is significant because of its contribution towards migration, promoting unity, helping to identify peoples’ social standings, and finally, for its ability to provide humans with nutrients necessary for their survival. It is worth noting that not all aspects that make food significant are positive; some are negative. Details on this are discussed in Chapter 5 of this study. The following section attempts to answer the second and third research questions based on the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum.

4.3. Participants’ Views on the Space for Food as a Topic in the South African Curriculum and Reasons for their Views

As shown in the previous section, participants had largely similar views with regard to the significance of food in the society. It is clear that food has remained an important commodity for centuries because of its undeniable contribution to society. This section presents participants’ views regarding the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum. To allow for clear presentation, this section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection has its focus directed to the question of whether there is space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum. The second subsection aims to understand the suggested nature of the inclusion of food as a topic in the curriculum.

4.3.1. The space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum

When asked about the space for food as a topic in the curriculum all the participants agreed that the topic of food should form part of the South African History curriculum. From the manner in which the participants responded, the data shows that food should not only be presented as a substance consumed by people, but also for the role it plays in the various spheres of society. This view was highlighted by Participant H who outlined that in the past food has not only served as a nutritional benefit; it has led to an occurrence of many events and changes. According to Participant H, *“a lot of Historical events incorporated food as a trigger of occurrence”. The impact food has in history can not be overlooked as even in modern day food is used as an excuse for bloodshed, theft, corruption, and wars*. A similar view was held by Participant F who asserted that incorporation of food as a topic into the curriculum based on its uncontested historical significance will broaden learners’ historical understanding. The participants asserted that the inclusion of the history of food in the South African history curriculum would help learners understand how it has acted as a driving force in historical events and how this has influenced the current society. This view was highlighted by Participant G who believes that if food history were to be included in the curriculum, learners *“would come to understand how and why most past events were initiated by food and have affected and determined their past, present and future”*. Similarly, Participant A noted that food *“is one of the major reasons for some historical events to be a success in the past”* therefore it should be catered for in the curriculum. It is from such understandings that participants were determined about reservations being made for *food in history* in the South African History curriculum.

Other participants further elaborated that, as much as food has influenced historical events and societies, its nutritional benefits cannot be overlooked. This is because its nutritional benefits and it being a need made it a significant factor in such events. Therefore, the participants pointed out that agricultural systems on food production and sustainability should be included if food, as a topic, is to be included in the history curriculum. This view was highlighted by Participant G who states that learners *“should be more informed and involved in the agricultural processes...especially now that our country is facing food insecurities and unemployment”*. According to Participant G, acknowledging food production in the history curriculum would also serve to teach about issues such as food insecurity. Participant G is convinced that equipping

learners with knowledge on farming, including the subsistence farming skills like those of the indigenous people, will enable them to sustain themselves and their families in times of need. The participant emphasised this by stating that learners will “*be able to sustain themselves and their families through subsistence farming and also take part in growing the economy through commercial farming*” (Participant G). The participant further added that doing so might also contribute positively towards the country’s economy and food security (Participant G).

Moreover, participants also expressed varying but intriguing views in relation to the benefits the space for food history in the South African history curriculum would have for learners. Here participants claimed that learners need to be aware of food’s contribution to the past and how those contributions have influenced and shaped the present. For example, according to Participant H, in the past, food was able to restore peace and harmony during times of conflicts. From this, learners will come to understand the various ways of resolving strife (Participant H). Furthermore, having space for food history in the South African history curriculum will enable learners to understand that sometimes culture is not fixed, but changes due to events that have occurred in the past. This view was further elaborated by Participant H who explained how food has led to certain beliefs in the society, which have in turn become a culture. According to Participant H,

...Some of the things that are still done today and are considered as culture are a result of the past events. The way that food is prepared today in Africa/Zulu culture was created by people of the past. There are certain rules that were created and are still used in modern day.

The participant explained that these rules which have turned into culture were established with the aim of promoting unity and initiating young members of the society into adulthood, cultivating the culture (Participant H). As put by Participant H, “*the purpose that this still serves is the unification and initiation of young males into manhood and better understanding of their culture*”. Thus, infusing food history into the curriculum can also help the youth to have an understanding of culture, how it came into being, its effects on society, and its importance, all aimed at building responsible well-informed adults. Also, through the lens of Participant H, having space for food history in the South African History curriculum “*will help learners to better*

understand or rather have in-depth knowledge about the past, making it easy to link it with the presence and analyse its contribution to the future". Similarly, according to Participant D, learning about food in history has the ability to "ensure that the future generation doesn't suffer the consequences of this current generation since the purpose of learning is not just to know only but it is to know and link what we know with our daily lives". These findings further signify why the space for food in history in the South African History curriculum should be given much deep thought.

Altogether, the participants agree that there is space for food history in the South African History curriculum. The various views given above show the significance of food to both the past and present society. The views show that food has influenced various phenomena that have occurred in the past. In Chapter 1 of this study, it was explained that the current South African curriculum aims to develop learners' skills, knowledge and values. These findings suggest that there is space for food history in the curriculum in terms of knowledge as this would provide content on the impact of food in shaping history. There is also space for food history in terms of values and of how societies value food beyond mere consumption.

4.3.2. The nature of inclusion of food as a topic in the South African History curriculum

In terms of 'how' food in history should be incorporated into the curriculum, participants had varying views. To begin with, some argued that since food has influenced various aspects in the society, as shown above, it should be infused with other themes in the curriculum. Food, as such, has had an impact on various topics covered in the history curriculum, as stated by Participant H, who argues:

...food played a role towards the eruption of World War one as there was production competition, countries were competing to be at the top of the industrial economies of the world. Food also played a huge role towards maintaining peace during the southern kingdom wars during the 1820s. Many Historical raids that were done, was because people were hungry and needed food hence the bloodshed that to place. In almost the entire History content food has a role to play as it also created relationships were formed by food whenever a country was suffering of poverty due to world war another countries intervention through the supply created bonds that are identifiable even in modern day.

Based on this view, it is possible that food in history does indeed touch various phenomena covered in the curriculum, which explains why participants argue that, instead of it covered as a separate theme, it would make much more sense to cover it as part of those themes. This suggests that the space for food history exists in themes that already form part of the curriculum.

On the contrary, to other participants, it makes more sense that a separate theme be made for food history in the history curriculum. These participants outlined that studying food as a separate theme will help emphasise its significance in history. This view was highlighted by Participants F and G. Participant F asserts that “*Food should have its own section...having its own will assist learners to understand the role played by food in shaping the history*”. Participant G concurs, “*I believe it should have its own chapters [sic], so it is emphasised, and learners realise its importance*”. This suggests that, in order to cater for the space for food in history there should be a separate theme that focuses on ‘*food in history*’ to emphasise its historical significance. However, it is also notable that the proposed theme will surely touch on topics covered in other themes, as posed by Participant D. According to Participant D, as much as it is acceptable to have a separate section for food in history in the South African History curriculum, doing this will “*automatically... attract some other sections to be infused into it like any other historical section. It will attract sections such as slave trade, migration of the Bantu people, the arrival of the white at the Cape, etc*”. This agrees with the views of Participant H who argued that it is impossible to discuss food in history without referring to other themes.

In terms of contextualising knowledge on food in history in the South African History curriculum, the study revealed varying but intriguing findings. The findings relate to whether the curriculum should cater for knowledge on food in history from all over the world or just in specific countries, such as South Africa. The majority of participants believed that the concept of food should be presented in the history curriculum from an international perspective. The participants justified this by stating that “*food has built relationships with other countries and has rotated for years from country to country therefore focusing on one country would make no sense*” (Participant H). This suggests that the South African History curriculum should cater for food in history of various countries worldwide instead of focusing only on one country. This view was supported by Participant D who believes that food in history should be included as

depicted in the international realm because “*History is not an island*”. In the same light, Participant F added that food history should be included from an international outlook since it has “*played a major role in occurring of many significant historical events globally*”. Participants H, D and F all agreed that presenting food found in the international sphere will equip learners with a broad understanding of its contribution to the past. Thus, because food has played a major role not only in shaping the history of South Africa, but in shaping the history of other countries as well, it should be studied from the perspective of the international sphere so that learners’ knowledge will not be limited. As a result, the participants concluded:

...the department of education must ensure that it includes both international, continental and local contents about food in History in the South African History curriculum, So that learners can have a global understanding of how food played a role in happening of many historical events.

(Participant F)

...there is no series of events that happened on their own without dependent or impacting other countries. It is of great importance that learners know food Histories of the world to be able to interpret and evaluate the success and short comes of some History events. This will not only give an insight on food but will give a broader one as it will cover all aspects that in most written History does not include.

(Participant A)

According to Participant F, it is fitting that when the space for food history is considered in the South African history curriculum, equal attention be directed towards international, continental, and local food in history. The participants emphasise that by doing so, the Department of Basic Education will be allowing learners access to a global understanding of contributions made by food to history. Participant A added that, because occurrences in one country tend to impact other countries one way or another, it would be wise to cater for food in history from an international perspective. The participant explains that doing so would enable learners to understand the effects of historical events globally (Participant A). Participant A further outlines that having space for international food in history will expose learners to content and knowledge of history not covered in history text books at present.

Still engaging in the matter of the context in which food should be included in the South African curriculum, Participant E highlighted that exploring the role played by food in history in the international sphere would be beneficial to them as they travel to other countries. To bring this to the fore, the participants posited:

...I am in support of international because the world today s interconnected knowing something about your country only might be beneficial when you are in your country only but that a disadvantaged when you get chance to travel across the world so it wise to learn and gain more information about other countries.

(Participant E)

Based on the view presented by Participant E, it can be understood that studying the significance of food in history will not only be beneficial to learners academically, but also socially. This is because at some point they (learners) might have to travel to other countries, and it might be good to know the history of those countries. Thus, according to Participant E, infusing international history into the South African history curriculum will assist learners who travel to other countries – they will be historically informed on how those countries have been shaped.

It is for such reasons that the majority of the participants contend that international food in history should be catered for in the South African History curriculum. Since the South African History curriculum consists of history from all over the world which makes up the themes, this suggests that the concept of food should be included in all themes.

On the contrary, one participant contested that only South African food in history should be included in the South African History curriculum. In his response, Participant B stated:

...amongst the food histories, the one that would need to be included in the South African History curriculum is just the South African one. This will help us in having our own account first...learners will also get an opportunity to create and honour our uniqueness through food production techniques...learners will know which food kept our ancestors for a long time and how did the preferences in consumption change over time.

In this case, one may argue that the concept of food may have to be included in themes that focus only on South African history. Nonetheless, another participant added that the manner in which the content on food history is presented in the curriculum should prioritise South African history first before other countries. Here the participants seemed not to be against the idea of including international food in history, however, only if more priority is given to that of South Africa. This view was given by Participant G who outlined that *“S.A food History should be a priority followed by continental and international”*. The participant justified this, stating that *“S.A food History should be a priority because we should learn about us, our history, our identity first before exploring others”* (Participant G).

Altogether, as shown in this section, all the participants agreed that food in history should indeed be included in the South African curriculum. However, participants have expressed differing views on how this should be achieved. While the majority contest for the inclusion of international food in history, the minority argue that much more attention should be directed to South Africa’s food in history.

4.4. Summary of Findings

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the study which was conducted as shown in the previous chapter. From the findings it is apparent that participants have different understandings when it comes to the significance of food in society. All the participants agreed that food in history should be catered for in the South African History curriculum.

In terms of the historical significance of food, the findings firstly indicate that it has had an impact on several aspects of society. The findings show that food has influenced the economies of the past through trade and manipulation at some point. In our current society, the economy has been boosted by agricultural businesses. In addition to this, food has been proven to have a positive impact in decreasing the number of unemployed people in any given society.

The second aspect of food argued to be historically significant is its influence in politics. The findings show that food has been employed in several cases in the occurrence of conflicts. Also, it has been discovered that, not only has food led to the conflicts, but it has also been used as a tool in establishing peace. These findings showed that food has influenced some countries to take over and dominate other countries.

Thirdly, the findings reveal that food is perceived as historically significant because of its influence on migration. According to the findings, food has caused people to move away from their homelands either by choice or by force. It has been shown that prior to colonisation, Africans migrated from one place to another in search of environments that would provide them with sufficient food. Through slavery, Africans were migrated to other countries for labour in agricultural fields. Europeans travelled as far as India for spices, and they permanently migrated to South Africa to colonise it. This was also the case for Indians who were brought into the country to work in sugarcane plantations.

Fourth, food is historically significant in that it has served as a unifying force in societies. The findings showed that food has brought families together, allowing an opportunity to groom children for their future roles in the society. Where family members had not seen eye to eye, food has been used as an apology by one to the other. Food has the power of keeping people in touch with their culture and homelands even when they are away. Hence, it is argued to be a unifying commodity.

Fifth, the findings show that food serves as social identity. Through analysing people's behaviour around food, one comes to understand their financial standing in society. It has been pointed out that people in the upper classes eat differently from those in the lower classes. Thus, by studying the type of food they eat one can often assess whether people are affluent or indigent. Also shown here is that food helps others to understand the culture to which a person belongs. This is because people from different cultures prefer or rather behave differently around food.

Sixth, it has been suggested that the significance of food as nutrient cannot be contested whether in the past or present society. The findings reveal that food provides the body with several nutrients that are mandatory in keeping the body functioning properly. Counted amongst the benefits of eating food is that it provides energy which is needed by the human body to perform tasks. Also, these nutrients assist humans to concentrate when partaking in all quotidian tasks. As a result, food is and has always been significant for its nutritional benefits.

In terms of the space for food history in the South African history curriculum, two contradictory findings emerged. On one hand, it has been shown that the space for food history already exists in themes covered in the curriculum. This is because food

history does not exist in isolation – it touches other themes which are in the curriculum. As a result, it should be covered as part of those themes. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that food history should be offered as a separate theme. This would emphasise its significance in shaping society.

As for the context within which food in history should be included in the curriculum, the study again revealed three varying findings. Firstly, the international content should be covered if space for food in history is made in the South African History curriculum. This is because the commodity forms part of every country's history. In addition, studying about food in history from an international perspective will broaden learners' understanding and place them at an advantage. Secondly, the findings show that the order in which food in history is covered should be first in the local realm, followed by the continental realm, going on to the international sphere. On the contrary, it has been pointed out that food in history should be covered only within a local, South African context, so as to prioritise the history of the country without comparing it with other countries.

All in all, the findings show the participants' understandings of the historical significance of food. In addition to this, their understandings of food in our current society have also been uncovered. The nature of the inclusion of food in the South African curriculum has been clearly explained in terms of where food should be included, and which content should be included. In the following chapter these findings are discussed against the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of this study were presented. This chapter serves to discuss these findings. The purpose of the study was to explore 4th History Education students' views on the space for food history in the South African history curriculum. This will be done by firstly, discussing their views on the significance of food both in the past and present society and secondly, discussing their views on the space for food history in the South African history curriculum.

5.2. Participants' Understandings of the Historical Significance of Food

The findings reveal that the participants view food as historically significant and therefore the topic should form part of the South African history curriculum firstly, because of its influence in the economies of the past. Secondly, food history should be catered for in the curriculum because of its impact on politics. Thirdly, it should be included because of its influence on migration. Fourthly, food history should be incorporated into the history curriculum because it has served as a unifying commodity. Fifthly, food serves as identity of the differences that exist in societies and, finally, the subject of food should be integrated into the curriculum because of its unending provision of significant nutrients. These different findings are discussed in this section by also drawing from literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study.

5.2.1. Food as influential to economies

The findings show that the participants view food as historically significant for its impact on the society's economies. The participants argued that, through studying food history, one is exposed to a plethora of knowledge enabling one to understand how historical societies managed their economies. This suggests that studying food history has the potential to provide one with *relevant* information which in turn expands understanding of the phenomenon. According to Partington (1980), this qualifies the concept as historically significant. To make this view apparent, the participants made an example of its contribution to influencing the lifestyles of indigenous Africans, while establishing new relations between societies. Taking a glance at the present society, the participants referred to food's contribution towards limiting unemployment. In Chapter 2 of this study, it was explained that the economy is made up of three aspects

which are production of services, supply of services, and consumption of services (Kenton, 2019). In terms of historical significance, here the participants located the importance of food in the present society which still falls within the borders of history. History reviews how the past has affected the present and the implications of this for the future. This finding has shown that historical significance is not only limited to the past, but it also applies to the present as well. However, this is determined by the phenomenon's ability to have a direct impact on the present and the future societies. This gives birth to the new and sixth criterion of historical significance which is *contemporality*. What makes *contemporality* different from the five criteria of historical significance is that it is not limited to the past, but it extends its focus to the direct impacts of the past on the present and future. This accurately links to history as it is the study of the past, its effects on the present society, and how this determines the future.

Pointing out the impact of food on influencing the lifestyle lived by some indigenous African societies, the participants echoed that food production and the lifestyle lived by the Khoisan people was influenced by its availability within a particular area. As pointed out by Hillel (n.d) and Ji Yun (2012), the Khoisan people relied on nature for food production, either through hunting or gathering. The authors further state that it was the environmental conditions that determined when and how long people should remain in an area (Hillel, n.d & Ji Yun, 2012). In the same light, Britannica (2019) affirms that the location of the hunter-gatherer societies was determined by the ever-changing environment's ability to supply them with enough food. This implies that when seasons changed, or the area could no longer provide sufficient food, the people were forced to migrate to a different location, one with enough food to sustain them for a certain period. It can thus be argued that the nomadic lifestyle lived by hunter-gatherer people was highly dependent on and predetermined by food. It is for such reasons that the participants view food as crucial to understanding the life of the Khoisan people. What this suggests is that the participants find food central to understanding the Khoisan people, thus qualifying it as historically significant, as argued by Partington (1980). According to Partington (1980), a phenomenon can be said to be historically significant if it was important to the people who experienced it. The participants' views tally with the argument that the Khoisan hunter-gatherers were keen to relocate so as to maintain access to food because of its *importance* to them,

therefore making food historically significant. The participants' explanation of the historical significance of food is also based on the criterion of *profundity*. The criterion of profundity in the historical significance framework highlights that a phenomenon must have had a great impact on the lives of people for it to be deemed historically significant (Partington, 1980; Levesque, 2005). Literature (Britannica, 2019) and participants agree that food was central to the lives of the Khoisan people in such a way that its absence forced them to migrate, meaning that it had a huge impact on their lives. It is for this reason that participants view food as historically significant based on its *importance* to the lives of the people who lived in the past.

By referring to farming as a new method of food production introduced by Bantu speakers in southern Africa, the participants asserted that the lifestyle of some Africans was transformed greatly. The participants argued that with the introduction of iron smelting by the Bantu speakers, some Khoisan [*sic*] people were introduced to tools which allowed them to grow their own crops, meaning that they no longer relied simply on hunting and gathering for food production. A similar view is held by Schmalz et al. (2019), who assert that farming allowed the indigenous people to produce a surplus; hence, after the introduction of iron smelting some people were no longer obliged to migrate seasonally to maintain food supply. The participants are correct in saying that the lifestyle of some indigenous people was transformed with the arrival of Bantu speakers. However, it is worth noting that not all Khoi and San people adopted the growing of crops, some of them never adopted the Bantu Speakers way of life (Schuster, 2010). Rather, it was those who had already converted to the Bantu speaker way of life who adopted these new agricultural ways. The San people and some Khoi people remained hunter gatherers even after the introduction of farming by Bantu speakers. This explains why the participants contend that farming as a new form of food production greatly changed the lifestyle of some indigenous people. In terms of historical significance, the participants signify food as having *profound* effects on some indigenous people. This goes in hand with Partington (1980) and Levesque (2005) who put it that historically significant phenomena should change people's lives rather than be superficial.

Further, the findings show that participants view food as having had an impact on the development of new modern technologies with the aim of maintaining and increasing its production. Referring to the Industrial Revolution, participants argued that, in order

to keep up with the ever-growing demand for food, various technologies were invented for food production in the 18th century. They also pointed out that this was the case even with the colonisation of present-day South Africa in 1652, whereby Europeans replaced traditional food-production methods with new technologies all with the aim of improving food production in their colonies. Literature on the Agricultural Revolution in Britain between the mid-17th and 19th centuries also attests to food production being a factor in the technological inventions such as seed drilling and threshing machinery (Ang, Banerjee & Madsen, 2010). Resulting from this, the participants highlighted food firstly, by stating that it was the indubitable importance and increased demand for food that led to the invention of these new machineries aimed at increasing food production (Partington, 1980). Secondly, they find food to be historically significant based on its profound impact on developing and changing the food-production system at large.

Furthermore, the participants argue that people or societies have had to establish new relations just so that they could maintain access to food, particularly through trade. As a result, the participants argued that, with the objective of maintaining food supply, business relations have strengthened between different countries. They made an example of how the kingdom of Mapungubwe in present day Limpopo established business relations and communication with countries like China and India through trading food. Saltworks (2020) and Johanneson et al. (2014) have shown that societies traded food items with one another. However, the participant's claim that people from China and India travelled all the way or stopped at Mapungubwe just for food is questionable, as the region was known for trade in other resources (Ebrahim, Haw & Jardine, 2018). Nonetheless, this view highlights food as the reason behind people's actions and choices because of its *importance* to them. This concurs with Levesque (2005) and Partington (1980) who advise that the historical significance of a phenomenon can also be determined by its *importance* to the people who experienced it.

One of the most intriguing views raised by the participants in relation to the influence of food in the economies was food being utilised as a manipulation tool by certain societies. The participants affirmed this by explaining how Europeans made countries like China believe that sugar was an important part of the diet so that they could trap her into buying sugar from them. From this it can be deduced that European countries were able to make other countries dependent on them now that certain food

commodities that they possessed had become an important aspect of their lives, such as tea with sugar. The participants view this as a strategy by European countries to maintain their dominance over other countries. Of course, Godoy (2015) has reviewed the case of tea and sugar in economics with tea imports counting one-tenth of income made through taxing in Britain during the 1700s. However, the participants have taken a different perspective, showing how the commodity has not only been used to strengthen the economy but also to maintain and extend dominance of superpower countries over others. In line with the historical significance framework, this suggests that food can offer understanding of how some countries were able to influence and maintain their dominance over other countries through using food commodities important to those countries. This corresponds with Partington (1980) and Levesque (2005) who advise that, to understand the historical significance of a phenomena, it should be viewed in relation to its importance to the people it affected. Participants further deemed food historically significant because of the *profound* effects it had on almost the whole world. Europe introduced the idea of serving tea with sugar, influencing the way many countries serve or have tea. This concurs with Levesque (2005) who asserts that, for an event to be deemed historically significant, it needs to have led to real change in the lives of people who lived during the time. The fact that tea is still served with sugar links food to the contemporality criterion, reaffirming its historical significance.

The findings show that the participants view the significance of food in the economy not to be limited to the past, but to have extended also to the present society. According to participants, this contribution is apparent in job opportunities created through food production. They argue that people are hired to work in the food-production sector, thus reducing unemployment, in turn decreasing poverty. This concurs with the argument by Townsend et al. (2017) that the food-production sector contributes more than other sectors in providing jobs, thus reducing unemployment. There is an unending demand for food, which suggests that employment opportunities from its production should be continuous. However, Christiaensen and Brooks (2018) contend that food production does not always guarantee a decrease in unemployment, making an example of how sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed a decrease in the labour force in the sector of agriculture. Either way, this view highlights food as being historically significant even in the present society because of its provision of jobs, thus

making it *important* to them. According to Partington (1980), the criterion of importance assists the understanding of what mattered to the people who lived during the phenomena in question, hence making this finding historically significant despite being directed to the present society. Here the finding uses the criterion of contemporality to signify food based on its undeniable impact on the present society, its production providing people with employment.

5.2.2. Food as influential to politics

As a second finding under this theme, the participants viewed food as historically significant for its influence on the politics of the societies in the past. The participants pointed out that, in the past, conflicts arose between societies over territory that was fertile for agricultural activities. To bring this to the fore, the participants made an example of the conflicts that resulted from the displacement of indigenous people by Europeans when colonialism was introduced into southern Africa. The participants pointed out that the land ownership conflicts that occurred between Europeans and the Khoisan people in southern Africa were highly influenced by the ability of land to maintain food production. This is in line with South African History (2020) and Stephenson et al., (2017) who assert that the conflicts that erupted between Europeans and the Khoisan were a result of the Dutch wanting to claim ownership of fertile land that initially belonged to the Khoisan people. According to South African History (2020), since the Khoikhoi needed fertile land for grazing their cattle, they were not willing to easily let go of it. This then makes one argue that, if food were not as significant for either groups, the colonisers would have not have seen the need to displace the indigenous people, particularly before they knew of the gold and diamonds, and the indigenous people would have not resisted moving to non-fertile areas in the region. As Stephenson et al. (2017) puts it, conflicts between the Khoikhoi and San and the Dutch in the 18th century were mainly motivated by the need to maintain access to fertile land which was initially owned by the Khoikhoi. It is worth noting that conflict over land for agricultural purposes did not only occur between Africans and Europeans, but it also occurred between Africans, especially during droughts (Tongwane, Ramotubei, & Moeletsi, 2022). The participants then deemed conflicts over fertile land *durable* because they have lasted until the present day, thus being historically significant. This concurs with Seixas (2006), who clearly stipulates that, if an event has had long-lasting effects, it can be said to be historically significant.

Another criterion that emanated from this view was *relevance*. The participants argued that learning about the conflicts surrounding ownership of fertile land would allow one an opportunity to understand those existing in present day. According to Partington (1980), if a certain aspect provides one with *relevant* information for understanding how things were in the past and their effects on the present society then that aspect is historically significant.

The participants further explained how raids were conducted because of food. This view has also been evidenced by Stephenson et al. (2017) who outlines that after the Cape Colony had released the Burghers, most of them attained food through raiding indigenous tribes during the 1770s. Similar sentiments are held by Johannesson et al. (2014) and Eldredge (1992), who mention that during the 19th century the Griqua accessed cattle through raids on the African kingdoms located near the Orange River. The point raised here is that, because of the desire for sufficient access to food, raids were launched. Another understanding derived from this point is that, because of its centrality to human life, humans would do anything to attain access to food, even if it meant war. Therefore, the participants stress food because of its *importance* to the people who lived during the time, which in turn influenced their actions (Partington, 1980). Based on this, the participants further argue that food raids shared light in understanding how some societies accessed food during conflicts therefore making it historically significant. This is in line with the historical significance framework adopted in this study. If an aspect provides one with information giving an informed understanding of the past, that aspect, which in this case is food raids, is relevant, making it historically significant (Partington, 1980).

The participants stated that food influenced superpower countries to take over and colonise other countries. This is in line with Bingly-Pullen (n. d), Smithfield (2017), and Graber and Gastropod (2016), who argue that resulting from the desire to acquire food, some countries have assumed control over other countries. The participants maintain this by explaining how southern Africa was colonised resulting from the establishment of a refreshment station after the colonists realised that the territory had fertile land that would provide passing ships with fresh produce. This explains why Thompson (2001) asserts that, because of food, southern Africa was taken over by colonists and completely transformed. This supports the participant's view that the desire for food has influenced countries to claim ownership of other countries. As such,

participants deem food to be historically significant because of how (with it being the main cause) the lives of the people in the societies were changed resulting from colonialism. This corresponds with Seixas (2006), who urges that a phenomenon can be said to be historically significant if it greatly changed the society, thus locating food within the borders of historical significance.

The participants further echoed that food has been used politically as a form of maintaining and restoring peace. Without being specific to a certain period, participants elaborated this by stating that at times when a son had sinned against his father, he would slaughter a goat or a cow and prepare a feast as a way of asking for forgiveness. Also, still on the view of food being utilised as a strategy for establishing peace is Johanneson et al. (2014) who comment that, after he had conquered his enemies, King Moshoeshoe of the Basotho Kingdom sent them cattle as a way of establishing peace between them. The participants took the idea further by arguing that the commodity was sometimes used to prevent conflicts from ever happening and establishing alliances for protection of one society by another should a conflict arise. Here participants made an example of how King Moshoeshoe gave King Shaka cattle for peace and protection. Again, Johannesson et al. (2014) concur that, as a strategy to prevent a war between the Zulus and Basotho, King Moshoeshoe gave cattle to King Shaka in the 1820s. With enough research, one can discover many other events in which food has been utilised as a tool for establishing peace. Through the lenses of the conceptual framework utilised in this study, food was deemed historically significant because of its role in averting conflicts and instilling peace between former enemies. This follows the criterion of profundity by Partington (1980), which states that the level of impact a phenomenon has determines its historical significance.

5.2.3. Food as influential on migration

The third finding was that participants view food as historically significant because of its influence in the migration of people. As mentioned earlier, the participants asserted that in the past, the lack of food in an area pushed the Khoisan people of southern Africa to migrate to a different environment, one with sufficient food supply. Based on this it can be argued that people did not have much control over how long or even where they wanted to stay. Rather, it was the availability of food that influenced their movement and determined the areas which they would inhabit. The same sentiments are shared by Hillel (n.d) and Ji Yun (2012), who, when referring to East Africa, assert

that the migration of the indigenous people was highly dependent on the environment's ability to provide them with food. This implies that, without the need for food, the indigenous people may not have had the compulsion to migrate to different areas from time to time. Even with the arrival of Bantu speakers in southern Africa, the participants pointed out that the process of food production was improved, thus reducing the compulsion for some former Khoisan to move periodically to different places. This was because they had found a stable food supply and could therefore finally settle in permanent locations. They could move by choice, as some of them did not convert to farming, but remained hunter-gatherers. This participant's view shows food to have had a great impact on the lives of the people as it determined whether or not people should migrate, meaning it had a profound historical significance. This coincides with Partington (1980) and Levesque (2005) who emphasise the change brought by the phenomena being studied in determining its historical significance. Secondly, the fact that people were willing to migrate in order to maintain food supply shows that it was important to them; therefore, historically significant. According to Partington (1980) and Levesque (2005), what makes a phenomenon historically significant is its importance to the people who experienced it.

The participants stated that at some points in the past the continued need for food influenced people to migrate to other countries. They gave the example of the voyages of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus who travelled as far as India in search of spices. They argued that the journeys of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus were primarily motivated by the desire to find spices. This is supported by Ebrahim, Jardine and Haw (2018) who view the expeditions of European explorers as being their need for spices in India. Of course, they did not cross the Indian Ocean *only* for the mere attainment of spices, but this was the primary motivator for these travels. The participants once again referred to the settlement of Europeans at the Cape being a result of the inevitable need for food leading to permanent migration and subsequent colonisation of the country. As a result, it can be argued that the need for food by passing ships influenced Europeans to migrate to southern Africa and settle in the area permanently, and other populations eventually migrating to the area, thus transforming South Africa at large (Ebrahim, Jardine & Haw, 2018). Resulting from the voyages of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus, the traditions on how food is prepared were transformed in their home countries and because of the settlement of

Europeans at the Cape, southern Africa was transformed. In addition, these travels had significant impacts on economic, social, and cultural interchange that inevitably affected the modern society (Ames, 2009). Thus, food is historically significant because of the *durable* and *profound* results it has provided in relation to this view. This is because the migration mentioned in this area changed peoples' lives and its results are still evident in the present day (Levesque, 2005, Seixas, 2006 & Partington, 1980).

5.2.4. Food as a unifying commodity

As shown in Chapter 4, the fourth finding under this theme was that the participants viewed food as being historically significant resulting from its ability to unify people of various backgrounds. Here, without being specific on the period they were referring to, the participants drew from how, during ceremonial events, people work together when preparing food for the success of the event. According to the participants, each person works according to what is expected of their gender and age; and generational lessons on manhood and womanhood are passed from the older generation to the younger generation. A similar view is held by Le (2017), who affirms that food maintains cultural values through generations. As a result, food unites people with common values and ways of life. From this, one can argue that food provides an atmosphere that allows for societal values and traditions to be taught to the younger members of the society. This process of passing down lessons takes place during its preparation, in the manner in which it is served, and in its consumption. On the contrary, Ma (2015), Kittler et al. (2010), and Sikhakhane (n.d), have shown that sometimes teachings passed through food preparation and consumption promote and maintain division between different genders and ages. An understanding that can be drawn from this is that, while food promotes unity as it brings people together during ceremonies in which life values are taught, these very same values also perpetuate ideas that sustain divisions between different genders and different ages. Although opposed, these two views share some common ground as both views highlight the contribution made by food in reaffirming the societal expectations of males and females in the society. In terms of the framework adopted in this study, food has been presented as a source that provides grounds for the continuous (*durable*) teaching of values and social expectations; hence in line with historical significance as explained by Seixas (2006).

5.2.5. Food as identity

As a fifth finding, the participants pointed out that food is significant for the role it plays in helping to recognise and understand identity. The view raised by participants regarding this finding verifies that this has not been the case only in the past, but in the present society as well. To emphasise this, with much attention directed towards the present society, participants pointed out class as something that is made clear and obvious by the food choices people have. The participants explained this saying that based on their financial stability, people eat what they afford to buy. This is because, according to participants, there is a great link between what people eat and affordability. A similar view has been shared by Miller et al. (2016), that most of the time, people eat what they afford rather than what they prefer. Hence, analysing the monetary value of food one eats one is exposed to understanding the societal class to which that person belongs. This explains why Toivonen (1997) finds food an excellent indicator of the differences between the various classes that make up society. According to participants, wealthy people eat food that is different from that eaten by those who come from low economic backgrounds. This is supported by Miller et al. (2016). Due to high prices, people in the lower echelons of society eat food that is cheap because that is all they can afford. Almerico (2014) and Mcilvenna (2019) agree with Miller et al. (2016), and explain that in France people who belonged to the lower classes could only afford to purchase brown bread during the 1780s. Here food has been presented as something that, when studied, provides lenses for an in-depth understanding of the economic differences in society, therefore making it historically significant. This corresponds with Partington (1980) who counts the provision of relevant information amongst the key factors that makes a phenomenon historically significant. The very fact that food serves as a lens through which to assess the financial standing of people in contemporary society verifies its historical significance.

Still on the finding on food assisting in indicating identity, participants remarked that food influences even the choices of social circles people gravitate to. Research has shown that the wealthy members of society choose to dine in expensive restaurants (Bartash, 2016). However, the participants take this further by arguing that, in the present society, a person may choose suitable company based on their choice of restaurants and the type of food they prefer to eat. Thus, people in the upper classes, being influenced by food, choose to be friends with those in the same class. In this

view, the participants mention food as a tool that helps a person to identify those whom they find suitable to associate with. This can be understood as a person's way of maintaining and reaffirming their status in society. The reason for this reaffirmation could be that people belonging to the upper echelons may not want to be deemed indigent by dining in restaurants that serve 'low-class meals'. According to the participants, food helps those in the upper classes to identify suitable associates. This view on determining the class to which one belongs may sometimes be problematic. A study conducted by the Ohio State University in 2017 shows that sometimes even the richest members of society dine in cheaper restaurants by choice (Fearnow, 2017) which then disturbs the identifying of suitable associates based on food choices or restaurants. However, the same cannot be guaranteed about indigent people who cannot choose to dine in expensive outlets. Under normal circumstances, therefore, those in the upper classes choose only to associate themselves with those of their own calibre; while those of the lower classes strive to make it to the upper echelons. It should also be noted that the strict food preference by those of the upper classes maintain financial divisions that exist in the society. This view presents food as a commodity that, after analysis of how people behave around it, has provided an understanding of how society functions. As such, through this view, the participants signify food based on its impact on the current society by magnifying the different classes. It also provides one with relevant knowledge on understanding the society, thus justifying its historical significance, as motivated by Partington (1980).

The participants further explained that this class phenomenon is visible even in grocery stores. According to the participants, on one hand, there are shops that sell food items that are mainly expensive, hence accessible mostly to the upper class. As a result, people from low-income backgrounds have minimal accesses to healthy food, predominantly available in these shops (Stern, Poti, Wen Ngi, Robinson, Gordon-Larsen, Popkin, 2016). On the other hand, there are shops that sell food items that are not expensive, hence, people belonging to the lower class do most of their shopping there. These types of This has been evidenced by a study recently conducted in America which shows that people from different socio-economic backgrounds shop at different shops from those of low-income backgrounds. Indigent or thrifty people shop in dollar stores that produce highly processed and unhealthy food (Kar, Motoyama, Carrel, Miller, Le, 2021). This implies that grocery stores,

through the kind of food produce they sell, also play a role in maintaining and indicating the financial divisions in society. On one hand, this could be because low-status grocery shops do not sell food that is desired by certain racial groups. On the other hand, it could be that they do not want to lower their status by being seen in shops that do not meet their status, once again maintaining financial social division. In this view, food is seen as historically significant because it acts as a lens that allows one to understand these divisions of society (Partington, 1980). It is also signified through its link to the criterion of contemporality through its focus on the effects of food in the present society.

In addition, the participants view food as significant because of the role it plays in helping to identify beliefs surrounding gender and age in society. Drawing from their observations as South African citizens, the participants affirmed that, in ceremonies, males eat different types of meat from females, who, according to Ma (2015), are mostly involved in the process of preparing food. According to the participants, there is food that is reserved for certain genders. A similar view has been shared by Kittler et al. (2012), who echo that in some cultures certain genders are prohibited from eating certain types of foods. Kittler et al. (2012) argue that some of the practices emanate from the idea that steak is masculine, hence should be consumed more by men; and salads are feminine, therefore suitable for females. One can argue that such practices are mostly a result of norms condoned by cultures in order to maintain values that have been in place for generations. This has been affirmed by Le (2017), who maintains that, through food, societies have been able to sustain their cultural values for generations. According to participants, where age is concerned, in some societies, no specifications are made in terms of the type of food children eat, rather, they eat whatever is left after all adults have been served. This concurs with Ma (2015), who notes that there are cultures that insist on serving children only after adults have been served, to reaffirm respect for adults. Because ideas about gender and age in relation to food are different amongst cultures and religions, a clear analysis of peoples' behaviour reading food reveals the culture or religion to which they belong. In this finding, food has been viewed as historically significant because of the impact it has continued to have on contemporary society in maintaining ideas regarding gender and age. In addition, food has been viewed to be historically significant because of its provision of relevant information that helps shed light on some dubious aspects of

society. This corresponds with Partington (1980) on his explanation of relevance in shaping one's understanding of the phenomena as the determiner of historical significance.

Furthermore, the participants expressed that one of the aspects that signify food in the present society is its ability to keep people intact with their families and nationalities. To bring this to the fore, they made an example of how people are reminded of their nationality through cooking recipes that are unique to their nationality or families. This concurs with Loveland, Smeeter and Mandel (2010), who explain that food consumption can satisfy the desire to belong. The participants contested that this is because of the nostalgic effect food can have on a person. Similar sentiments are held by Vignolles and Pichon (2014), who affirm that food has the ability to transport one to one's past, thus making clear the link between its consumption and nostalgia. This implies that food helps people strengthen their identity and belonging (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014; Loveland, Smeeter & Mandel, 2010). It therefore makes sense why, to feel connected to their families or nations when far from them, people cook foods unique to their background. This explains why Baker (2005) associates nostalgia with a person's favourite recipes. In the same light, Vignolles and Pichon (2014) have proven that nostalgic food consumption can result in positive emotions. Here the participants have aligned the historical significance of food through the lenses of the present. History is the study of the past, its effects on the present, which in turn determines the future (DoE, 2011); therefore justifying the historical significance of food in contemporary society.

The last aspect participants mentioned in relation to identity was culture. According to the participants, food connects people to their culture and religion. They argued that it helps to identify the difference and uniqueness of various cultures that exist in society. To them, food is significant in symbolising different cultures and offering an understanding of those cultures. Looking at literature, two aspects emanate from this view – food as symbolism and food as culture. Firstly, considering food as symbolism, Asi and Teri (2016) assert that certain foods symbolise various aspects to different people because some food commodities symbolise taboos and totems to people, hence they refrain from consuming them. Secondly, on food as culture, Almerico (2014) agrees that food defines a person's cultural identity, people's food preferences mostly having to do with their culture. This explains why Asi and Teri (2016) and

Boutaud, Becut and Marinescu (2016) view food as an affirmation of the culture to which a person belongs and its maintenance agent. Once again, the participants have pointed out the significance of food in the present society in shedding light on the different cultural values of society, making it relevant (Partington, 1980). Here food is also viewed as historically significant because of its contemporality in the society.

5.2.6. Food as nutrient

The sixth finding of this study, as shown in Chapter 4, is the unending significance of food in providing the body with nutrients that are mandatory in order to keep it in its functioning condition. Rogers (2020) and Butler (2019) acknowledge that food provides the body with nutrients necessary to keep it functioning properly. According to the participants, this significance cannot be limited to a specific period. They argued that this is because, for generations, food has been one of the most important commodities for maintaining life. A similar view is held by Quddusi (2018), who accepts that food is the most important resource (after water and air) that people need in order to stay alive. The participants asserted that without food nutrients the human body cannot maintain life. Although participants did not fix this view to a certain period, the view shows food as historically significant. This is because the nutritional significance of food has not been limited to a generation or period; rather, it continues through the ages including the present and the future to come. The most apparent criteria making food historically significant in this view are importance, durability, profundity, and quantity. In application of historical significance as advised by Seixas (2006) this is because of its *importance* for maintaining life, secondly and thirdly, because of its unending (durability) impact (profundity) on everyone's (quantity) lives, as all people need to eat.

The participants further stated that the nutrients from food assist the human body to conduct activities. They explained that the body uses nutrients from food to create energy which in turn fuels it for physical tasks. Rogers (2010) agrees that when digested, the nutrients attained from food supply the body with energy that it then uses to engage in physical activities. According to Brundage (2015), these nutrients consist of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins which are broken down by the body in order to create energy. In the absence of these nutrients supplied by food, humans would be subject to hunger, and their bodies would not function as expected (Butler, 2019; Barrell, 2020). For example, people would fail to be productive as expected at work

(Wanjek, 2005). In the presence of nutrients from food, there is an increase in productivity at work, especially in manual labour (Umar, 2020). Thus, one can argue that, in the absence of nutrients retrieved from food there would not be any roads, large buildings or dams since these are a result of manual labour. Even with modern technology, human labour is needed to control machinery (Barrell, 2020). This view promotes food as historically significant through *importance* to people for its ability to provide nutrients that make it possible for people to conduct physical tasks. This then correlates with Partington's review on how important this aspect is or was to the people who lived it, when one determines historical significance.

The participants further acknowledge the role of the nutrients attained from food in sustaining people's mental health. Without being specific on the period they were referring to, participants affirmed that, in the absence of these nutrients, humans would not be able to concentrate or stay focused. Quddasi (2020) supports this, and explains that this is a result of nutrients that, when consumed regularly, provide an individual with the ability to concentrate and to focus. Without food from which these nutrients are retrieved, people would not be able to effectively conduct any activity (Barrell, 2020). Hutchinson (2019) adds that this is because, when a person is hungry, their energy decreases, causing their mind to lose focus. Hunger increases distractibility and a victim cannot perform as needed. Therefore, the implication is that food is imperative for its provision of nutrients that help individuals to concentrate on multiple tasks (Quddasi, 2020). This view can be argued as in line with the concept of historical significance. The human race has existed for generations; without a stable mentality there would otherwise be no evidence from their era; it would not show any signs of civilisation. Once again, since food is a commodity that has served all generations as an important aspect of maintaining mental health, it falls in line with the criteria of importance and durability, which makes it historically significant. This is because, according to Partington (1980) and Seixas (2006), the historical significance of a phenomenon is determined by its importance to the people it affects, and the level of impact it has had on them.

Further, the participants argued that food also helps to fight diseases that attack the body. According to the participants, the nutrients in food supply the body with help to maintain its immune system thus keeping it healthy against diseases. This is, according to Ramalingum and Mahommadally (2014), because food carries bioactive

nutrients that help prevent or reduce the exposure to certain diseases. This view concurs with Mohanral and Sivasankar (2014), who make an example of how sweet potato leaves are used to treat Type 2 diabetes in places like Ghana and Akaz. On the same issue, Yang et al. (2016) explain how barley also helps to prevent Type 2 diabetes and to reduce issues relating to obesity. Henceforth, it can be concluded that food provides humans with both curative and preventative nutrients that keep the immune system healthy. In terms of the conceptual framework adopted in this study, this finding views food as crucial to the participants. This then aligns with Partington's (1980) idea of considering any aspect as historically significant if it is important to people.

Altogether, these findings show that food contributed not just to political history, but it has also had an impact in the shaping of social history and economic history. This further verifies the equal emphasis of economic and social history in the curriculum rather than only emphasising political history, as is the case with the current South African History curriculum. These findings show that this can be attained through featuring food in the curriculum in participants argued for the review of the South African curriculum so as to feature the contribution of food to all three aspects – political history, social history, and economic history. This is discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.3. Participants' Views on the Space for Food as a Topic in the South African Curriculum and Reasons for their Views

In this section the findings on the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum are discussed. This is done by firstly discussing the participants' stances on whether there is space for food in history in the South African History curriculum. Secondly, the findings on how food in history should be made part of the curriculum are discussed.

5.3.1. The space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum

The findings discussed above show that the participants consider food to have been significant in so many aspects of history other than politics. As has been stated above, probably one of the reasons why food history does not feature much in the curriculum is that history tends to emphasise political history more than other aspects of history. If the curriculum had more economic and social history, it would feature more content on food in history. The participants argued that there is a space for food in history in

the curriculum, yet unfortunately, the current South African History curriculum is political, hence biased (Dlamini, 2019; Apple, 1993; Jansen, 1990 & Pinar, 2004)

According to the findings, the first step towards making space for food history in the curriculum will be to avoid conceptualising it as a commodity only important for its consumption, but rather for its contribution to the economic, social, and political spheres in the past. The current South African History curriculum does not place much emphasis on the influence of food in these different realms of society. Participants argued that the curriculum should show how food has acted as an agent throughout history, rather than presenting it in a shallow manner as only something to be consumed. This is a unique finding, since literature shows the significant contributions made by food in three spheres (economic, social, and political) of past societies, yet does not say anything about its inclusion in the history school curriculum. As a result, the participants called for the revision of the South African History curriculum because, as was mentioned in Chapter 1 of this paper, it ignores the significant role played by food in shaping the past. This can only be accomplished if space is equally made for all the three spheres so as to avoid meaningless integration of facts, as advised against by Peck (2009). Perusing the conceptual framework of historical significance, Partington (1980) advocates for the acknowledgement of content that acts as a window through which to understand the past as relevant. In line with this, the participants viewed food as historically significant because of the plethora of understanding it would expose learners to were it to form part of the South African History curriculum as a first-order concept.

The findings show that making space for social history in the South African History curriculum will allow learners an opportunity to learn about the influence of food in culture and social norms, and the implications this has on society. This concurs with Fathi (2009) and Maleki (2008), who vote for a curriculum that features content that links to societal values and culture. The participants argued that by doing this, the Department of Basic Education will be able to produce learners who are informed in terms of the diversity that makes up the South African community. This follows Dlamini (2019) who has shown that government employs the school curriculum to produce desired informed individuals who can live up to societal norms and values. Since food in culture forms part of social history, it means one effective way the government can achieve this is by making space for social history in the South African History

curriculum. Here the participants signify food as an *important* tool that can be utilised by the government to emphasise norms and values that are key to maintaining the ideal society. In correspondence with Partington (1980), with their view shaped by the historical significance framework in this argument, the participants advocated for the addition of *relevant* content on social history that will inform pupils of the societal norms. Contemporality seems to have been applied here too, since the curriculum will have a direct impact on the present society, further justifying its significance.

In making space for food as a topic in the South African curriculum, the findings show that a fair portion of content should be reserved for political history, rather than having it as the dominant sphere. The participants argued that this should be with the aim of highlighting the significant contributions (Pletcher, 2019; Heyning, 2010; Van den Bergh, 2012), which have been discussed in the previous section, that have been made by food in shaping politics in the past. Therefore, through including food history in the South African History curriculum, learners will know of its contribution to political content already covered in the curriculum, but isolating the commodity as having had an impact on them. The participants acknowledged that political history is already included in the South African History curriculum, but the curriculum still needs to highlight the role of food in politics. Participants argued that, because food has acted as a driving force in politics hence transforming countries (Bingley-Pullen, n.d; Smithfield, 2017; Twilley, Graber & Gastropod, 2016), learning about it will shape learners' historical consciousness. It will allow them to make analyses, and make judgements and conclusions in relation to the political themes studied. According to the historical significance framework, Partington (1980) confirms that the criterion of relevance depends on how studying about a certain phenomenon helps a person to understand the past. On the view by participants that studying food in history allows learners an opportunity to analyse evidence and draw conclusions, making it relevant in understanding the past; hence in line with the historical significance framework. Partington (1980) avers that the criterion of relevance depends on how studying a certain phenomenon helps a person to understand the past. Participants believe that studying the role of food in history allows learners an opportunity to analyse evidence and draw conclusions. Such makes it relevant in understanding the past; hence it is in line with the historical significance framework.

Even though all participants hold a similar view on the historical significance of food, some participants were convinced that the nutritional value of the commodity should not be taken for granted. They pointed out that, without the nutritional benefits of food, it would not carry the value it does; arguing that its nutritional essence was what made it significant in the first place. This goes hand in hand with Quddusi (2018), Rogers (2020), and Burgess (2004) who view the nutritional value of food as the main reason for its significance. In the process of revising the curriculum, curriculum planners should be careful of not sidelining the primary significance of food altogether. Just because more room must be made for food in shaping history, does not mean that it should not be covered for its nutritional significance. As a justification for this, the participants stated that not overlooking the nutritional value of food in the South African History curriculum will equip learners with sustainable *food ways* similar to those employed by indigenous societies, as shown by literature presented in Chapter 2 (Mark, 2017; FAO, 2020, Hillel, n.d; Ji Yun, 2012; Schmalz et al., 2019; Omaar, 2016). Furthermore, the findings indicate that learning about food-production ways of the past might have a positive impact on fighting against poverty in South Africa. The researchers affirm that this will serve the country in fighting against food insecurity. In support of not overlooking the nutritional values of food, Trapido (2017) adds that studying the topic will help define South African history before colonisation. This view was shaped by historical consciousness of the significance of food in both the past and present, rather than only in the past. History is the continuous study of society over time, including the past, present, and future.

It is clear that there is space for food in the South African history curriculum and that featuring it in the South African history curriculum will be beneficial not only to the learners, but to the government as well as the society at large. Featuring it in the curriculum should not be much of a problem considering the fact that it influenced many topics already covered in the curriculum.

5.3.2. The nature of inclusion of food as a topic in the South African History curriculum

This section was guided by two objectives. The first objective was to understand whether food history should be covered as a theme in the South African History curriculum or whether it would be correct to infuse the theme with other themes that

are already covered in the curriculum. The second objective was to understand the contexts within which the content on food should be represented. The findings show that the participants had varying but intriguing views on the manner in which 'food in history' should be integrated into the South African History curriculum. These are discussed in detail below.

On one hand, in identifying the space for food history in the South African History curriculum, the participants advised that food history be infused into themes that already exist in the curriculum. The reason they gave for this is that food is not an isolated substance – food has influenced numerous historical phenomena that are covered in the curriculum, implying that covering the topic of food separately would not be an informed decision. Therefore, participants argue that it should be integrated with other themes to emphasise its contribution to them. Once again, although literature (Kittler, et al., 2012; Almerico, 2014; Asi & Teri, 2016) has mentioned the important role played by food in helping to understand how societies function, the latest finding has taken this a step further by calling for its integration into the school history curriculum. The research shown in Chapter 2 of this paper proves that the South African History curriculum does indeed cover themes in which food has contributed in some way (Brinkman & Hendrix, 2011; Johanneson et al., 2014; Eldredge, 1992; Ebrahim, Jardine & Haw, 2018). Therefore, it makes sense for participants to assert that the topic of food should be covered as part of these themes. Based on this view, it can be concluded that integrating the topic of food as a first-order concept into these themes would shed more light on understanding them. The criterion of relevance of the historical significance framework is met here. The need to integrate food has been determined by its relevance in helping to understand the themes that are covered in the South African History curriculum. This view does not diverge much from the current structure of the curriculum. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the South African History curriculum does not feature the role of food as a first-order concept regardless of its significant role in the past. This means that, if infused into other themes as proposed by this view, food as a topic would remain hidden in the shadows of those themes.

On the other hand, the findings have shown that some participants were adamant about having food history covered as a separate theme in the South African History curriculum. The participants justified this by stating that having food history covered

as a separate theme will help emphasise it, hence attract more attention towards its significant contribution in shaping the past. However, the participants also noted that because food touches many aspects, even when covered as a separate theme it is bound to touch other themes. This concurs with Ji Yun (2012), Schmalz, et al, (2019), Mark (2017), Calson (2017), Llewellyn and Thompson (2019), Thompson (2001) and Albala (2011) who have shown that food has contributed to conflicts, politics, economics, societal identity in the past – it inevitably touches other themes even when covered separately. The point here is not to exclude other themes when mentioning food, but to rather have food history as one of the main themes under which the themes it touches are covered. Based on this, it can be argued that covering the topic of food as a separate theme in the history curriculum does not necessarily mean that other themes will not be referred to because it inevitably touches numerous themes. This would also mean that maybe the curriculum should be structured based on first-order concepts rather than simply on events-based content. Featuring food history as a separate theme and still referring to other themes signifies food based on profundity and duration. According to Partington (2005), the historical significance of a phenomenon can be determined by the level at which it affects people's lives. It is worth noting that sometimes the effects of one phenomenon can be the cause of totally different phenomena. Now if themes are to be taught separately, and reference is given to other themes, their profundity on those themes will be known. Further, Seixas (2006) and Partington (1980) mention that for an event to be considered historically significant it should have produced results that have affected people for a long time. Given that events can occur within events, for one to understand the actual durability of the former they need to tap into the latter, and this might be impossible if themes are taught in isolation. Reference should therefore be made to affected themes even if food history is covered as a separate theme. Nonetheless, if food as a topic were to be covered as a separate theme its relevance in providing historical understanding will be limited to one theme.

When viewing the contexts within which content on food should be represented, the majority of participants agreed with integrating such from an international perspective. According to the participants, this is because food has not been significant in only one country, but all around the world. A similar view is held by Karon (2018), Kehinde (2013), Schmalz, et al. (2019), and Oktay and Sadikoglu (2018) who concur that food

is known from one place to another which means that covering food from an international perspective will help make better sense of international history. Therefore, if food history were to be covered in the South African History curriculum to highlight its significance, it should not only focus on the history of South Africa, but on international history. The participants argued that doing this will expand learners' understanding of the contribution made by food to history, as the focus will be equally directed to other countries as well. Another justification the participants gave for this view was that what happens in one country inevitably affects other countries. Also given as a motivation for covering the topic of food from an international viewpoint was that it will provide learners with content that is not covered in the South African History curriculum. This could be because food history covers economic, social, and cultural history (Carlson, 2017; Rosinbum, 2019) which would expand historical knowledge if covered in the curriculum. In addition, if learners are taught about food history in the international sphere, they can use the content to understand foreign countries, especially if it they travel to those countries in future. This means that studying food history from an international perspective will be beneficial even in their social life. Taking into consideration the framework that guided this study, reasons given for this view are in line with the concept of historical significance. Learning about the relevant contributions by food to history from an international viewpoint will afford learners the opportunity to learn about the impact of food on world history (Partington, 2005).

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned, a minority of the participants argued that, when making space for the subject of food in the South African History curriculum, rather than giving equal attention to all the countries around the world, South African history should be made a priority. Presentation seemed to be the case here, as participants indicated that the phenomenon should be covered starting with South Africa (national), followed by Africa (continental), then the rest of the world (international). Here the participants signified that food as a topic should be viewed first on its impact on South African history. This aligns with Partington (1980) and Levesque (2005), who signify a phenomenon based on its profundity on the people it impacts and its importance to those people. This was motivated by the desire to have a decolonised curriculum which as it stands prioritises the history of other countries over African history (Mbembe, 2015; Heleta, 2016). As such, the participants contest for a curriculum that places emphasis on South African history first, rather than giving more attention to that

of other countries. This view therefore provides a clear sequence that should be considered when integrating food history into the South African curriculum. It makes sense that participants contested for starting with South African History because the curriculum in question of reconstruction is South Africa's curriculum. As Partington (1980) points out, an aspect can be said to be significant depending on its importance to the people it affects.

Contrary to the first two views regarding the context from which food history should be covered in the curriculum, some participants argued that only South African history should be catered for in the South African history curriculum. This view was motivated by the continued need to decolonise the curriculum by emphasising the history of South Africa. The participants contested that it is mandatory that learners know about the indigenous history of their country before learning about the history of other countries. According to Mbembe (2015) and Heleta (2016), this is the case with the current education curriculum in South Africa as it is still Eurocentric, hence colonial. The call for decolonising the education curriculum is not new in South Africa. This idea has been proposed from the 1950s and has lasted until today (Lebeloane, 2017; Fataar, 2018). Since the South African history curriculum covers global history, this suggests that if the curriculum is reconstructed and this view is considered, only themes focusing on South African history can be delivered. Here the participants signify that the topic of food should be included based on the importance of the phenomenon to the people it affects (Partington, 1980). To them, a phenomenon is important to those it affects hence excluding the need to study the history of other countries. The view also shuns the criterion of relevance within the historical framework as it does not reach its conclusion based on the relevance of the content but rather on context. Thus, stating the only relevant content on food that deserves to form part of the South African History curriculum is only that which is about South African history.

These conflicting views regarding the context from which food in history should be featured carries two meaning. The first meaning is that participants signify food based on its universal significance. The second meaning is that they are limiting its significance to context in the name of decoloniality. This requires an emphasis that decolonialising the curriculum will not necessarily mean excluding content about other

countries, instead it will look at the inclusion of content that is relevant to learners be it local or international content.

Altogether, the findings show that there is space for food in history in the South African History curriculum. The only problem is that the curriculum places more priority on political history than economic and social history, thus automatically side-lining food in history. As the curriculum is a tool utilised and decided by the government, the choice of whether it is featured in the South African History curriculum is a political decision depending on its historical significance to those in authority.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of this study were discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to present conclusions to the whole study. This is achieved by drawing from all the chapters (Chapter 1-Chapter 5) that have been presented in this study. In addition to this, reflections and implications of this study are given.

6.2. Review of the Study

This study was organised into six chapters which are as follows:

6.2.1. Chapter 1

In this chapter, an introduction to the study was presented. The study was contextualised and the centrality of food in society was explained. The rationale and motivation for the study and its focus and purpose were all considered in this chapter. The research questions and research objectives that guided the study were outlined. Thereafter, a brief explanation of historical significance as a conceptual framework adopted to analyse the findings was explained in detail.

6.2.2. Chapter 2

This chapter of the study reviewed literature on the phenomenon of food and provided the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter was made up of four themes relating to food. The first theme developed an understanding of the concept of food. It tried to understand 'what' food is by outlining its nature and the manner in which it is consumed. The second theme explored the meanings attached to the concept of food. Seven meanings of food were discussed: food as a nutrient, food as culture, food as symbolism, food as a societal class indicator, food as medicine, food accompanying leisure, and food as security. The third theme reviews literature on the role played by food in history. This includes the role food has played in economic, political, and social history. The fourth and final theme in this chapter reviewed food in school history focusing on the school curriculum in general and the school history curriculum in particular. After the literature review, the chapter then explained historical significance as a conceptual framework for this study.

6.2.3. Chapter 3

In this chapter, the methodology that was employed to conduct the study was explained. Reasons for choosing interpretivism as a paradigm and locating the study within the qualitative approach were presented. Phenomenology as the research style that was employed and its link to the study were outlined. In addition, a detailed explanation of snowball sampling and its usage in this study were provided. The reasons for employing semi-structured interviews and analysing data inductively were also provided in this chapter. The chapter ended by explaining ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the study.

6.2.4. Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the findings of the study were presented. Six different findings emanated from the data generated. These were presented in themes which were: food as influential to economies, food as influential to politics, food as influential on migration, food as a unifying commodity, food as identity, and food as nutrient. In terms of the space for food as a topic in the South African history curriculum, the chapter showed findings on whether there is space for such a topic in the curriculum and the nature of its inclusion.

6.2.5. Chapter 5

In this chapter, the findings of the study presented in Chapter 4 were discussed in relation to the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2. In addition to this, the findings were analysed utilising an historical significance conceptual framework of the study as was outlined in Chapter 2. These findings were discussed in relation to the research questions and objectives on which this study was grounded.

6.2.6. Chapter 6

This chapter presents conclusions to the whole study. This was achieved by drawing from Chapter 1 right up to Chapter 5 of this dissertation. Thereafter, the chapter presents reflections and implications of this research.

6.3. Reflections on the study

The course of the research has been educative. Conducting this research has been a process of growth some of which was a result of aspects that were expected, and some which came as a surprise. Below is the researcher's reflection on the journey

towards the completion of this study. Firstly, methodological reflection is shared, followed by the reflection on findings.

6.3.1. Methodological reflections

In the early stages of this research in the year 2020, the initial plan was to use history educators as the research population. However, resulting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic that same year, using educators as my sample became almost impossible. This was because at the outbreak of the disease, the whole country (South Africa) went into lockdown. I could not access any schools or teachers. Given the regulations placed by the pandemic at that time, accessing history teachers became arduous because I would have had to wait much longer for permission from the teachers' schools and the Department of Basic Education, and an ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I then changed to utilising 4th year History Education students as the population of my study, because even though there was a national lockdown, I would be able to contact them without breaking any of the regulations. However, having access to the right number of participants was still a challenge which is why I then employed snowball sampling as recommended by Pandey and Pandey (2015) when there is a scarcity of participants. I used a few contacts who were 4th year History Education students. These students knew other 4th year History Education students who could potentially join the sample of my study. I chose 4th year students because at least they were close to completing their degree and were thus the closest to practising teachers. The fact that I was now recruiting my population from only one university meant that I needed permission from only one university, thus reducing the logistical complications. Having 4th year History Education students rather than educators proved to be a success as it gave me an assurance that these students had been exposed to relevant content relating to the topic.

The initial plan was to conduct a contact study. Ultimately, I pursued this on distance mode, which meant that I was bound to experience some challenges, whether expected or unexpected. Some of the most apparent challenges that I experienced include not being able to personally hand pick the participants due to scarcity (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). Instead, I found participants through the few contacts I had; hence I could not guarantee that they would participate in the study with any alacrity. All I had to rely on was that they were familiar with the History Education curriculum; and that

they had acquired sufficient historical understanding over the full three years they had spent at university.

Based on the findings of this study, one can confidently say that the research questions were answered. Generating data that answered the questions was challenging in that firstly, after analysing the data, I realised that some questions had still not been answered, and follow-up questions had to be asked of the participants. Secondly, even after I had managed to generate data that would answer all the research questions accurately, such was minimal, thus insufficient to meet the requirements of the chapter on findings. I then had to conduct more interviews so that I would have enough data. This was a result of using questionnaires instead of face-to-face interviews. I believed that with face-to-face interviews I would have been able to generate sufficient data on the first attempt.

Another aspect worth reflecting on regarding my methodology is my data-generation tool. For this research, data was generated both telephonically and by means of questionnaires. Had the interviews been held face-to-face, the back-and-forth process would have been averted. This is because with face-to-face interviews one can probe further on the spot rather than waiting for the response found in the questionnaire. With questionnaires, I sometimes had to rephrase the questions and resend them to the participants because the way they responded showed that they had not understood the questions, and this was a constraint on its own. Even with telephonic interviews, one still had to consider the maintaining of a stable network connection which would not have been the case with face-to-face interviews. I also believe that some of the participants would have expressed themselves better in face-to-face interviews than in questionnaires and telephonically. Nonetheless, as mentioned in Chapter 3, given the circumstances that obtained during the time the data for this study was generated, conducting distance interviews was the best option, and this option achieved the intended success.

Another challenge was that some participants took too long to complete the questionnaires and return them to me. This posed an added strain on my study. I had to wait patiently for the participants to respond. I tried hard not to create any inconvenience in their lives or daily schedule, thus keeping the promise made on the consent forms.

The challenges mentioned above were major and had a huge impact on the study, given the circumstances the research was conducted under. However, such challenges proved not to be overwhelming. Firstly, using 4th year History Education students instead of educators worked very well. I did not have to pause my study for a longer period, and I was able to obtain my ethical clearance within a relatively short period of time. Secondly, employing questionnaires and cellphones for generating data worked, because it still allowed me to obtain the subjective views of the participants, the questions being open-ended.

6.3.2. Reflections on the findings

This research was guided by three research questions. The first question was aimed at exploring the participants' understandings of the historical significance of food. In response to this question, the findings show that the participants do find food to be historically significant. They explain this by referring to certain times in the past in which food had an impact. These include firstly, the role played by food in economies of the past, as supported by Ji Yun (2012), Schmalz et al. (2019), Ang, Banerjee and Madsen (2010), Saltworks (2020), and Godoy (2015), who shed light on its impact on the lifestyle of past societies. Secondly, food was significant based on its contributions to the politics of the past, as has also been echoed by Smithfield (2017) and Thompson (2001). Thirdly, the findings proved food to be significant because of its impact on migration both in the past and present society, as has been supported by Ebrahim, Jardine and Haw (2018). Fourthly, food was viewed as a unifying commodity (Le, 2017). Fifthly, food was found to be an indicator of identity, with similar sentiments expressed by Kittler et al. (2012), Almerico (2014) and Asi and Teri (2016). Finally, the participants advised that the role of food as a nutrient should not be overlooked because this is the very essence of its significance (Rogers, 2020; Barrell, 2020; Hutchinson, 2019). Some of these points form part of topics covered in the South African History curriculum; however, such points are invisible because the topic does not go beyond nutrient in its representation of food. This, therefore, goes back to the main argument of this paper. Regardless of the significant role played by food in shaping the past, it is underrepresented in the curriculum by being given a meaning limited to food as a nutrient. Furthermore, the findings show that the significance of food is not only limited to certain phenomena, but it is continuous. This has been evidenced through responses that highlight the impact of food in aspects such as

creating job opportunities as part of its impact on economies and its role in highlighting identity. All these responses which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter show that the participants conceptualise food as always a significant part of the society, hence historically significant.

The second and third research questions of this paper were aimed at understanding whether there is space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum. The findings show that there is indeed space for this topic. Participants agree that it should form part of the curriculum. In terms of how this should be done, most of the responses suggested that it be included in themes that already form part of the curriculum. This concurs with the *Procedures and Revisions in Curriculum Development* criteria as outlined in Madadlou and Gharaaini (2014). The paper explains that content for the curriculum should be selected within the borders of the subject matter, hence aligned with existing themes that form part of the subject. However, some responses show that if this is done, the significance of food will remain undisclosed; hence, such should be covered as a separate theme to emphasise its significance. This then responds to the argument that was raised in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The question that was asked is why food history is not covered as a first-order concept in the curriculum, given its significant contributions to the past.

Also worth noting is that, while the findings concur that there is space for food history in the curriculum, they do not exactly identify where that space is. For instance, if food history is to be infused into other topics, which topics are these? Should the topic of food be covered separately, and if so, where should that be done? Before or after which topics? Will the additions mean anything? What makes these questions important is that if new content is to be integrated into the curriculum, a clear method must be in place, as advised in the *Procedures and Revision in Curriculum Development* criteria highlighted in Madadlou and Gharaaini (2014). This then implies that more research is still needed on the space for food history in the history curriculum. For instance, in his *Principles of Curriculum Development*, Fathi (2009) advises that the content covered in the curriculum should relate to social values such as culture and the needs of the country. Similar sentiments are held by Maleki (2008) in his *Curriculum Development: Practice Guide* in which he asserts that content selected for the curriculum must consider cultural heritage and values systems. Both Fathi (2004) and Maleki (2008) agree that the content should relate to and prove useful

to the everyday life of learners. These are some of the aspects that must be considered when making the choice of content selection for the South African History curriculum. Indeed, more research is needed with regard to the space for food as a topic in the curriculum, the focus not being the historical significance – this has already been answered; rather, the process of *integrating the topic of food into the history curriculum* should be addressed.

The findings can also be considered in relation to the issue of decolonising the curriculum mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. On one hand, the majority of the responses show that food history should be covered from an international perspective to highlight its contributions in the history of various contexts. On the other hand, a few of the responses suggest that food in history should only be studied in relation to South African history so as to cater for the decolonisation of the curriculum. Here there seems to be a misconception that excluding content from other countries is a requirement for decolonisation. In fact, decolonisation is not only determined by the content but rather by the manner in which that content is presented. There is evidence that, after the attainment of democracy in South Africa, the history of indigenous people was included in the curriculum, yet the curriculum remained Eurocentric (Mbembe (2015; Heleta, 2016). This is because African history continued to be presented as inferior to foreign history while portraying European superiority. This implies that limiting the contribution of food to only South African history, while excluding other countries does not guarantee decolonisation of the curriculum which students in South Africa have been clamouring for. This is because the point of decolonising the curriculum is not to undermine or eradicate Western and European History – it is to make African history the core of the curriculum (Mbembe, 2015).

Another aspect worth reflecting on is the conceptual framework that was adopted for this study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework of historical significance is made up of five criteria. However, the findings showed that the participants relied predominantly on certain criteria over others. The criterion that was dominant in justifying the historical significance of food in history was *relevance*. The aspects mentioned in relation to food were significant, hence relevant to know and learn about as they add knowledge to one's understanding of the past. This was mostly because food, as a topic, was viewed as a window through which to offer a glimpse into the past. Such coincides with Partington (1980), Seixas (1980) and Levesque

(2005) in signifying food based on its provision of an understanding of the past. The other four criteria were almost evenly considered. The findings have also signified food based on its contribution to the present society, thus proving the conceptual framework that was employed in this study insufficient, it being limited to the past. As a result, a new criterion, 'contemporality', was introduced as one of the criteria for determining the historical significance of a phenomenon. History is a study of the past, together with its effects on the present and future. This means that determining the significance of phenomena should not be limited to the past but should be extended to the present and future society. Contemporality as a new criterion for conceptual framework of historical significance views the direct impact of phenomena on the present society. As with other criteria, this new criterion is open to further development for informed usage in future studies.

6.4. Implications of the Study

This study had various implications for me, both personally and professionally. It has also presented implications for the South African History curriculum and for future research on the topic. These are discussed in detail below.

6.4.1. Personal and professional implications

This study presented me with the opportunity for both personal and academic growth. The phenomenon of food is not popular in the history education discipline. Therefore, throughout the course of this study, I had to keep on explaining its significance. At first, convincing other people to see the significance of food as a key first-order concept in history was difficult. This effort prompted me to grow academically: I was compelled to continually research the phenomenon so that I would be informed enough to explain its significance. Having to conduct an empirical research during a time when a country is undergoing a national lockdown was challenging to say the least. However, this was also an opportunity for growth as I had to familiarise myself with a plethora of research methods with the aim of finding the most suitable for this study. This study helped me develop into a resilient person, given the circumstances under which I conducted this research. However, because it is unique research in my field, there was an eagerness to complete the study and share its findings.

Conducting research of this nature has increased my passion for academia, especially within the history education discipline. The research allowed me to understand that

history is broader than many people assume. From conducting this study, I have come to understand and appreciate the centrality of food as an element of history within various aspects of society. It is particularly so, that food is not only important for consumption. In addition, the study has allowed me to expand my historical consciousness in terms of how history assists in making sense of the present.

It is worth mentioning that being part of the CFS project has not only had an impact on my choice of conducting a study on food, but also on my development as a scholar. During the course of this research, as part of my scholastic responsibilities, I had to complete and deliver progress presentations on my study. During the presentations, I was exposed to several academics who contributed their views on the research. Such views assisted me to establish the trustworthiness of my research.

6.4.2. Implications for the policy

The findings have shown that there is space for food history in the South African History curriculum, meaning that this study has implications for curriculum policy. The curriculum reflects the government's ideals and aspirations usually informed by the past of a given society (Jansen, 1990; Pinar, 2004). It is therefore a political policy whose designing of the content consists of decisions made to teach the ideological beliefs of the country (Dlamini, 2019). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the South African curriculum (CAPS) is aligned with the country's ideologies as reflected in the national Constitution (DBE, 2011). These beliefs include democracy, social justice, equality for all, access to higher education, and preparation for the workplace. This, therefore, connotes that the choice of whether food as a topic should be included as a theme in the South African History curriculum is an aspect that can be decided by the government.

In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education is responsible for developing the curriculum, CAPS (DBE, 2011). The Ministerial Project Committee is then responsible for designing each subject in line with CAPS (South African Government, 2022). The conceptual framework adopted in this study acknowledges the impossibility of studying everything that has happened in the past, which is why curriculum designers decide on what they find deserving of inclusion, in other words, the salient aspects of history (Lomas, 1990; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Seixas, 1994). This implies that the Ministerial Project Committee has made choices and decided which themes deserve to be

incorporated into the curriculum and which themes should be excluded. Evidently, food was found to be historically insignificant, or it was never given a serious thought to begin with. There is always the problem of subjectivity in determining what is historically significant (Lomas, 1990; Seixas, 2006). However, this study reveals that any future curriculum review should consider featuring the topic of food as a theme, based on its significance in the past and to the present.

6.4.3. Implications for future research

The main aim of this study was firstly to understand the historical significance of food before determining whether there is space for the topic of food in the South African History curriculum. The findings have proven that food, as a topic, is historically significant based on the contributions food has made in shaping both the past and the present societies. It has also been proven that there is space for the topic of food in the South African History curriculum. However, the question to whether the topic of food can be added as a first-order concept in the curriculum in reality remains to be seen. This implies that there is still more research needed on the space for food history in the South African History curriculum. The proposed research would need to be systematic in nature whereby the research analyses the actual curriculum in relation to the integration of food as a topic in the curriculum. Consideration must be given to curriculum development aspects that have been mentioned above, together with many others. Although the study will no longer be focused on the significance of food as this has already been answered, it would still maintain its focus on the space for food as a topic in the South African History curriculum in theory.

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APPENDIX A



1 August 2020

Miss Nomkhosi Mhlanga (SN 215014903)
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN
Email: 215014903@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Miss Mhlanga

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Does food History matter?: Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South African History curriculum."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with forth year students in the School of Education on the Edgewood campus. (Taking in account the regulations imposed during the lockdown ie restrictions on gatherings, travel, social distancing etc. ZOOM, Skype or telephone interviews recommended)

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



DR KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR (ACTING)

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

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APPENDIX B



22 September 2020

Miss Nomkhosi Mhlanga (215014903)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Miss Mhlanga,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001874/2020

Project title: Does food History matter?: Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South African History curriculum

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 24 August 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 22 September 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4657 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX C

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE FORM

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nomkhosi Mhlana, a Master's candidate at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood campus in Pinetown.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research entitled "Does food history matter? Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South African History curriculum". The aim and purpose of this research is to explore the views of 4th year History Education students on food history in the South African history curriculum. The study is expected to enroll 8 participants located in the School of education, Edgewood campus. It will involve semi-structured interviews with each participant whereby they will firstly be required to complete a qualitative questionnaire. In addition, telephonic interviews lasting 30 to 45 minutes will be held with each participant. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be two years (2020 to 2021).

Though the study will provide no direct benefits to participants, I hope that the information collected will benefit or contribute towards the understanding of the History discipline.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact me at: (031) 215014903 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The participation in this research is voluntary therefore you may withdraw participation at any point and in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which are normally entitled.

Your personal information will be treated as confidential. Thus, in the report of the study a pseudonym will be used in place of your name.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I _____(name) have been informed about the study entitled "Does food history matter?: Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South African History curriculum" by Nomkhosi Mhlanga.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0631656510 or 215014903@stu.ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX D

Interview schedule

Research title : Does food in History matter? Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South Africa History curriculum

Researcher : Nomkhosi Mightgirl Mhlanga

Participant :

Date :

Questions

1. What is the importance of food in the current society?
2. Do you think food has an impact on how the society functions? For example, looking at politics, economics, etc.
3. Do you think food have played an important role in shaping the past?
4. In what way do you think food have contributed into shaping the current society?
5. Should food History be included in the South African curriculum?
6. If yes, why do you think so?
7. If not, why do you think it should not be included?
 - 7.1. . And what makes it different from other first order concepts that it should not be included?
8. If food Histories were to be included in the South African History curriculum, how do you think this would contribute towards learners understanding of the past?
9. Which of the food Histories do you think would need to be included in the South African History Curriculum? For example, International, Continental or just South African
 - 9.1 Why do you think so?

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Name :

Date :

contact details:

1. How has food contributed to shaping the economies of the past in terms of how it was produced, supplied, and consumed by the society?
2. How did food change or influence the lifestyle of the people who lived in the past?
3. What impact did food have in the politics of the past?
4. How will the inclusion of food in the curriculum benefits learners?
5. If food be included in the curriculum, how should this be done? Should it (food in history) have its own section, or it should be infused in other topics throughout the curriculum?
6. Based on your response where you said food should be included, did you mean it should be included just as something that is eaten or as something that has played a role in shaping the past or both? Please elaborate.

NB: You I allowed to write in your preferable language be it easy Zulu or English. this is so that you explain your response thoroughly

APPENDIX E



Pinpoint Proofreading Services

40 Ridge Rd

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Durban

3610

09 July 2022

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Lydia Weight, have proofread the document titled: Does food in history matter? Exploring 4th year History Education students' views on food in the South African history curriculum by Nomkhosi Mhlana. I have made all the necessary corrections. The document is therefore ready for presentation to the destined authority.

Best regards

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Lydia Weight.

L. Weight

DOES FOOD IN HISTORY MATTER? EXPLORING 4TH YEAR HISTORY EDUCATION STUDENTS' VIEWS ON FOOD HISTORY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY CURRICULUM

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