Thinking Through Food in South Africa:

Identities, Embodiment and Representation

Edited by

Desiree Lewis

Vasu Reddy

Relebohile Moletsane

Heather A. Thuynsma

ESI

Thinking Through Food
in South Africa:
Identities, Embodiment and
Representation

ESI

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Part 3 – Representing and Imagining Food

Foreword

Janaka B. Lewis, Ph.D.

When we sit at individual or communal tables, we consider each other and our senses before taking a single bite. We think about what brought us to the table, who we are eating with, what meal will be served and possibly even where the food is from. In South Africa, which Lewis, Reddy, Moletsane and Thuynsma describe as 'home to diverse cultures, histories, food heritages, culinary landscapes, food-growing and food-buying environments that collectively spice the food eaten and enjoyed by individuals and groups in the country', food is sustenance, an access point, historical and cultural marker and much more. *Thinking Through Food in South Africa: Identities, Embodiment and Representation* explores the ways in which individuals define themselves and their role in society through food, including its role in school-based historical curriculum, alternative food networks, community-supported agriculture, intergenerational rituals and exchanges and as Nomkhosi Mhlanga argues, 'historical significance [in the ways that] it influences economics, politics, migration and social cohesion'. More than a study of ingredients, this book holds and guides a multi-layered conversation about food as home, practice and community.

Key to this volume is its definition of the field of critical food studies in its interdisciplinarity and, rather than the lens of natural studies, expanding focus to humanities with some incorporation of social sciences. Expanding beyond incorporation and elevation of food narratives, the collection also, through a number of entry points, explores impact on small-scale farmers—closure of social grant pay points in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal and rural livelihoods and ability of these farmers to sell in these spaces (Shabalala), and as Vermeulen argues, 'racialized distribution of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital' based on citrus farmworkers in Limpopo province, South Africa. The book pays specific attention to the roles of marginal urban farming by women, with Masuku highlighting their role in gaining economic empowerment, agency and food security, use of unconventional urban spaces and changing narratives of land access in the ways that they shape local food systems and urban agriculture policies. Tamako and Chitja continue the focus on small-scale urban farming in KwaZulu Natal's Sobantu township, with a focus on barriers to land ownership related to financial issues, resources and land use, extending the argument that ownership and empowerment for women is critical for 'sustainable urban agriculture and improved livelihoods'. In these narratives,

women drive and change the narrative of food access on multiple levels.

While leaving room for the possibilities of the indulgent and of food as creative poetics, this critical volume leaves us with critical food studies and analysis as an "ideal lens" to examine complex relationships in politics, economy, and social and cultural dynamics. It highlights women, including grandmothers in knowledge transition, in the value of food production and access, and explores implications of food security and the significance of social networks. While contributing to the role of food in maintaining gendered systems and constructions of identity, subjectivity and conferral of power through food, *Thinking through Food* also explores the creation of food archives—cookbooks, memories and even as Bota contends, the silences that influence how we understand these archives.

Wnuczek-Lobaczewski uses food to offer historical analysis of narratives told by women who sent letters and *pakkies* (parcels) to service men, and in the imaginative possibilities of archive and narrative, multiple authors examine food stories as 'alternative lens[es] through which one can observe important local histories'—Christian Afrikaaner histories, food and recipes as carriers of memory (and challenges to fictive constructions of memory through Steele's critical attention to Disney's Animal Kingdom Park) and visual essays (as Du Preez and Bleeker focus on the collaboration around the Elandskloof garden project). As Bester offers, 'food is slippery', and so we conclude with black middle-class South Africans eating practices as symbolic capital, food as connections with nation and identity, Black gay mens' consumption of food as experience of community (Sibeko) and the role of food in local media. Throughout this book, the idea of local holds meanings that are relative and relevant to the story(ies) being shared, including the community itself.

As they focus on the significance of the specific values of food in South Africa, the perspectives offered in *Thinking Through Food in South Africa* are expansive. The authors connect to community-based narratives outside of local space (including Psyche Williams-Forson's focus on Black American food practices), as they create and reveal unique lenses of critical significance. Food is critical, social, political, communal and most of all, cultural. Each narrative leads us to a greater understanding of the power held by food and its practitioners, demanding that we listen *and* engage as we consume.

―――――――――――――――――――――――

Chapter 1

Towards a New Palate:
Thinking Through Food in South Africa

By Desiree Lewis, Vasu Reddy, Relebohile Moletsane and Heather A. Thuynsma

South Africa is home to diverse cultures, histories, food heritages, culinary landscapes, food-growing and food-buying environments that collectively spice the food eaten and enjoyed by individuals and groups in the country. Despite the significant issues of access for many, due to the well-documented class and buying-power differences among the country's people and between communities and issues of class and cultural affiliation in relation to taste, there is often considerable blurring, sharing, admixture and fusion among the country's foods (Anderson 2014; Balirano and Guzzo 2019; Civitello 2011). From *pap*[1] and *umqombothi*[2] to weekend *braais* (BBQ), vibrant curries and the varieties of *melktert* (milktart)*, pickled fish to koeksisters/koe'siestas,*[3] food is not only an essential sustenance, it is also a powerful tool for appreciating and critiquing South Africa's social and political complexity (Bodic 2021). One of the most important elements in South African food is its blatant heterogeneity: The foods and cuisines that different South Africans enjoy reach back to violent and tumultuous pasts of apartheid, migrant work, white settler domination and cultural hegemony, highly exploitative domestic labour and slavery. However, food growing, cooking, food choices and eating habits never only reflect histories of domination, pain, trauma and resistance, they also tell wide-ranging narratives of legacies of creativity, ingenuity, fortitude and joy. Therefore, the idea of an authentic South African cuisine or food (as if foods are ever "authentic" and untainted by hybridisation or globalisation) is a fallacy (Cheung and Wu 2013 who address similar debates regarding Chinese food). In addition, like the Africans transported to the United States (US) as slaves, different groups whose experiences of forced relocation, migration, slavery or economic exploitation in South Africa, obliged them to abandon and modify many foods and foodways they originally knew (Bower 2009; Wallach 2015). As the documentary film, *High on the*

11

---

1   Soft bread-like staple food made mainly with maize/corn meal.
2   African traditional beer.
3   The distinction between the two, one very sweet and associated with Afrikaner cuisine and a Dutch legacy, and the other spicy and flavoured by aniseed, cardamom and other spices, grew out of tastes brought over by Indonesian slaves.

Hog clearly illustrates, current cooking and food tastes in the US, often popularised as "American" by African Americans, have their roots in various African dishes, although they have since evolved due the sharing, admixture and fusion with other groups in the country as well as others globally.

In South Africa, what people can grow (if they have access to land), what they can buy (if they are not unemployed or have poor or no access to food markets) and what and how they cook, significantly influences their food choices. As discussed above, some of the main reasons can be linked to the country's history of the intense and far-reaching patterns of colonial settlement and apartheid domination, with forced migration, slavery and social dislocations of communities. Consequently, even a very brief reflection of how food has travelled and changed with people, how it has morphed as people migrate, interact, struggle or create, conveys how much it says about complex social and historical processes. The task for critical food studies, then, is not simply to add food to already-known histories, narratives or analyses of cultures, or politics of social process, but to provide a lens that allows one to think differently, in more nuanced ways and hopefully, think more productively about our world. Critical Food Studies, a relatively new field of academic study within South Africa, moves beyond understanding recipe development and the practice of culinary techniques. It is used instead to explore people's identities, different relationships between and among them, their cultures (Mintz and DuBois 2002) and the personal and collective politics that flavour our daily lives (Stanley, Lewis and Mafofo 2023).

What is Critical Food Studies?

This is usually the first question one is asked when claiming to work in the field of Critical Food Studies (Ashley et al. 2004; Belasco 2008; Miller and Deutsch 2009). First, the asking of the question is itself intriguing, since in many ways the meaning is self-evident: it involves a critical and usually interdisciplinary approach to the multiple relationships between eating, preparing, meaning making around ritualising or producing food on one hand, and human experiences on the other. These experiences are underpinned by social locations and histories, cultural meanings and semiotics and pay attention to political economy and ecology, which indicates that 'you can't have a serious conversation about food without talking about human rights, climate change and justice. Food not only affects everything, it represents everything' (Bittman 2021: xiv).

As Bittman (2021) and many other food scholars argue, food studies constitute a "field" because of

12

its interdisciplinary range and its steady consolidation in scholarship and knowledge generation globally. Such consolidated work includes taught courses (see for example, undergraduate and postgraduate courses at universities such as Indiana, Arizona, Michigan and others in the US), dedicated journals (for example, *Food Studies: An International Journal, The International Journal of Food Studies, Gastronomica: The Journal of Food Studies*), anthologised scholarly chapters and accessible yet incisive essays, podcasts, conferences and many kinds of digitally circulated resources.

Food studies, often now better-known as Critical Food Studies, distinguish the field from applied food studies, food science and technology studies, scientific studies of food and agriculture. These draw on disciplines in the natural sciences and are concerned primarily with issues such as increasing reliable food productivity, ensuring food safety and regulation. Critical Food Studies can also be distinguished from public health approaches, food security studies, food sovereignty studies, food justice studies and land and livelihood policy and scholarly work. With these approaches to food, the emphasis is placed on the physiological well-being of individual bodies and group's food access and health, rather than on the symbolic meanings attached to food and eating, the aesthetics and taste of food, the memories and associations that connect certain foods and food events to social and cultural ones. Epistemologically, the field of Critical Food Studies draws on some methods, approaches, core issues and insights from social sciences and natural science disciplines.

13

Moreover, as a field of study, Critical Food Studies are invariably inter- and multidisciplinary; it would be counterproductive to neatly separate it from "what it is not". What is distinctive about Critical Food Studies is that it turns to food as an optic for directing attention to the semiotic, cultural, social and historical meanings and legacies of food. Consequently, it avoids fixating on clear-cut answers to such questions as: How does one produce safe and nutritious food? Which groups dominate the world food system or what political strategies are needed to overturn this? How can increasing production assist with solving hunger and starvation in the world today? Which technical, scientific or organisational strategies can increase or transform food production for the future? While these may all be important questions, Critical Food Studies seeks to address rather than to ask the how and why questions; questions distinctive to the humanities and some branches of the social sciences. As the chapters in this book will illustrate, these include: How do people make sense of their worlds through food? How is food linked to a sense of national belonging and identity? Which discourses guide particular interest groups, communities or societies to approach

food in certain ways and what are the underpinnings of these discourses?

Despite the dearth of scholarship that addresses these questions in South African scholarship, these questions preoccupy many citizens' everyday lives globally. The questions also drove the earliest food studies scholarship in the early and mid-1900s, including Raymond Williams (1973) (on taste), Roland Barthes (1982), Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and Claude Lévis Strauss (1978). In the wake of this work, feminists from different disciplines went on to deepen and extend the field to include what food means to humans and different societies, how power relations evolve in relation to food access and food work, how ideas about taste are linked to classed and caste standards (Turner 2018) and even how food smells have special resonance in thinking about classed norms and hierarchies, food tastes and memories or the desire and yearning for emotionally and biologically fulfilling sustenance (Elabdali 2024). As discussed above, in many parts of the global north, food studies scholarship, driven from humanities perspectives, has made tremendous inroads into academic teaching and publications. Indeed, the writings of critical scholars such as Michael Pollan (2014), has popularised Critical Food Studies as a field of study and research across contexts.

14   The rapid upsurge of humanities-driven work on food has not occurred in South Africa as fast as it has in the global north. It is as though the human complexities that food inevitably raise were being erased in dominant trends in the scholarship, with food being confronted mainly as a source of physical sustenance and gustatory pleasure and nutrition. Consequently, in South Africa and in many other parts of the global south, food is studied in agricultural and natural sciences and related fields focussing on such areas as food security and food sovereignty. The assumption—whether explicit or implicit—is that food must be confronted primarily or only as a resource for human survival or productivity. As Richa Nagar asserts, this fixation with the 'hunger of the belly' is the 'common sense handed down to us by dominant frameworks that require us to separate hunger of the belly from hunger of the soul, unemployment form resistance, activism from spirituality, social justice from poetic justice, law from poetry' (Nagar 2019: 178). The utilitarian, positivist and productivity-focussed orientation of much food studies neglects the human dimensions of food, and what it means. While most scholars who approach food studies from this orientation often argue that, if the serious crises around food access and hunger in South Africa warrants attention, the humanities, the poetic, the playful, the ambiguous or complex are indulgent. This book insists that this is not the case, arguing that critical humanities that use food as an optic, work, allowing us to understand much more about our pasts, presents and future worlds that we might assume.

This chapter introduces the theoretical underpinnings of Critical Food Studies and explores three key concepts—identity, embodiment and representation. The aim is to help develop a more nuanced appreciation for South Africa's food practices, experiences and complex power dynamics. As demonstrated in the three sections that make up the rest of the book, these issues frame the chapters, with the subheadings (to which we return in respective sections framing connected chapters) largely constituting over-arching areas for current and emerging work in humanities-oriented food studies—both in South Africa and beyond. The centrality of these categories, as well as many of the concepts, key arguments and subject matter are, therefore, pivotal to evolving work in the relatively new trans-disciplinary field of food studies.

Food as a marker of self and other

Understanding an individual's sense of self and how this reflects the social and cultural groups, is an intricate process. Critical Food Studies scholars, keen to untangle some of this complexity, use food as a marker to map how individuals and communities interact and shape their sense of being. Such mapping includes examining how food choices, culinary practices and dietary restrictions symbolise who we are and who we are not. The act of eating, therefore, transcends biological necessity, and becomes an expression of our cultural heritage, values and beliefs. Stuart Hall's (1990) approach to understanding identity as a process of "becoming" aptly explains this interaction. According to Hall, identities are constantly constructed and negotiated when they interact with other actors. A prime example of this negotiation is the mapping of *foodways*, which explores how food practices, beliefs and rituals are shared. Foodways evolve as cultures mingle as well as in response to shifting political priorities. Perhaps the most obvious example of this dynamic is how, under apartheid, food practices were used to assert racial hierarchies and determine a particular sense of belonging. For example, a *braai* symbolised white leisure culture and became synonymous with alcohol and rugby. Post 1994 and the end of the legal apartheid, there have been efforts to incorporate the *braai* tradition into black South African culture as a marker of their own evolving identities (Nugent 2010). This evolution was encouraged by anti-apartheid activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu to push the country's National Heritage Day holiday (24 September) to be celebrated as National Braai Day. It may be safe to assume that Archbishop Tutu's reasons included a deliberate attempt to develop not only a unified national identity among the racialised groups (by the apartheid system), but also a national culinary heritage inclusive of all. This effort has, however, been contested with some black South Africans rejecting the term *braai* as an attempt to mute national dialogue on race and

15

ethnicity (Yount-Andre and Zembe 2023).

Theories of intersectionality also acknowledge how interactions between race, class, gender and sexuality mould identity, which is seen most obviously through the food practices that either reinforce or challenge these intersecting power structures. As the chapter by Brian Sibeko in this volume illustrates, a commonly cited example is that of black South Africans who consume "luxury foods" like sushi or who buy groceries from high-end grocery stores, the so-called status consumption of food. Such consumers are perceived as upwardly mobile individuals whose social status includes disposable income and whose consumption behaviour effectively reinforces racialised wealth disparities (Kaus 2013). Others include those who use status consumptions as a strategy to improve their social standing in a society that usually marginalises them (for example, black gay men).

On a personal level, our food choices and culinary practices illustrate the stories we tell about ourselves. These "culinary narratives" have been influenced by family recipes and recipe books (Cusack 2000; Englebrecht 2013), such as the South African bestseller *Kook 'n Geniet* (Cook and Enjoy) that have been passed down through generations. They are also reflected in the way restaurants adapt their menus (Fisher and Du Rand 2022). In addition, food allergies, religious dietary laws and ethical food choices have also shaped perceived identities and navigating these restrictions in social settings highlights the essential social aspects of food.

Essentially, food can be a source of division or a bridge connecting individual choices to the broader social context. Food is a key marker that shapes one's perceptions of self and one's interaction with others. Food can define boundaries while also fostering connections and helping us appreciate social differentiation and our distinct cultural identity.

Intersection between food, embodiment and the body politic

In many ways our understanding of self, overlaps with embodiment (Steel and Zinn 2017). From this perspective, food can embody our sense of injustice and inequity and the very act of eating can be a form of political expression and activism.

Before food is ingested and tasted, it is experienced both physically and through the sensory

dimensions of food practices. The textures, aromas and flavours in a dish evoke joy, memories, traditions and a connection with one's cultural past which ultimately influences social hierarchies, a nation's identity and its political discourse. In an extreme example, Donna Haraway's (1991) '*Cyborg Manifesto*' offers an interesting perspective on how our bodies interact with food and food production practices. Such practices, Haraway argues, include the use of pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the growing popularity of processed foods that are often marketed to low-income communities, which affect our bodily health. In similar arguments, food studies scholars have also noted the influence that large food corporations have on policymaking and are keen to explore how policy prioritises profit over public health. Gómez (2022) has explored this relationship in Mexico and Brazil, while Igumbor et al. (2012); Abdool Karim, Kruger and Hofman (2020) and Mialon, Crosbie and Sacks (2020) have all examined the industry's influence on South Africa's policy making processes.

In the South Africa context, studying the embodied food experience illustrates the unequal power dynamic that is baked into the food landscape (Kesselman 2023). Access inequality is often linked to the so-called "food deserts" in low-income communities, which highlight and reinforce divisions within the country's social fabric and political consciousness (Caesar and Crush 2016). The persistent spatial and racial inequalities that continue to separate South African communities have also limited access to fresh, healthy foods, leading to higher rates of malnutrition and diet-related diseases, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. This has led scholars to investigate how formal and informal food sources overlap and interact to create social exclusion and malnutrition (Battersby 2019; Battersby and Crush 2014).

17

Rising to challenge these inequalities, the broader food justice movement, particularly those pushing the concept of food sovereignty (Moyo and Thow 2020), are lobbying for systemic change and healthier outcomes. To ascertain the merits of such a recipe, Kanosvamhira (2024) examined how urban community gardens could be included in a model for harvest sales that fosters sustainable urban agriculture and food justice in the global south. Similarly, Yount-André and Zembe's (2023) focussed on how social inequalities determine the political significance of eating meat versus choosing a vegetarian diet.

Representing and re-imagining food

Long before the surge of work in transdisciplinary food studies, scholarship by cultural studies scholar and philosopher, Roland Barthes (1982), anthropologist Claude Lévi Strauss (1978) and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) explored the intricacies of food's semiotic and interpretive meanings within certain societies, among groups, and transnationally. Often drawing directly or indirectly on these scholars' insights, food studies scholars have recognised that food is never simply a material resource, but always redefined within specific symbolic and meaning-making systems. The very fact that what constitutes "food" is often defined culturally, and what is deemed edible or not, or special or mundane in different contexts, makes it clear that it is never devoid of social and cultural signification. An obvious example is that for many French people, snails are a delicacy, whereas for those who are unfamiliar with the idea of a mollusc being edible, ingesting these creatures seems abhorrent. In South Africa, many ethnic groups find eating tripe, trotters and "offal"[4] pleasurable. Yet for others, the idea of eating the head or intestines of a sheep is appalling, although these same people may find raw fish (which they fondly call sushi) highly enjoyable (unimaginable as food for certain offal eaters of cooked meat).

18

One of the first rules in acknowledging that food is always socially constructed, represented and imagined, is to respect the relationality of the meanings accorded to specific food items or cuisines, and to accept how varied food tastes and meanings are respected. One crucial way of ensuring this respect is by understanding the histories through which certain foods come to be valued under certain socio-political circumstances. To take the example of offal in South Africa, we could speculate that many South Africans had limited access to all parts of butchered animals or ate as much as possible of what an animal could provide or ate what was discarded by those who had the buying and social power to choose. A similar explanation has been given for why the intestines of pigs (known as chitlins) have been important in black American cuisine. However, some black food scholars have stressed that attributing food tastes only to what groups must eat because of their limited options, distorts the agencies and culinary inventiveness of socially and historically marginalised groups. Consequently, how food is represented and valued cannot be explained solely because of socioeconomic factors, but has much to do with the sensory, olfactory, visceral and aesthetic meanings that certain foods, food rituals and dishes hold for certain groups.

---

4   Offal can include inner organs as well as the heads of animals such as sheep and goats, and is relished by many Namaqualanders (Nama people from the Namaqualand region of Namibia and South Africa), for example.

Critical Food Studies in South Africa: Pedagogical and research aims

Within the South Africa context, Critical Food Studies have been used to reimagine current debates on food and to push them past a mere systems analysis and towards a more active engagement. Scholars in the field aim to critically examine food landscapes and surface issues such as ready access, equity and sustainability of food sources. In addition, others are keen to balance these issues with the persistent effects of colonialism and apartheid which continue to exacerbate food and health inequalities in the country. These inequalities have prompted scholarly interest in Alternative Food Networks (AFN) and how these initiatives are able to make access more just and sustainable (Bos and Luke 2016; Cerrada-Serra et al. 2018; Jarosz 2008). Furthermore, scholars such as Mert-Cakal and Miele (2022) have studied the potential of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)—community gardens and farmers markets—to understand how their ecological and social values might potentially mitigate the effects of the world's industrialised food system. However, despite their potential benefits, there is much debate about how accessible CSA initiatives are for low-income households (Vasquez et al. 2016), and whether they reproduce social inequalities (Guthman 2011; Moragues-Faus and Marsden 2017).

19

As an academic field, Critical Food Studies seeks to push beyond such systems analyses and is instead used as a lens through which to recognise, reimagine and reinvigorate the study of food as an entry point into understanding relationships, identities, histories and social justice/injustice in society. To illustrate, a few studies have explored how food is produced, consumed, what it symbolises and how it shapes South African society (Muimba-Kankolongo 2018). As discussed throughout this chapter, Critical Food Studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field that matches the ubiquity of food and mixes perspectives from history, anthropology, sociology, economics and nutrition to create much richer insights. As Cargill (2005) argues, much like other interdisciplinary areas such as women's studies and critical African studies, the field of critical food studies encourages scholars of all stripes to synthesise various disciplinary theories and methodologies.

Centring South Africa's unique socio-political experience within the broader field of Critical Food Studies, presents an underexplored angle in the field, with the potential for extrapolating local experience to the global level, including, among others, the chapters elevating marginalised voices, such as those of small-scale farmers, informal food vendors and communities struggling with food insecurity included in this book. As described in the special issue *Gender Questions* on

'*Critical Food Studies in South Africa: Feminist Perspectives*' (Lewis and Reddy 2021), including these voices has the potential to facilitate a more just and nuanced representation of food. Furthermore, by identifying key issues, new research into South Africa's food landscape is possible. Such research aims to challenge dominant narratives and evolve a more just and sustainable food future that can physically and metaphorically feed this society.

One of the most exciting pedagogical and research features of this book is its evolution that involved frequent engagement between established scholars and new-generation and postgraduate writers. Several years ago, the book was identified as a key project in a programme dedicated to expanding research, supervision and new generation writing in the field of Critical Food Studies. Several journal special issues have also come out of this work (*Gender Questions,* a special issue on *Critical Food Studies in South Africa: Feminist Perspectives*; an issue of Food Studies in South Africa for *Matatu, A Journal of African Culture*, Agenda's special issue, *Transnational Perspectives on Gender, Food and Ecology* and a special issue titled *Reading Africa Through Food* for the *Journal of African Cultural Studies*). What has been striking in working with mainly young authors for this book and in the journal issues, has been their excited and passionate perceptiveness about the rapidly changing food worlds, that are so intimately connected to transforming subjectivities and intersecting social locations. It is as though the dynamism of food worlds in the present—whether we see this optimistically (for example, new creolised foods and new ways of food travelling among groups) or pessimistically (alarming changes in foodscapes, food processes and shocks for our environment), these dynamics are being taken extremely seriously as foci for theoretically rigorous and nuanced empirical studies. As the framing sections that introduce each subsection in this book will demonstrate, much of this work indexes the pivotal ideas of earlier food studies scholars, such as Roland Barthe (1982), or scholars whose work has now come to be used extensively in food studies, such as Pierre Bourdieu (1984), or the long traditions of feminist scholars who have consistently foregrounded the centrality of domestic work, of kitchen politics and texts such as recipes as important archives. This work, especially in South Africa, deserves to be deepened, expanded on and even challenged, whether through various forms of academic publications, or through supervised dissertations and thesis by new scholars and writers who have become increasingly interested in what is both so quotidian and necessary for all humans, yet also very complex and fascinating.

20

References

Abdool Karim, S., Kruger, P. and Hofman, K. 2020. Industry strategies in the parliamentary process of adopting a sugar-sweetened beverage tax in South Africa: A systematic mapping. *Global Health*, 16(116). DOI:10.1186/s12992-020-00647-3

Andersen, E.N. 2014. *Everyone eats: Understanding food and culture.* 2nd edition. New York and London: New York University Press.

Ashley, B., Hollows, J., Jones, S. and Taylor, B. 2004. *Food and cultural studies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Balirano, G. and Guzzo, S. (eds). 2019. *Food across cultures: Linguistic insights in transcultural tastes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barthes, R. 1982. *Empire of signs.* Translated by R. Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.

Battersby, J. 2019. The food desert as a concept and policy tool in African cities: An opportunity and a risk. *Sustainability*, 11(2): 458. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020458

Battersby, J. and Crush, J. 2014. Africa's urban food deserts. *Urban Forum*, 25(2): 143–151. DOI:10.1007/s12132-014-9225-5

Belasco, W. 2008. *Food: The key concepts*. New York: Berg.

Bittman, M. 2021. *Animal, vegetable, junk: A history of food, from sustainable to suicidal*. Houghton Mifflin.

Bodic, S. 2021. *The ultimate South African cookbook*.

Bos, E. and Luke, O. 2016. Virtual reconnection: The online spaces of alternative food networks in England." *Journal of Rural Studies,* 45: 1–14.

Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Translated by R. Nice. Harvard University Press.

Bower, A.L. 2009. *African American foodways: Explorations of history and culture*. University of Illinois Press.

Caesar, M. and Crush, J. (2016). *Urban food deserts and climate change in Africa's hungry cities*, (No. 3) (pp. 1–10). HCP Discussion Papers.

Cargill, K. 2005. Food studies in the curriculum: A model for interdisciplinary pedagogy. *Food, Culture and Society,* 8: 115–123. 10.2752/155280105778055371

Cerrada-Serra, P., Moragues-Faus, A., Zwart, T.A., Adlerova, B., Ortiz-Miranda, D. and Avermaete, T. 2018. Exploring the contribution of alternative food networks to food security. A comparative analysis. *Food Security*, 10: 1371–1388.

Cheung, S.C.H. and Wu, D.C.H. (eds.). 2013. *The globalization of Chinese food*. Oxon & New York: Routledge.

Civitello, L. 2011. *Cuisine and culture: A history of food and people*. 3rd edition. John Wiley & Sons.

Cusack, I. 2000. African cuisines: Recipes for nation building? *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 13(2): 207–225. DOI:10.1080/713674313

Elabdali, R. 2024. *Yalla Nutbikh* "Let's cook": Negotiating emotions of belonging through food in heritage language classrooms. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(S1): 56–74.

Engelbrecht, F.R. 2013. *Visual consumption: An exploration of narrative and nostalgia in contemporary South African cookbooks*. University of Pretoria.

Fisher, H.J.H. and Du Rand, G.E. 2022. Promoting South African indigenous and cultural foods through contemporary menu adaptations - A case study. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 11(SE2): 1685–1697. DOI: https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.317

Gómez, E.J. 2022. The politics of ultra-processed foods and beverages regulatory policy in upper-middle-income countries: Industry and civil society in Mexico and Brazil. *Global Public Health,* 17(9): 1883–1901. DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2021.1980600

Guthman, J. 2011. If they only knew. The unbearable whiteness of alternative food. In: AH Alkon and J. Agyeman (eds.)*, Cultivating food justice: Race, class and sustainability,* (pp. 263–281).

Hall, S. 1990. Cultural identity and the diaspora. In: J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community*, *culture*, *difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, (pp. 222–237).

Haraway, D. 1991. A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist- Feminism in the late twentieth century. In: D. Haraway (ed.), *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge. pp.149–181.

Igumbor, E.U., Sanders, D., Puoane, T.R., Tsolekile, L., Schwarz, C., Purdy, C. et al. 2012. Big food, the consumer food environment, health, and the policy response in South Africa. *PLoS Medicine*, 9(7): e1001253. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001253

Jarosz, L. 2008. The city in the country: Growing alternative food networks in metropolitan areas. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24: 231–244. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.10.002

Kanosvamhira, T.P. 2024. Cultivating food justice: Redefining harvest sales for sustainable urban agriculture in low-income Cape Town post Covid-19. *International Journal of Urban Regional Research,* 48(2): 280–292. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.13224

Kaus, W. 2013. Conspicuous consumption and "race": Evidence from South Africa. *Journal of Development Econ*omics, 100(1): 63–73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2012.07.004

Kesselman, B. 2023. Transforming South Africa's unjust food system: An argument for decolonization. *Food, Culture & Society*, 27(3): 792–809. DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2023.2175483

Lévi-Strauss, C. 1978. *The origin of table manners*. Mythologiques, 3. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Lewis, D. and Reddy, V. 2021. Guest editors' introduction: Special issue on critical food studies in South Africa: Feminist perspectives. *Gender Questions*, 9(1): 1–4. DOI:10.25159/2412-8457/8436.

Mert-Cakal, T. and Miele, M. 2022. 'Workable utopias' for social change through inclusion and empowerment? Community supported agriculture (CSA) in Wales as social innovation. In: *Social innovation and sustainability transition,* (pp. 307–326). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Mialon, M, Crosbie, E and Sacks, G. 2020. Mapping of food industry strategies to influence public health policy, research and practice in South Africa. *International Journal of Public Health,* 65: 1027–1036. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-020-01407-1

Miller, J. and Deutsch, J. 2009. *Food studies: An introduction to research methods*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Mintz, S.W. and Du Bois, C.M. 2002. The anthropology of food and eating. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31(1): 99–119.

Moragues-Faus, A. and Marsden, T. 2017. The political ecology of food: Carving 'spaces of possibility' in a new research agenda. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 55: 275–288.

Moyo, B.H. and Thow, A.M.T. 2020. Fulfulling the right to food for South Africa: Justice, security, sovereignty and the politics of malnutrition. *World Nutrition,* 11(3): 112–152.

Muimba-Kankolongo, A. 2018. *Food crop production by smallholder farmers in Southern Africa: Challenges and opportunities for improvement*. London: Academic Press.

Nagar, R. 2019. *Hungry Translations: Relearning the World through Radical Vulnerability.* Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Nugent, P. 2010. Do nations have stomachs? Food, drink and imagined community in Africa. *Africa Spectrum,* 45(3): 87–113.

Pollan, M. 2014. *Cooked: A natural history of transformation*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Stanley, B.J., Lewis, D. and Mafofo, L. 2023. South African food studies: Introduction. *Matatu*, 54(1): 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1163/18757421-05401001

Steel, L. and Zinn, K. (eds.). 2017. *Exploring the materiality of food "stuffs": Transformations, symbolic consumption and embodiments.* London and New York: Routledge.

Turner, B. 2019. *Taste, waste and the new materiality of food*. Taylor & Francis.

Vasquez, A., Sherwood, N.E., Larson, N. and Story, M. 2016. A novel dietary improvement strategy: Examining the potential impact of community-supported agriculture membership. *Public Health Nutrition*, 19(14): 2618–2628.

Wallach, J.J. (ed.). 2015. *Dethroning the deceitful pork chop: Rethinking African American foodways from slavery to Obama*. The University of Arkansas Press.

Williams, R. 1973. *The Country and the City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yount-André, C. and Zembe, Y. 2023. Consuming inequities: Vegetarianism, climate crisis, and political upheaval in South Africa. *Anthropology of Food*, 17. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/aof.14021

25

Part 1:

From Table to Thought:
Savouring Food Studies through the Social Sciences
and Humanities

Food and its study are influenced by culture, history and a range of socio-political factors. When combined, these factors form a complex mix of relationships that define who we are as individuals and the broader society we form. Through food, we can view our past—our history of colonialism and apartheid—and understand how our present choices are shaped by a fusion of cultures.

As the title suggests, the authors in this section will touch on issues and methodologies that stem from the social sciences—historical and heritage studies, political sciences and sociology—to centre marginalised voices and challenge dominant narratives. The chapters that follow will discuss issues of access, inequality and the power dynamics related to food. Using key concepts such as food justice and food sovereignty, these scholars explore alternative food networks, community-supported agriculture, the political implications of dietary choices and the cultural meanings associated with different foods.

This section starts with a chapter by Nomkhosi Mhlanga who argues that food has historical significance, since it influences economies, politics, migration and social cohesion. This is why South African student teachers have advocated to include food in the history curriculum, because doing so will forge a better understanding of food's impact on society, particularly its social structures and divisions. Mhlanga argues that integrating food thoughtfully into the curriculum can enrich historical learning and reflect its role in shaping society. Ultimately, decision-making for curriculum content remains a political process, however, incorporating food as a first-order concept holds promise for enriching historical learning.

Nkululeko Shabalala follows with an article which explores the closure of social grant pay points in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Shabalala traces how this move has harmed small-scale farmers, food

access and community unity. According to the study, the tactic has undermined rural livelihoods by disrupting traditional markets, limiting access to fresh produce for vulnerable groups and effectively disconnected these groups from traditional food networks. This reflects, and indeed echoes Mhlanga's findings, that food systems have become politicised and for Shabalala, highlights the need to support informal markets and re-evaluate food accessibility in rural areas.

The chapter by Gabe Vermeulen further investigates this political dynamic, however, from a more sociological perspective. Vermeulen's study is an ethnographic study that examines the precarious lives of citrus farmworkers in Limpopo, South Africa. Using a Bourdieusian framework, the study reveals how farm owner's technocratic discourse obscures the employer-employee dynamic, effectively reinforcing labour exploitation and socio-economic vulnerability. The owner's rhetoric legitimises inequality and perpetuates a racialised distribution of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital in South Africa's agricultural sector.

Michelle Masuku's chapter studies the overlooked practice of marginal urban farming by women in Harare, Zimbabwe and highlights its role in economic empowerment, food security, and women's agency. Marginal urban farming involves cultivating crops in unconventional urban spaces and challenges the traditional agriculture discourse. Using Feminist Political Ecology and Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Masuku highlights women's contributions, challenges in land access and the need to recognise their role in shaping local food systems and urban agriculture policies.

Nthabeleng Tamako and Joyce Chitja conclude this section with a study that incorporates essential factors alluded to in each of the preceding chapters. The authors investigate small-scale urban farming in KwaZulu Natal's Sobantu township and focus on land access, gender disparities, and the importance of urban agriculture for food security. The authors highlight the challenges urban farmers, especially women, face in accessing land. Their analysis emphasises the need for collective action, community involvement and gender-sensitive practices to overcome obstacles such as financial limitations, resource scarcity and land use conflicts. Tamako and Chitja find that addressing land ownership and empowering farmers, particularly women, is crucial for sustainable urban agriculture and improved livelihoods.

Chapter 2

Does Food in History Matter? Food in the South African History Curriculum

By Nomkhosi Mhlanga

Introduction

When one thinks of food, one customarily focusses on its taste, how filling it is and sometimes even considers the effects it has on our bodies. This is because the significance of food in society is normally generalised to its consumption and nutritional value (Kittler, Sucher and Nelms 2012). However, research on foodscapes and foodways has shown that its significance goes beyond its consumption and nutritional value. Foodways offer a lens through which one can understand how human identity is constructed (Janowski 2012). This coincides with Kittler et al. (2012: 4) who perceive food consumption as a 'reaffirmation of cultural identity'. Asi and Teri (2016) add that food can preserve the essence of culture across generations; and Almerico (2014) views food as a definition of a person's cultural identity. Strongly evident in all foodscapes are the politics, economy, sociology and ecology that surround food items, food production and eating (Dolphijn and Amilien 2020). According to Twilley, Graber and Gastropod (2016), food is an engine of empires and revolutions. This is because foodscapes can either unite, divide or transform societies (Smithfield 2017; Twilley et al. 2016). For example, the establishment of the refreshment station in 1652 in Southern Africa led to colonisation which not only stripped the "natives" of their land and freedom, but also undermined and disregarded their consent in their own land. This had ripple effects on the country that have lasted till today, and it changed South Africa forever in terms of what it was to its people and the rest of the world. This shows how food, through foodscapes, allows one to understand how humanity is continuously changing (Dolphijn and Amilien 2020), and the very specific local, national and global histories contributing to these changes.

Regardless of its centrality in society, there is a dearth of literature on food from the humanities perspective and specifically, that of history education. The South African History curriculum (Department of Basic Education 2011), both at school and at teacher education levels, is silent

29

on food as a first-order concept. This is because scholarship on food tends to be limited to its consumption and nutritional value (Kittler et al. 2012). Food studies in universities are predominantly found in the natural sciences (Alimi 2016; Ranadheera, Baines and Adams 2010) where food is only viewed as a nutrient people need to survive (Ranadheera et al. 2010). When viewed in line with the historical significance of conceptual framework, food cuts through all its criteria as it is important to humanity (importance), affects many people (quantity and profundity), has a continuous impact on society (durable) and helps understand past and present society (relevance and contemporality). According to Levesque (2005), Partington (1980) and Seixas (2006), these are what determine a phenomenon's historical significance and it therefore, makes sense why food should be considered when studying history.

Furthermore, despite the abundance of emerging scholarship on the need to decolonise the curriculum in post-independence African society (Lebeloane 2017), the South African school curriculum still requires more work for this to be achieved. According to Fataar (2018), during colonisation in Africa, the educational curriculum at secondary and tertiary levels paid little attention to indigenous knowledge since it was regarded as primitive, hence, irrelevant. Indigenous knowledge was not featured in the curriculum: it was 'regarded as weak and untrustworthy, both in terms of theory and of methodology' (Mahabeer 2020: 98). Decades into democracy, the South African education curriculum has been criticised for still being Eurocentric, as was the case during colonialism (Mbembe 2015). This Eurocentrism is inextricably connected to the devaluation of indigenous knowledge. In many ways, knowledge of food is remarkably like indigenous knowledge, since it is often commonsensical and based on every day and lived experiences, it is learnt and knowledge about it is transmitted (for example, in families, through adverts or through parents and caregivers) and it is linked to the senses, especially pleasure and a sense of belonging and communal identity. Thus, from learning about food in history, its meaning and its significance in passing down generational teachings, learners will grasp an understanding of how indigenous knowledge has been maintained and sustained over the years.

Mahabeer (2020) argues that it is pointless to advocate for the decolonisation of the curriculum in higher education if less effort is put into the school curriculum. For Fataar (2018), decolonising the education curriculum involves selecting humanity's knowledge to be incorporated into the university and school curriculum. In the case of the school curriculum, the calls for decolonisation of South African education culminated in the Department of Basic Education proposing that

history be made compulsory by 2023 (Davids 2016; Ndlanzi 2018; Pather 2018). This followed the demands made by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) whose members view history as key to the propagation of knowledge aimed at producing patriotic South African youth (Davids 2016). This suggests that there is a need for the history curriculum content to be thoroughly revised. Since decolonising the curriculum involves incorporating humanity's knowledge (Fataar 2018), food as a commodity and form of material culture that cuts through all societal spheres is relevant to experiential, grounded and cross-cutting understandings of one's place in the world. Focussing critically on food means critically confronting everything that surrounds food.

One way to promote a 'more-than-food' (Goodman 2016: 1) perspective on food and its centrality in society when integrating it into the school history curriculum, is by looking at its contributions to meaning-making and wide-ranging socio-political and economic processes. Because the school history curriculum aims at covering key areas, including politics, the economy, social relations and cultural dynamics, food can serve as an ideal lens.

Acknowledging the role that food has played in peoples' lived experiences and identity constructions over time, the study discussed in this chapter aimed to understand student teachers' views on the space for "food talk" in the South African history curriculum. The study addressed the research question: Is food significant in the South African history curriculum? The narratives of student teacher interviewees/participants contribute to a better understanding of the precise significance of food discourses in educational matters related to humanities, which is where individuals can develop their critical literacy and ability to participate in building democratic public spheres.

The historical significance of food

The narratives of the above study revealed food to be an ageless substance whose role in society is permanent. This is because of the commodity's ability to influence various interrelated spheres that assign meaning to society. Among the areas and topics often referred to in narratives were political economy, migration, social cohesion, identity construction and food as fundamental human rights. Although discussed in separate themes in this chapter, these aspects overlap, as it is often difficult to understand one without touching on the others. What appeared to be a consistent thread in the narratives, was how food was acknowledged as being both timeliness and universal, as well as being constantly given meaning and cultural or economic significance *under certain circumstances* and *at*

specific moments. While the study looked at food in a historical context, its narratives extended its significance to present and future societies as well. This correlates with Seixas (2006), who views the past, present and future as a connected whole.

The political economy of food

Starting with food in politics, due to its uncontested value and significance resulting from its centrality to humanity, food has influenced superpower countries to assume control over other countries (Smithfield 2017; Twilley et al. 2016). This explains why food, as a valuable resource, is counted as a primary motivator of conflicts associated with colonialism. It is interesting to reflect on how student teachers connected their historical knowledge to both their own understandings of food and to their sense of what school learners could find interesting or engaging. For example, some participants stressed that it was after realising the agricultural potential of southern Africa that Europeans constantly alienated the indigenous people's land. The dire need for food, amongst other resources, made several countries fight over owning a portion of "African soil", knowing the wealth it would generate for them; hence, the Europeans resorted to colonising the continent. In southern Africa, conflicts relating to the ownership of fertile land have continued to the present day. This makes food economically significant in history for its continued (durable) impact on society. Further, learning about this could offer an important and engaging way for learners to concretise the logic of colonialism. Even when it comes to preventing conflicts, the resource as a bargaining commodity had a tremendous impact, since it was utilised to negotiate relations between opponents. Research participants in the above study referred to examples of King Shaka and King Moshoeshoe of southern Africa, who established "alliances and support" using cattle during the *Mfecane*, the great Nguni wars of the 1700s. This example seems especially significant, since it encourages students to understand how "ethnic conflicts", often seen as being innate and driven by irrational feelings, were connected to economically rational conflicts and forms of negotiation. Since some ethnic battles did not involve formal land ownership or money (as features of a colonial political economy), it is through thinking about food as a resource that one can make economic sense of the battles. Generally, these narratives provide "relevant" understanding since they explain how food acted as a driving force behind political phenomena in the past, thus affirming its historical significance. This resonates with Partington (1980), who historically signifies a phenomenon based on its provision of relevant information for understanding the past.

Another thread that surfaced in the narratives was the complex economy of food, namely, the production, supply, and the consumption of goods and services by society (Kenton 2019). The narratives of the study show that the area inhabited by hunter-gatherers was determined by food availability. When the environment failed to produce food, inhabitants were forced to move to maintain its supply. With the introduction of farming by the Bantu speakers in southern Africa, they were no longer dependent on food gathering, since they could now produce a surplus. This shows how their intrinsic desire to maintain food security controlled the peoples' lives. Because food provides "relevant" insights into how the pre-colonial society of southern Africa functioned, it was deemed historically significant.

Participants also examined how food has shaped "modernity". Food had a significant impact on the development of several modern technologies, all aimed at increasing and maintaining its production and availability to society. This was noted in Mhlanga (2022: 51), who points out that 'the Industrial Revolution is evidence of that fact … the introduction of new technologies for agriculture and farming … all due to food production demand'. Technologies such as the threshing machinery and seed drill invented during the Agricultural Revolution in Britain between the mid-seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, are all examples of technologies whose invention was motivated by the need to increase and maintain food production (Ang, Banerjee and Madsen 2010). This addresses a gap in existing histories for reconsidering historical and technological developments in other contexts, especially southern Africa. According to Mellet (2020), in *The Lie of 1652*, southern Africa witnessed many technological innovations before the 1600s connected to indigenous people's efforts to produce, process, cook and preserve food. This evidence counters the tendency to celebrate only movements such as the French Revolution or the Industrial Revolution as markers of modernity, a concept that looks at 'conditions of social existence that is significantly different to all forms of human experience' (Shilliam 2010: 1). Such evidence can, therefore, play a key role in encouraging teachers, with their students, to play an active role in directly decolonising history curricula.

33

The participants of this study reflected on how, at some point, European countries used food to increase their profits and dominance over the world by manipulating other countries into valuing products controlled by Europe. For instance, the example of the role of sugar in slavery and European monopolies over markets is crucial and has the potential to activate the interests of students in studying the past. Participants recognised how strong a role sugar has played in making many countries economically dependent on the exports of countries in the global north.

They noted how many countries like China, were manipulated into making sugar an important part of their diet, they were, therefore, trapped into buying sugar from European countries, the main producers of sugar. This allowed European countries to maintain their dominance and influence and increase their profits all at once. Recognising the role sugar played in promoting slavery and driving slave plantations globally, the participants noted how in order 'to increase the global supply of sugar, there was the establishment of plantations, particularly in the Caribbean and Brazil' and they brought Africans over to be enslaved workers in the plantations (Mhlanga 2022: 54-55). This proves food to be historically significant for its long-lasting effects (durability) on society, as in modern times, tea and many other diets are still served with sugar in many parts of the world. What is evident is that the participants used food to explain historical political economy dynamics, using what they are familiar with to understand the broad content of global politics and economy. This shows how through food, history can be made more relatable and simpler to understand as students will be utilising familiar content on food to understand and make sense of bigger and broader topics covered in the history curriculum.

Also worth noting is that food production is not only limited to agricultural activities or large factories. After the harvesting, processing and packaging of agricultural products in big factories, they undergo other processes, including preparation for consumption as a meal. In many societies, people who are mostly involved in this part of food production and processing, are women (Ma 2015). This has a lot to do with societal views and culture (more to be discussed later), however, it also impacts the production sphere of the economy. Therefore, by including roles played by food in shaping history, learners' attention will also be drawn to gender issues that have a significant impact on society.

Food and migration

In conventional school history curricula, the topic of migration is often approached in disembodied, abstract ways; ways that easily make school learners disinterested. The dynamic and exciting processes of the movement of human beings resulting from slavery, colonial conflicts, forced labour processes, migrant labour as well as subordinate groups' resistance to oppression, can frequently seem abstract and remote. Learners, who have an everyday understanding of the value and meanings of food, could therefore, acquire deep understandings of the complexities of migration if it were examined through the lens of food. As the study participants indicated, this

is especially important in the context of southern Africa, where humans were forcibly moved, or moved themselves in relation to various groups' efforts to build up food surpluses or basic food resources.

It is significant that seeing the movement of humans in relation to food struggles, can encourage insight into historical processes in the past, as well as into social history in the present. For example, school learners could quickly learn how to analyse the experiences of the many African migrants who currently live and work in South Africa and send money to families in counties such as Malawi and Zimbabwe.

As the narratives made clear, these current processes are linked to past ones. Student teachers reflected on how food influenced hunter-gatherer societies to migrate regularly. The area where they initially migrated to and how long they stayed depended on the availability of food in those areas. Even after the introduction of farming, droughts forced inhabitants to migrate so they could grow crops. The participants pointed out that 'African people who relied on farming and hunting as a source of food were forced to move to another place which has fertile soil to plant crops', suggesting food was the cause of migration (Mhlanga 2022: 57). This is affirmed by Hamilton et al. (2016), who argue that the migration of the Bantu was based on food availability. If food had not been as *important*, they would not have been compelled to migrate, thus, showing that food was historically significant due to the profound impact it had on their lives. Taking a glance into modern southern Africa, the reason for the first major migration of large numbers of Indians into the region was for agricultural purposes, with this largely determining why the largest population of persons of Indian descent living outside of India, is in South Africa. The fact that this migration changed the demographic profile of southern Africa, historically signifies the importance of food, firstly, because its impact was significant, and, secondly, as it produced long-lasting results. This also shows that the commodity was historically significant, for as Levesque (2005) and Partington (1980) contend, historically significant phenomena are based on their "importance" to those who experienced them.

35

For migrants in contemporary society, eating and drinking plays a specific role of their identity. In a foreign land, migrants 'fossilize' their foodways to maintain their identity (Dolphijn and Amilien 2020: 10). However, foodways do not only keep migrants tied to their native identity, they also allow for cultural transition into the foreign society, hence, altering the initial cultural identity of

migrants as they adapt to the new society. Therefore, even though they are a marker of identity, foodways are not static, but are continuously changing (Janowski 2012). What is central to African culture today, was once foreign. For this reason, food helps identify the change in societal culture and identity, as through migration and foodways, identity is continuously modified.

Food in identity construction and social cohesion

Narratives acknowledged how food maintains unity amongst people regardless of their different backgrounds and that this has not only been the case with past societies, but throughout generations. When preparing cuisines for ceremonial events, people contribute based on their gender and age. Food preparation then creates an atmosphere during which teaching and learning of generational values about womanhood and manhood are passed on to the younger generation. According to one participant, in the past, during food preparation, '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' (Mhlanga 2022: 59). Hence, food can unite individuals with common values and ways of life, as it maintains generational values (Le 2017). On closer inspection, however, one finds that the very same values sustain gender and age stereotypes in one way or another (Kittler et al. 2010; Ma 2015). For example, since ancient times, women have been given "feminine" responsibilities, such as cooking and serving food, while men are responsible for tasks considered "masculine", such as slaughtering cattle and making a fire to cook. Even when it comes to serving food, there is a belief in "serving the best for man" whereby larger portions of food are served to men rather than to females. Hence, while food maintains unity, it eventually provides an opportunity to sustain gender stereotypes. Nonetheless, food has served as a tool for the continuous (durable) transmission of values and social expectations, thus reassuring its historical significance.

The role of food work in maintaining gendered systems has been mentioned previously, and the importance of this subject for learners is clear. Narratives seemed to indicate how certain neglected areas in the curriculum, namely gender and the social cohesion of groups warrant careful analysis of their complex and ambiguous meanings. The curriculum usually presents social processes as though they were stable, and their meanings were clearcut. Through attending to the role of food in society, students could be made aware of how ambiguous and multi-layered historical processes are. In other words, "history" cannot consist of fixed narratives told from one perspective;

"history", as decolonial scholars insist, always consists of partial knowledge and particular groups' interpretations.

The narratives revealed that foodscapes and foodways play a significant role in the construction of identity. Foodways connect people to their culture and religion. According to the study participants, this is because 'food is also tied to religion and ritual', and therefore, it 'plays a big role in helping us identify the different cultures and heritages that exist in the modern society' (Mhlanga 2022: 62). It serves as symbolism (Asi and Teri 2016), since certain food commodities symbolise taboos and totems in some cultures, therefore, people refrain from eating those foods (Asi and Teri 2016). As a result, people's food preferences mostly have to do with their culture (Almerico 2014), since food is a reaffirmation of the culture to which one belongs (Asi and Teri 2016; Boutaud, Becuţ and Marinescu 2016). Hence, paying attention to the individual's foodways helps to understand their cultural identity. This then signifies food based on its association with culture and religion in the current society.

Moreover, it was found that foodways are significant in identifying the societal financial hierarchy to which one belongs, be it the lower-, middle- or upper class. This resonates with Miller et al. (2016) who look at how food choices are highly influenced by affordability rather than preference. For example, during the 1780s in France, people in the lower class only ate "dark" (brown) bread, because that was what they could afford, while white bread was a luxury only afforded by those in the middle- and upper class (Almerico 2014). This remains the case as even participants point out that 'in the 21st century food defines our class and identity especially now that the food prices have increased rapidly, people buy what they can afford' (Mhlanga 2022: 60-61). As such, analysing the monetary value of food an individual eats, can inform one of the financial class to which the individual belongs. This is because foodways are an excellent indicator of the different classes that form society (Toivonen 1997), which signifies food on the bases that it presents a lens that offers an understanding of people's socio-economies.

Foodscapes illuminate the food practices that determine the inclusion and exclusion of people in public spaces based on class (Dolphijn and Amillien 2020). This inclusion and exclusion between the socio-economic classes is transparent, especially in foodscapes such as grocery stores. As per narratives in Mhlanga (2022: 61), 'income do influence people's choices of food because … those who are rich will eat food that is more expensive while those who are in need [poor] will eat normal

[basic] food'. Different shops cater for different socio-economic classes (Kar et al. 2021). While those in the middle- and upper class can afford the expensive healthy food offered in high-status stores, the indigent and thrifty purchase most of their food in one-dollar stores that, unfortunately, sell mostly highly processed and unhealthy food (Kar et al. 2021). This means that grocery shops as foodscapes also play a role in maintaining and making the socio-economic divisions that exist in society, transparent. Contemporality in historical significance is evident in this narrative as it mainly highlights the role of identifying the division that exists in foodscapes in the present society.

Food as a basic human right

Found to cut through all insights about food was its indubitable significance in maintaining life. Again, it is worth noting how learners can be taught about human rights or democracy as though these were abstract. Yet, the narratives of education students as teachers in the making, revealed how much students could understand true democracies, and develop insights into critiquing undemocratic practices, if they attended to food: what it consists of; who controls it; how it becomes a resource as a commodity and—in the present day—how it is bought and by whom. This is because food provides the body with nutrients that are compulsory for keeping it functioning well (Butler 2024). Whether one is young or old, male or female, it is mandatory that one consumes a certain amount of nutrients daily. No wonder food is counted among the most important resources (together with water and air) required for human survival. One participant stated that it '*helps us to stay alive*'. This is why food security can be considered a basic human right. Food security is not simply having something to consume to fill one's stomach; instead, it can only be attained 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' (Porter et al. 2014: 490). Unfortunately, this human right to food security is sometimes hindered by phenomena, such as wars, droughts and natural disasters. An example of such a phenomenon is the scorched-earth policy during the South African War in 1899. Here food was historically signified, firstly because of its "importance" for maintaining life, and, secondly, because of its unending (durable) impact (profundity) on everyone's (quantity) lives, as all people must eat.

Conclusion

The narratives analysed in this chapter allow one to see concretely that food is indeed historically significant. The views of participants, who are already familiar with the existing history curriculum, who have deep interests in making history relevant and concrete to their young learners and who were eager to reflect on the teaching and learning possibilities of a neglected concept, can give one a grounded and general sense of the role of food.

The crucial step towards reserving space for food as a first order concept in the South African history curriculum requires an end to conceptualising food's significance in a shallow manner that only focusses on its consumption. The resource (which also, as explained, has tremendous cultural meanings) should be conceptualised as an agent in shaping the political, economic and social complexities of the past. The narratives discussed in this chapter clearly make a call—from a young generation of aspiring teachers—for the revision of the South African history curriculum, since it ignores the significant role played by food. It often refers to food incidentally and as a tangential element. History, however, does not address food as a factor that either drove or is at the centre of massive processes, such as migration. To correct this, equal room should be made for economic, social and political societal affairs, rather than only prioritising politics over other spheres, as is the case with the current South African school history curriculum. Content to be included should be decided upon using the six criteria of historical significance to avoid meaningless integration of facts, as warned by Peck (2009).

Since food is closely linked to culture, integrating it into the South African history curriculum will allow for the teaching of social norms and their implications in society. Moreover, this could be done in ways where students have a very clear, direct and lived experience of how food has affected their own sense of self—for example, in classed, gendered, racialised or ethnic ways. This aligns with the writing of Fathi Vajargah (2009) and Maleki (2008), who support teaching and learning about social values and culture in curriculum content. Since food cuts through all societal spheres, especially culture, integrating it into the school history curriculum will result in having learners that are well-informed in terms of South African diversity. This way, the history curriculum will not only equip learners with historical content, it will also prove to equip students to play active and productive roles as critical citizens with the potential to build truly democratic public cultures. While many might debate whether this necessarily means working with the state, it can contribute to society in meaningful ways that are not narrowly economic and political.

39

At this point, it is clear that food is historically significant and it should have a place in the South African history curriculum. However, considering that a curriculum is a planned policy, there are still aspects that must be noted when integrating content on food into the curriculum. For example, from which context should this content be featured? Various, yet similar narratives emanated from this study in response to these thoughts.

Looking at the prioritisation of content, on one hand, the narratives stated that food should be infused with themes that already form part of the South African history curriculum. This is because food does not exist in isolation; many of the phenomena covered in the South African history curriculum were influenced by food in one way or another. Literature reviewed in the present study showed that food has indeed contributed to several topics covered in the South African history curriculum (see Brinkman and Hendrix 2011; Ebrahim, Jardine and Haw 2018; Eldredge 1992; Johanneson et al. 2014). This means that infusing food into the curriculum will elucidate understanding of these phenomena and their impact on society. Therefore, featuring food as a separate theme will not be an informed choice.

40   On the other hand, a minority of the study's participants opposed the integration of food into existing themes. These participants believed that food should be featured as a separate theme '*so it is emphasised, and learners realise its importance*' in shaping the past. The view is self-contradictory as the participants acknowledged the fact that food inevitably touches topics that already form part of the South African history curriculum. According to participants, although covered separately, it would 'automatically ... attract some other sections such as slave trade, migration of Bantu people, the arrival of the white at the Cape, etcetera' (Mhlanga 2022: 68). Since the aim would be to emphasise its significance, a solution to this problem would be to structure the curriculum based on first-order concepts, rather than event-based content. The conceptual difference here is that the former focusses on foodways and foodscapes, and the latter looks at only historical events. Hence, structuring the curriculum based on first-order concepts rather than event-based points to create equal space for economic, social and political spheres, rather than only prioritising politics.

As part of understanding how food should be integrated into the South African history curriculum, contextualisation was also considered. The reason for enquiring on the context from which food should be featured, was to address the ongoing issue of decolonising the South African school curriculum, as was stated in the introduction. Most of the participants called for the integration of

the international content of food in history, because history is not an island. The commodity 'has built relationships with other countries and has rotated for years from country to country therefore focusing on one country would make no sense' (Mhlanga 2022: 68). Similar sentiments are shared by Karon (2018); Kehinde (2013); Oktay and Sadikoglu (2018) and Schmalz et al. (2019). Also, what happens in one country sometimes affects other countries, hence, justifying covering food from an international perspective. Although in support of this narrative, some advised that South African history be prioritised before other countries. In contrast to these two narratives, a minority advised that food should only be covered in cases where it contributed to shaping South African history to decolonise the South African history curriculum by exposing learners to their own history before the history of other countries. Here it was argued that 'S.A … history should be a priority because we should learn about us, our history, our identity first before exploring others' (Mhlanga 2022: 71). This clearly called for a curriculum that is written from a South African perspective for South Africans. As was stated, the call for decolonising the curriculum is not new, as Heleta (2016) and Mbembe (2015) have stated that the current South African education curriculum is still very much Eurocentric, even after years into democracy. Therefore, to correct this, the integration of food in the South African school history curriculum should be done with the decoloniality in mind.

41

It has been shown that a curriculum is a policy designed not only to equip learners with subject-specific knowledge, but to also promote the country's constitutional ideals largely informed by the country's past (Dlamini 2019). In South Africa, given its experience under colonialism and apartheid, the curriculum aspires to uphold ideologies associated with equality, democracy and diversity. Therefore, food qualifies as a first-order concept in the South African history curriculum, since it is a commodity that does not isolate, but rather cuts through all races, genders and ages, thus, aspiring to the country's ideologies. Sadly, since the curriculum is a policy designed by the government and by those in power, the decision to reserve space for food in the South African history curriculum remains a political one.

If food contributed to several events covered in the history curriculum, why exclude it? Why sideline its contributions when counting the causes of successes or failures of these events? This might be because there is no clear strategy for integrating it into the curriculum; meaning, since the historical significance of food has been proven, future research should take a step towards exploring means of systematic procedures of infusing it seamlessly into the curriculum in consideration of already existing themes and governmental aspirations.

References

Alimi, B.A. 2016. Risk factors in street food practices in developing countries: A review. *Food Science and Human Wellness*, 5(3): 141–148.

Almerico, G.M. 2014. Food and identity: Food studies, cultural, and personal identity. *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies*, 8(1).

Ang, J., Banerjee, R. and Madsen, J.B. 2010. *Innovation, technological change and the British agricultural revolution*. CAMA Working Paper No. 11/2010, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1668132 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1668132

Asi, L.N. and Teri, D.T. 2016. Influence of food taboos on nutritional patterns in rural communities in Cameroon. *International Review of Social Research*, 8: 2–6.

Boutaud, J.J, Becuț, A. and Marinescu, A. 2016. Food and culture. Cultural patterns and practices related to food in everyday life. Introduction. *International Review of Social Research*, 6(1): 1–3.

Brinkman, H.J. and Hendrix, C.S. 2011. *Food insecurity and violent conflict: Causes, consequences, and addressing the challenges*. World Food Programme, pp. 513-520.

Butler, N. 2024, January 19. *How long can you live without food?* Healthline. https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/how-long-can-you-live-without-food

Davids, M.N. 2016. Making history compulsory: Politically inspired or pedagogically justifiable? *Yesterday and Today*, 15: 84–102.

Department of Basic Education. 2011. *National curriculum statement: Curriculum and assessment policy.* South African Government. https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicyStatements(CAPS)/CAPSFET/tabid/570/Default.aspx

Dlamini, R.K. 2019. *History teachers' experiences of the implementation of the Eswatini (Swaziland) general certificate of secondary education (SGCSE) history curriculum.* Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu Natal.

Dolphijn, R. and Amilien, V. 2020. *FOOD2GATHER–negotiating foodscapes: An introduction*. Oslonet.

Ebrahim, F., Jardine, V. and Haw, S. 2018. *Viva social sciences: Grade 6 learners book*. Vivlia Publishers and Booksellers: Florida Hills, RSA.

Eldredge, E.A. 1992. Sources of conflict in Southern Africa, c. 1800-30: the 'Mfecane' reconsidered. *Journal of African History*, 33: 1–35.

Fataar, A. 2018. Decolonising education in South Africa: Perspectives and debates. *Educational Research for Social Change*, 7(SPE): vi-ix.

Fathi Vajargah, K. 2009. *Principles and concepts of curriculum planning*. Tehran: Wing Publishing.

Goodman, M.K. 2016. Food geographies I: Relational foodscapes and the busy-ness of being more-than-food. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(2): 257–266.

Hamilton, M.J., Lobo, J., Rupley, E., Youn, H. and West, G.B. 2016. The ecological and evolutionary energetics of hunter-gatherer residential mobility. *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews*, 25(3): 124–132.

Heleta, S. 2016. Decolonisation of higher education: Dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa. *Transformation in Higher Education*, 1(1): 1–8.

Janowski, M. 2012. Introduction: Consuming memories of home in constructing the present and imagining the future. *Food and Foodways*, 20(3-4): 175–186.

Johanneson, B., Fernandez, M., Roberts, B., Jacobs, M. and Seleti, Y. 2014. Focus: History grade 10. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Kar, A., Motoyama, Y., Carrel, A.L., Miller, H.J. and Le, H.T. 2021. COVID-19 exacerbates unequal food access. *Applied Geography*, 134: 102517.

Karon, T. 2018. The bittersweet (and spicy) history of South African cousins. Retrieved from https://explorepartsunknown.com/south-africa/the-bittersweetand-spicy-history-of-south-african-cuisine/

Kehinde, M. 2013. Trans-Saharan slave trade. In: F. Bean, and S. Brown (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Migration*. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6179-7_30-1

Kenton, W. 2019. *Economy: What it is, types of economies, economic indicators*. Retrieved from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economy.asp

Kittler, P.G., Sucher, K.P. and Nelms, M. 2012. Food and culture (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Le, C.B. 2017, January 07. *What food tells us about culture*. Freely Magazine. https://freelymagazine.com/2017/01/07/what-food-tells-us-about-culture/

Lebeloane, L.D.M. 2017. Decolonizing the school curriculum for equity and social justice in South Africa. *Koers*, 82(3): 1–10.

Lévesque, S. 2005. Teaching second-order concepts in Canadian history: The importance of 'historical significance'. *Canadian Social Studies*, 39(2): 1–2.

Ma, G. 2015. Food, eating behavior, and culture in Chinese society. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 2(4): 195–199.

Mahabeer, P. 2020. Decolonising the school curriculum in South Africa: Black women teachers' perspectives. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 5(1-2): 97–119, DOI:10.1080/23802014.2020.1762510

Maleki, H. 2008. *Curriculum. Development: Practice Guide*. Tehran: Madresh Publications.

Mbembe, A. 2015. *Decolonising knowledge and the question of the archive*. Lecture delivered at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Mellet, P.T. 2020. *The lie of 1652: A Decolonised History of Land*. Tafelberg.

44

Mhlanga, N.M. 2022. *Does food in History matter? exploring 4th year History education students' views on the space for food in the South African History curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation).

Miller, V., Yusuf, S., Chow, C.K., Dehghan, M., Corsi, D.J., Lock, K., Popkin, B., Rangarajan, S., Khatib, R. Lear, S.A and Mony, P. 2016. Availability, affordability, and consumption of fruits and vegetables in 18 countries across income levels: Findings from the Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology (PURE) study. *The Lancet Global Health*, 4(10): e695–e703.

Ndlazi, S. 2018, June 1. *History to become a compulsory subject from 2023. Independent Online*. https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/history-to-become-a-compulsory-subject-from-2023-15261637

Oktay, S. and Sadıkoğlu, S. 2018. The gastronomic cultures' impact on the African cuisine. *Journal of Ethnic Foods,* 5(2): 140–146.

Partington, G. 1980. What history should we teach? *Oxford Review of Education*, 6(2): 157–176.

Pather, R. 2018, May 31. *Education task team – History should be a compulsory school subject from 2023*. Mail and Guardian. https://mg.co.za/article/2018-05-31-education-task-team-history-should-be-acompulsory-school-subject-from-2023

Peck, C.L. 2009. *Multi-ethnic high school students' conceptions of historical significance: Implications for Canadian history education.* Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia.

Porter, J.R., Xie, L., Challinor, A.J., Cochrane, K., Howden, S.M., Iqbal, M.M., Lobell, D.B. and Travasso, M. I. 2014. *Food security and food production systems*.

Ranadheera, R.D.C.S., Baines, S.K. and Adams, M.C. 2010. Importance of food in probiotic efficacy. *Food Research International*, 43(1): 1–7.

Schmalz, D.L., Joyner, L., Duffy, L.N., Bricker, K.S. and Blomquist, K.K. 2019. The cycle of food socialization: leisure as resistance. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 23(4): 1-20.

Seixas, P. 2006. Benchmarks of historical thinking: A framework for assessment in Canada. The Center for the Study of Historical Consciousness. *Recuperado el*, 16: 1–12.

Shilliam, R. 2010. Modernity and modernization. In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.

Smithfield, B. 2017, July 20. *Salt's value to mankind precedes recorded history-it has served as a currency and cause of war.* The vintage news. https://www.thevintagenews.com/2017/07/20/salts-value-to-mankind-precedes-recorded-history-it-has-served-as-currency-and-cause-of-war/

Toivonen, T. 1997. Food and social class. *Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics*, 21(4): 329–347.

Twilley. N., Graber. C. and Gastropod. 2016, August 23. *The salt wars*. The Atlantic.

Chapter 3

Death of a Market: Social Grant Pay Points and their Effect on Food Inequality, Farmer Opportunities and Communities in KwaZulu-Natal

By Nkululeko Shabalala

Introduction

*M*r Ndlovu is a rural and old-aged small-scale farmer who gets his pension at a local community hall. He is a small-scale farmer who uses the group of pensioners at his local community hall to sell his surplus maize and other crops to that he cultivates. One day Mr Ndlovu was expecting to go and sell his surplus maize and receive his pension at the local community hall, only to find that the cash van was not at the site. He was been advised that, from now on, he must collect his pension money at any of the nearest major supermarkets. This is because the government has decided it will change the system through which Mr Ndlovu receives his pension. However, Mr Ndlovu lives a far distance from the supermarkets where he must collect his pension. Mr Ndlovu now needs to request assistance with transport fare and at the same time, he cannot sell his surplus crops because there is no longer a market that used to support him by buying his maize and other crops. Mr Ndlovu and his community have been robbed of an opportunity to grow their businesses and extend their social ties by giving out credits. Together with other small-scale farmers, he saw this market as a viable element to sell his produce and other consumable items. Local food cultures included unconventional fresh produce that involved amadumbe (a type of root vegetable), corn and beans, when prepared together, called umngqusho. Moreover, this market also played a critical role in introducing imfino, a wild leafy vegetable to the locals.

47

The above analogy seeks to provide a brief explanation in lay terms of the negative impact the alteration of dispersing social grants from local community venues to big supermarkets had on both the recipients and the small-scale farmers who sold in this market. Additional income from social grants has a positive impact on economic activities by easing the rural household's financial constraints (Sinyolo, Mudhara and Wale 2016) and compelling them to shop at big supermarkets. This is ironic since cash transfers are a policy instrument aimed at building household resilience

in terms of access to food. Social grants' intended and unintended impact on different outcomes have been investigated at length in South Africa (Sinyolo et al. 2016). Moreover, Sinyolo et al. (2016) argue that cash transfers lead to dependency and a culture of entitlement among recipients. Other studies suggest that cash transfers discourage participation and investment in agricultural production activities through increased reliance on purchasing food in markets, and not from urban areas (Kajiita and Kang'ethe 2016). Moreover, critics argue that social grants create dependency and therefore, do not promote sustainable growth and development of recipients (Sinyolo et al. 2017; Tshuma 2012).

Moreover, this market was created by local people without external intervention, and to an extent, it involved "unconventional" fresh produce, which formed part of the local food culture, explaining why some of this produce escaped the attention of supermarkets, at least initially. This local food culture included unconventional fresh produce which involved *amadumbe* (a type of root vegetable), corn, and beans that, when prepared together, is called *umngqusho*. Moreover, this market also played a critical role in introducing *imfino*, a wild leafy vegetable to the locals. Ntuli (2019) also talks about its importance in terms of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals. It is essential to note that in these markets, locals were very happy to share stories of their favourite dishes and how they went about preparing them.

48

Mncube (2022) argues that smallholder farmers need more than access to land for them to farm efficiently, therefore, access to markets for smallholder farmers is key to their survival. Although many of these smallholder farmers utilise communal lands in rural areas, 49.9 per cent of smallholder farmers farm their land in tribal authority land, while 1.8 per cent of the households rent out their land (Aliber and Hall 2012). This chapter focusses on three critical aspects of a community's control over food resources and access concerning identity-making: the political economy of food within the context of an increasingly corporatist and pro-corporate state, the squeezing out of the informal food production and selling sector; the impact of social grants, especially *impesheni* (a pension pay point where pensioners gathered to receive their social grant, and subsequently create a niche market to trade among themselves and their communities), on rural livelihoods, social and cultural norms and identity making among food growers and buyers.

There is a dearth of literature that interrogates the relationships between social grants and smallholder farming and how the informal economy has sustained numerous smallholder farmers

in community-based social grant pay points. Sinyolo et al. (2016) have written on the issue of social grants and smallholder farming in South Africa and the numerous impacts both these phenomena present in mainly rural communities. Contrary to this, other studies counter-argue and focus on social grants and how they lead to a culture of dependency. In their article, '"*It's Not Enough" Local Experiences of Social Grants, Economic Precarity, and Health Inequity in Mpumalanga, South Africa*', Winchester, King and Rishworth (2021) discuss how social grants affect the relations of distribution, rooted in practices of sharing and dependence.

Moreover, Ferguson and Li (2018) question the issue of whether the recipients of social transfers express a sense of entitlement or are plagued by connotations of dependence and shame linked to moralised ideas of the virtue of work and the shame of "idleness" and "handouts". Mtshali (2018) provides a different outlook on the culture of depending on social grants, particularly the old age grant, where the author argues that pensioners rely on the social welfare programme due to the inability to continue working. Furthermore, Mtshali (2018) argues that the high poverty levels for those who are already on pension could indicate that South Africans do not rely on personal investments such as private pensions, they rather depend on social assistance from the government.

Four dimensions of food security are: 1) availability, where food is produced locally and imported from abroad; 2) access, where food can reach the consumer (transportation infrastructure) and the latter has enough money to purchase. Peng, Dernini and Berry (2018) argue that such physical and economic accessibility is added to socio-cultural access to ensure that the food is culturally accepted and that social protection nets exist to help the less fortunate. The third dimension is, the utilisation of food, where:

> the individual must be able to eat adequate amounts both in quantity and quality in order to live a healthy and full life to realize his or her potential. Food and water must be safe and clean, and thus adequate water and sanitation are also involved at this level. A person must also be physically healthy to be able to digest and utilize the food consumed. (Peng et al. 2018: 2 and 4)

The fourth dimension is the stability of both the availability and access to food. While these dimensions are interlinked and equally imperative, this chapter seeks to expansively deal with food accessibility within the context of rural livelihood to examine the impact thereafter, of the

termination of the market which ensured food accessibility to rural communities.

The importance of food security, particularly in rural areas, should also be examined critically within the scope of nutrition security. Govender et al. (2017) provide empirical evidence on how the majority of poor and rural South Africans rely on social grants and cannot afford a balanced diet. Subsequently, a balanced diet ensures that communities do not suffer from health conditions that may include obesity and undernutrition. Masuku and Bhengu (2021) argue that indigenous and locally grown foods are perceived as healthy foods, since they contribute to good immunity in the human body. Faber et al. (2010: 37) examined 'African leafy greens' as potentially significant sources of micronutrients missing from many South African diets. All these vegetables were commonly consumed in all areas, however, more so in rural settings.

A mixed method approach was utilised to analyse the impact of how an informal market that existed in parallel with the formal agricultural markets, was demolished when more than a decade ago, national government through the Department of Social Development, introduced a new payment method by allowing pensioners to receive their social grants at big corporate companies (Mail & Guardian2012). Richmond, a town in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, was purposely selected due to it being purely rural, and most of the households were involved in the market either as farmers, middlemen or buyers of food. The primary data was collected through a qualitative design interviewing smallholder farmers and those referred to as middlemen. Thus far, a total number of fifteen participants were interviewed. Key themes emerging across all interviews and discussions were that the cash transfer and the market that was created at the cash transfer pay points were useful in obtaining food.

Theoretical framework

Popular economies provide critical aspects on modification of literature on informality by showing links between the formal and informal economies. According to Hull and James (2012), the concept of popular economies recognises the legacy in South Africa based on popular culture, which describes a world of new identities and activities. Furthermore, the concept of diverse economies can be interlinked with popular economies to properly contextualise how *impesheni* operated on the informality of the South African economy.

Blumberg et al. (2020) critically discuss and assess major theoretical approaches deployed in the study of alternative food networks. Within the context of rural South Africa, particularly the smallholder farmers who provided alternative ways of producing their crops, the analysis of their work includes economic, cultural and agroecological practices that create different farming styles (Blumberg et al. 2020). Historical narratives connect the past, present and future of an organisation (Foster et al. 2017). However, to properly contextualise *impesheni*, the historical narratives connect the past, present and future of this market, which was systematically demolished by the current administration.

The change of moving from pay points to supermarkets (which are situated far from the rural areas), resulted in pensioners being forced to collect their social grants at the supermarkets instead of the market which they had relied on for many years and which was predominantly close to where they lived. This study, therefore, seeks to provide a fresher look at social grants and the incentives generated in the market at social grant pay points. It seeks to provide empirical evidence as to how social grants, particularly old age grants, sought to provide, among other things, vibrant informal markets where smallholder farmers would utilise those markets to sell their produce.

51

The political economy of food

A global context

Food systems are at the centre of the conversation regarding food politics and the political economy of food. This is mainly because despite that these food systems have developed over the past 50 years; they have not been sustainable. De Schutter (2017) maintains this justification by arguing that the health and environmental impact, as well as the failure to reduce rural poverty in developing countries and the power imbalances in food chains, are a concern to a growing number of activists. This encompasses all food system activities; the interrelationships of components and actors, and the institutions that regulate those activities, components and actors (Anderson and Leach 2019).

Paarlberg (2010) argues that there is a distinctive feature that distinguishes, for example, between the social contestation about food and state authority. Paarlberg (2010) further argues that civilians disagree over the wisdom of eating junk food, which is not food politics. The underlying meaning of this is that Paarlberg (2010) raises this issue not only in terms of food politics, but also based on the

issue of health. However, if these civilians organise and take political action to impose (or block) new governmental regulations on junk food—for example, prohibiting certain foods in public-school cafeterias—that is food politics (Paarlberg 2010) within the context of food consumption.

The South African crisis

Previous research in South Africa has documented the tendency for relatively minor policy changes concerning the food supply. Even in response to the significant food security and nutrition crisis engendered by the global food price increases of 2007-2009, the South African food policy focussed on household food access rather than changes to the food supply (Kirsten 2012; Watson 2017). Within the context of the political economy of food in South Africa, the informal market, including the demolished market of *impesheni*, is treated as secondary in policy and is often considered a backward system in need of modernisation.

Most people access food from both the formal and informal systems, therefore, these are complementary rather than exclusive (Crush and Frayne 2010). However, the lack of resources in rural areas makes it difficult for communities to have the luxury to choose their sources of accessibility when it comes to food. Therefore, informal markets become their direct and only hope to access food. Although, Aliber and Mdoda (2015: 30) argue that the 'relatively high density of informal and independent food retail channels contribute to a field of choice' to rural consumers. One critical question which should be engaged in this regard, is the intention to demolish the *impesheni* market where smallholder farmers sold their products, and their businesses thrived. Not only did their businesses thrive, the social ties that were created in the market also kept and encouraged social cohesion among farmers, community members and those who worked as middlemen in the market.

Impesheni and food provisioning in rural communities

Despite supermarket penetration, African Food Security Urban Network data indicates that the urban poor and rural communities continue to choose to source their food in the informal sector, likely due to factors such as spatial accessibility, access to credit, appropriate quantities and price (Skinner and Haysom 2016). This can only be overcome by long-term structural changes in the society and economy of South Africa (Lahiff 1997). Small markets are continuously enabled to

ensure food provisioning to community members by smallholder farmers who are still subjected to decades of exclusion from formal sectors of the South African economy.

Rural crop production plays a major role in alleviating food shortages in most developing countries. According to Mujuru and Obi (2020), rural development should be at the core of the government agenda, since most households still derive livelihoods from agriculture and in most cases, on smallholder plots. The state of rural farming is appalling and repels youth participation. In most cases, young people are discouraged from owning land and other agricultural resources. This was evident in the *impesheni* market where smallholder farmers were the older generation and young people assisted as middlemen. Operating similarly to street vendors, smallholder farmers who sold crops at the market ensured food security and food access to various families who were food insecure, through credit, locally grown products and the accessibility of nutritious crops and vegetables.

The role of *impesheni* and rural livelihood: Exploring some social ties and norms

There is a distinct system that always binds communities together through social, cultural and religious interactions among individuals. Manyelo, Van Averkeke and Hebink (2014) rigorously argue that some farmers and traders had developed relationships of trust, which made special arrangements possible. For example, farmers would allow certain traders to enter their plots and harvest produce in their absence (Manyelo et al. 2014). This is a clear indication of how social bonds and trust among the key players of informal markets are created and upheld through generations.

The social interactions went beyond whether one is a farmer or a middleman, the level of trust that was demonstrated by the key players in this market is evident (Manyelo et al. 2014). Manyelo et al. (2014) argue that after the harvesting of produce by non-farmers, these traders would wait for the farmer to come and charge them. The advantage of being allowed to harvest produce in the absence of the plot holder was that produce could be secured before the arrival of other groups.

Alternative means to access markets are continuously being created. Manyelo et al. (2014) state that even though farmers did not have access to markets, historically, they would visit neighbouring villages to sell their produce door-to-door and would be received warmly by homesteaders. Every seller in the market aimed to establish a loyal customer base.

Creating "loyalty" was pursued by extending "special treatment" which included giving extra produce free of charge, reducing the price of produce, allowing customers to buy on credit and customers referred to other sellers when items requested by a customer were out of stock. Therefore, according to Pienaar and Traub (2015), livelihood diversification amongst smallholder households and farmers is often based on a variety of factors and conditions which make a classification on a single indicator problematic.

The pivotal role of women: From planting to produce

Societal and cultural norms normally grant women the responsibility to ensure that members of their households receive sufficient food. McKenna (2014) emphasises that in developing countries, women make an essential contribution to agricultural initiatives as farmers and workers, to ensure the accessibility of food for their households. Women are the main smallholder farm producers of food that is consumed within the country and this has led to the empowerment of most women. Mpanza and Mbatha (2021) argue that support for women as smallholder farmers is very important to achieve food security at the household and global level through the introduction of national development programmes.

It is likely that in the poor communities in South Africa, social grants play a pivotal role in eliminating poverty at the household level (J. Dubihlela and D. Dubihlela 2014). Despite women's integral role in agriculture, they operate on an uneven playing field and are five times less likely to own land than men (Muzari 2016). Because of women's dominant presence in all aspects of smallholder production, ensuring policy priorities to consider their needs and socio-economic conditions is imperative (Sibanda and Mwamakamba 2012). However, the role of women in terms of improving food security is not well recognised, especially in policymaking and resource allocation.

Identified through produce: Identity-making of smallholder farmers in *impesheni*

The relationship between individuals and their communities through the sense of community and participation (Mannarini and Fedi 2009) is sometimes referred to as feelings of belonging, influence within the group, fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connection. The smallholder

farmers who produced and sold food as crops identified themselves as distinct from each other through the type of crops and vegetables each farmer produced and that reflected how small and rural businesses sustained themselves. To examine how small-scale farmers perceive or form communities requires a closer look at the role small-scale farmers play in promoting the increasingly influential notion of local food systems and the way the local food movement interacts with local economies (Iles, Ma and Erwin 2020). Wittman, Beckie and Hergesheimer (2012) argue that local food systems, including alternative food networks, may function as part of a "social" economy, since they foster local circulations of economic value and they help address social needs, such as the desire for consumers to obtain fresh produce and to have a connection with farmers.

Understanding identity and community as essential components of the social activity of small-scale farming, requires an understanding of the motivations of small-scale farmers and the associated decision-making processes. According to McGuire (2015), identity is a set of meanings characterising an individual as unique and as holding a specific role in a group or within society. Although farmers and other middlemen may be found selling the very same produce on the day of the market, this was a very rare sight. This market was a quality-driven movement that focussed on values, relationships and methods surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food for the entire community. Therefore, Iles et al. (2020) argue that within this context, cooperation amongst small-scale farmers contributes to a sense of belonging and the formation of a small-scale farmer identity, as well as the overall benefit to the farmers.

The social situation is not the only place where farmer identities are verified or changed, in some instances, like farmers who produced and sold food at *impesheni,* the type of food that each farmer grew played a pivotal role in determining the identity of the farmer. McGuire (2015) theorises that the biophysical environment can impact how a particular identity moves up or down in the hierarchy and influences farmer management decisions that contribute to soil erosion and water pollution.

The narrative: Meet the market and the farmers

The role of social grants in rural communities

The modification of the social grant payment system had unforeseen consequences on an important rural market. Cash transfers are a policy instrument aimed at building household resiliency in terms of access to food in multiple facets. This can be achieved in numerous ways, including, but not limited to, facilitating changes in productive activities by relaxing liquidity constraints, improving human capital and improving the ability to respond to and cope with exogenous shocks (Natali et al. 2016). Moreover, the aim of cash transfers can aim to engage households in more potentially profitable activities. Even in other African countries where social grants, especially old-age pensions, are effective, Gronbach (2020: 1) argues that payments are increasingly delivered through private financial institutions, citing that 'although states continue to play a pivotal role in terms of oversight, administration, and coordination'.

Impact of policy change on subsistence farmer access to markets and rural people's foodscapes

The onslaught of globalisation and liberalisation has made the African economy more integrated with the global economy. Beri, Mhonyera and Nubong (2022) provide evidence in this regard, citing that the direct effects that were evident were in higher lending costs and other impairments due to strict credit policies in advanced economies. Moreover, Hlatshwayo et al. (2022) argue that access to markets in developing countries is becoming more difficult and is therefore, becoming a central focus to governments and development practitioners in the developing world. Sikwela (2013) argues that in most African countries, it is not the policy as such, but the budgetary, technical and administrative implementation of the specific policies that enable smallholder farmers to fit in these markets and generate profits from their crop sales. Therefore, these factors seek to scrutinise how the South African government handled the transition of social grant pay points to allow pensioners to withdraw their pensions in retail supermarkets. In terms of budget, technicality and the administrative implementation of the specific policies, the South African government sought to minimise costs as well as the number of cash vans to visit local community venues and decided to allow the large corporations (supermarkets) to administer the process of handling the cash transfers to pensioners.

Addressing gender inequality through rural foodscapes and foodways

Women in rural subsistence farming and in food production have been fighting to not be kept on the side-lines of the debate regarding foodscapes. Adema (2006) defines foodscapes as a representation of the full scope of the food environment of a given place when the environment is considered to have both multisensory tangible and material aspects, which are touch, scent and taste. Moreover, intangible essence can also be included which can evoke affective responses, generate and stimulate memory and spark the imagination. Gender is a significant variable since it gives a common understanding of what is variably affected by any social or economic phenomenon in each community within the Richmond area. Belasco (2008) presents supporting evidence in relation to the importance of why gender is considered a significant variable, particularly in rural areas. The author argues that food preparation and consumption have long been associated with a women's world, and has thus, been accorded less respect and attention than male activities. Furthermore, Beardsworth et al. (2002) highlight the significance of gendered roles being increasingly scrutinised during the 1990s. Subsequently, age is often associated with experience, and elderly farmers are usually considered more experienced (Khapayi and Celliers 2016).

Strategies to improve smallholder market access

The activities that usually occurred at the social grant pay points market included bringing together different types of sellers in a single market where not only farmers sold their produce, but also those who sold items such as clothing, handmade beads, and other products which could be sold at an informal market. For the benefit of this chapter, however, the questions served as a base to gather accurate and relevant data regarding the study. The semi-structured questions included a brief description of the market by the participant of the *impesheni* market, looking at how they were first introduced to this market to comprehend the inception of the market, the processes they went through to participate, the relationship they had with their buyers in the case of farmers and most importantly, the motive behind participating in this market. A female smallholder farmer reported that:

> '*I can describe this market as a "community-based initiative" that sustained various social relations among those who participated in it, whether as a seller or a buyer. I used to sell my sweet potatoes, amadumbe, and maize which I planted with my children.*'

The female farmer went on to specify and describe what would normally happen, particularly from the start of the day of the market, however, not placing much emphasis on the preparations to get to the market. This is what she had to say:

> 'I worked normally with my children to plough and harvest the produce; however, I had a helper who would assist in transporting our produce with a wheelbarrow to the market (about 1.5 km away from the homestead of the farmer). We had a very pleasant relationship as he would arrive early in the morning on the day of the market to ensure we got to the market before the old age pensioners and other farmers and sellers would come.'

The farmer specifies that her mother was the one who introduced her to this local market in the late 1990s. She specifies that her mother also sold some household accessories at this market to ensure that they had something to eat at the end of the day. This indicates how the systematic demolition of this market hurt generational teachings and economic endeavours. The intergenerational teachings of children by their parents, and the teachings of grandchildren by their grandparents, were discontinued in a manner that had a negative impact in terms of encouraging the children to plant for selling. Njobe and Kaaria (2015) note that it is well-acknowledged that women play a pivotal role in ensuring household food security, as they constitute approximately 60–70 per cent of smallholder farmers in developing countries.

58

Smallholder farmers, especially in less developed countries, have encountered several challenges in gaining access to markets (Van Tilburg and Van Schalkwyk 2012). Smallholder farmers who relied on the social grant pay point market are still producing food with little or no opportunities to sell their produce. This hurts the local economic development of the area, considering Richmond is predominately rural with agriculture being the primary economic activity of most of the population.

Local economic development

There is an urgent need to encourage rural smallholder farmers to shift their day-to-day agricultural activities to something more competitive and structured. Entrepreneurship still needs to be channelled and training is of paramount importance for rural smallholder farmers. Zaaijer and Sara (1993) suggest that local economic development is essentially a process in which local governments and/or community-based groups manage their existing resources and enter partnership

arrangements with the private sector or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic arena.

The demolition of the market these farmers relied on was a result of government restructuring the dispensing of social grants, particularly old age grants. This will ensure various opportunities are unlocked for the local economic development of rural communities, specifically Richmond with its various commercial and non-commercial farmlands. Manona (2005) argues that on the issue of marketing staple food such as maize, the low maize prices would have a positive impact from the consumers' point of view, while the same low prices bring to the fore the harsh realities of economic competitiveness for commercial farmers. Muzekenyi, Zuwarimwe and Beata (2019) state that entrepreneurial skills in rural farming have not been widely assessed and profiled to determine their importance among small-scale farmers, which has led to the need to further investigate small-scale farming entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The ways in which small-scale farmers acquired the necessary information and assistance to start and maintain their farming operations, highlighted both the farmers' flexibility and commitment to making their products viable. However, according to James, Hendrickson and Howard (2012), these conventional ways of acquiring knowledge are different from the crop advisors and agri-business professionals that larger-scale farmers normally have access to and rely on. In essence, this was the symbolic and distinctive element that distinguished smallholder farmers who sold at *impesheni,* compared to other actors in the larger formal agricultural sector. Smallholder farmers play a pivotal role in ensuring food security in rural homesteads, through markets that they create for themselves. The destruction of the social grant pay-points market in rural Richmond had a significant impact on local economic development and food provisioning. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to support and cultivate new markets for smallholder farmers to encourage rapid market accessibility. The impact of the global and local political economy on food must still be thoroughly investigated within the context of rising food prices and the destruction of informal markets through unequal competition.

Furthermore, major challenges facing small-scale farmers in a rural setting have been addressed, however, the call for further vigorous intervention is fundamental to enable farmers to develop

their entrepreneurial skills within the midst of volatile market accessibility. Perhaps one of the major questions to ask is how much these farmers are producing which can be attributed to rural development. Did they produce enough for the current administration to properly recognise them and not demolish their market? Or is it all part of what has been referred to above as food politics through contesting state authorities regarding formal and informal markets of the economy? Much of the literature suggests that there is not sufficient evidence as to why the modification of cash transfers shifted from a single pay point to retail supermarkets. However, the hypothesis that this was mainly because of the safety and protection of old age pensioners, cannot be agreed upon. Therefore, calls for further investigation that provides a detailed approach regarding small-scale farming in rural areas and how to market accessibility, can be prioritised.

References

Adema, P. 2006. *Festive foodscapes: Iconizing food and the shaping of identity and place*. Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.

Aliber, M. and Hall, R. 2012. Support for smallholder farmers in South Africa: Challenges of scale and strategy. *Development Southern Africa*, 29(4): 548–562.

Aliber, M. and Mdoda, L. 2015. The direct and indirect economic contribution of small-scale black agriculture in South Africa. *Agricultural Economics Research, Policy and Practice in South Africa,* 54(2): 18–37.

Anderson, M. and Leach, M. 2019. Transforming food systems: The potential of engaged political economy. *IDS Bulletin*, 50(2): 131–146.

Beardsworth, A., Bryman, A., Keil, T., Goode, J., Haslam, C. and Lancashire, E. 2002. Women, men and food: The significance of gender for nutritional attitudes and choices. *British Food Journal,* 104(7): 470–491.

Belasco, W. 2008. *Food: The key concepts*. Berg.

Beri, P.B., Mhonyera, G. and Nubong, G.F. 2022. Globalisation and economic growth in Africa: New evidence from the past two decades. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 25(1): 1–12.

Blumberg, R., Leitner, H., and Cadieux, K. 2020. For food space: theorizing alternative food networks beyond alterity. *Journal of Political Ecology,* 27(1):1-22.

Crush, J. and Frayne, B. 2010. *The invisible crisis: Urban food security in Southern Africa.* Cape Town, AFSUN.

De Schutter, O. 2017. The political economy of food systems reform. *European Review of Agricultural Economics,* 44(4): 705–731.

Dubihlela, J. and Dubihlela, D. 2014. Social grants impact on poverty among the female-headed households in South Africa: A case analysis. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 5(8): 160–167.

Faber, M., Van Jaarsveld, P.J., Wenhold, F.A.M. and Van Rensburg, J. 2010. African leafy vegetables consumed by households in the Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in South Africa. *South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 23(1).

Ferguson, J. and Li, T.M. 2018. *Beyond the "proper job": Political-economic analysis after the century of labouring man.* Institute for poverty land and Agrarian studies (PLAAS), Working Paper 51.

Foster, W.M., Coraiola, D.M., Suddaby, R., Kroezen, J. and Chandler, D. 2017. The strategic use of historical narratives: A theoretical framework. *Business History*, 59(8): 1176–1200.

Govender, L., Pillay, K., Siwela, M., Modi, A. and Mabhaudhi, T. 2017. Food and nutrition insecurity in selected rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa—Linking human nutrition and agriculture. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,* 14(1): 17.

Gronbach, L. 2020. *Social cash transfer payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa*. CSSR Working Paper, 452.

Hlatshwayo, S.I., Ojo, T.O., Modi, A.T., Mabhaudhi, T., Slotow, R. and Ngidi, M.S.C. 2022. The determinants of market participation and its effect on food security of the rural smallholder farmers in Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, South Africa. *Agriculture,* 12(7): 1072.

Hull, E. and James, D. 2012. Introduction: Popular economies in South Africa. *Africa*, 82(1): 1–19.

Iles, K., Ma, Z. and Erwin, A. 2020. Identifying the common ground: Small-scale farmer identity and community. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 78: 25–35.

James, H.S., Hendrickson, M. and Howard, P.H. 2012. Networks, power and dependency in the agrifood industry. In: James, Jr., H. (eds.) *The ethics and economics of agrifood competition*. The International Library of Environmental, Agricultural and Food Ethics, vol 20. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6274-9_6

Kajiita, R.M. and Kang'ethe, S. 2016. Exploring the grants dynamics and underpinnings driving to dependence syndrome in South Africa: A literature review. *Journal of Social Sciences,* 49(1-2): 101–110.

Khapayi, M. and Celliers, P. 2016. Factors limiting and preventing emerging farmers to progress to commercial agricultural farming in the King William's town area of the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *South African Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 44(1): 25–41.

Kirsten, J.F. 2012. *The political economy of food price policy in South Africa*. Food price policy in an era of market instability, 407.

Lahiff, E. 1997. *An Apartheid Oasis: Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods in Venda*. London: Frank Cass.

Mail & Guardian. 2012, February 3. *Stores score on pension payday*. By Staff Reporter. Available at https://mg.co.za/article/2012-02-03-stores-score-on-pension-payday/

Mannarini, T. and Fedi, A. 2009. Multiple senses of community: The experience and meaning of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(2): 211–227.

Manona, S. 2005. *Smallholder agriculture as local economic development (LED) strategy in rural South Africa: Exploring prospects in Pondoland, Eastern Cape*. Master's thesis of Philosophy (Land and Agrarian Studies). The University of Western Cape.

Manyelo, K., Van Averbeke, W. and P. Hebinck, P.G.M. 2014. Smallholder irrigators and fresh produce street traders in Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa. In *Rural development and the construction of new markets,* edited by P. Hebinck, J. Douw van der Ploeg, and S. Schneider, 131–150.

Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Masuku, M.M. and Bhengu, A.S. 2021. The value of indigenous foods in improving food security in Emaphephetheni rural setting. *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems,* 20(1): 13–23.

McGuire, N.M. 2015. Environmental Education and Behavioural Change: An Identity-Based Environmental Education Model. *International Journal of Environmental & Science Education,* 10(5), 695-715.

McKenna, K.A. 2014. *The role of Ugandan women in rural agriculture and food security*.

Mncube, N.L. 2022. *Investigating the contribution of social cash transfers to the food security situation of agricultural-based rural households of Nhlazuka, Richmond Municipality, South Africa.* Doctoral dissertation.

Mpanza, N.T. and Mbatha, M.W. 2021. The role of women in improving access to food at the household level in Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal of Gender, Society, and Development,* 10(2): 135–155. 10.31920/2634-3622/2021/v10n2a8

Mtshali, N.T. 2018. *Assessing the impact of social grants in alleviating poverty in South Africa.* Mini-thesis, Masters of Commerce. Department of Economics, University of the Western Cape.

Mujuru, N.M. and Obi, A. 2020. Effects of cultivated area on smallholder farm profits and food security in rural communities of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. *Sustainability*, 12(8): 3272.

Muzari, W. 2016. Agricultural productivity and food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR).* 5(1): 1769–1776.

Muzekenyi, M., Zuwarimwe, J. and Beata, K. 2019. Review of South Africa's small-scale farming entrepreneurial constraints and opportunities: A rural perspective. *Journal of Agriculture and Allied Sciences*, 8(1): 79–85.

Natali, L., Handa, S., Peterman, A., Seidenfeld, D. and Tembo, G. 2016, March. *Making money work: Unconditional cash transfers allow women to save and re-invest in rural Zambia*. Innocenti Working Paper No.2016-02, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

Njobe, B. and Kaaria, S. 2015. *Women and agriculture: The untapped opportunity in the wave of transformation*. Background Paper.

Ntuli, N.R. 2019. Nutrient content of scarcely known wild leafy vegetables from northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *South African Journal of Botany,* 127: 19–24.

Paarlberg, R.L. 2010. *Food politics: What everyone needs to know.* New York, N.Y., Oxford University Press.

Peng, W., Dernini, S. and Berry, E.M. 2018. Coping with food insecurity using the sociotype ecological framework. *Frontiers in Nutrition,* 5: 107.

Pienaar, L. and Traub, L. 2015. *Understanding the smallholder farmer in South Africa: Towards a sustainable livelihoods classification*.

Sibanda, L.M. and Mwamakamba, S. 2012. Women farmers can influence policy through theatre. *Appropriate Technology,* 39(4): 62–63.

Sikwela, M.M. 2013. *The impact of farmer support programmes on market access of smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, South Africa.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Fort Hare.

Sinyolo, S., Mudhara, M. and Wale, E. 2016. To what extent does dependence on social grants affect smallholder farmers' incentives to farm? Evidence from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics,* 11(2): 154–165.

— — —. 2017. The impact of social grant-dependency on agricultural entrepreneurship among rural households in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, *51*(3): pp.63–76.

Skinner, C. and Haysom, G. 2016. *The informal sector's role in food security: A missing link in policy debates?* Working Paper 44. Cape Town: PLAAS, UWC, and Centre of Excellence on Food Security.

Tshuma, M.C. 2012. A review of the poverty and food security issues in South Africa: Is agriculture the solution? *African Journal of Agricultural Research,* 7(28): 4010–4020.

Van Tilburg, A. and Van Schalkwyk, H.D. 2012. *Strategies to improve smallholders' market access.* Unlocking markets to smallholders: Lessons from South Africa, (pp. 35–58).

Watson, D.D. 2017. The political economy of food price policy during the global food price crisis of 2006-2008. *Food Security*, 9: 497–509.

Winchester, M.S., King, B. and Rishworth, A. 2021. "It's not enough:" Local experiences of social grants, economic precarity, and health inequity in Mpumalanga, South Africa. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, 2: 100044.

Wittman, H., Beckie, M. and Hergesheimer, C. 2012. Linking local food systems and the social economy? Future roles for farmers' markets in Alberta and British Columbia. *Rural Sociology*, 77(1): 36–61.

Zaaijer, M. and Sara, L.M. 1993. Local economic development as an instrument for urban poverty alleviation: a case from Lima, Peru. *Third World Planning Review*, 15(2): 127.

Chapter 4

Capital and Paternalism in Agriculture: The Case of Malapeng Citrus Farm

By Gabe Vermeulen

Introduction

Despite labour legislation and the institution of a minimum wage in the agricultural sector, farmworkers in South Africa are some of the most vulnerable, underpaid workers in the economy. This chapter is based on an exploration of farmworkers' lives on a citrus farm in Limpopo Province, South Africa, called Malapeng, and how the workers' lives are impacted by the integration of the citrus sector into the global agricultural economy. This chapter aims to understand permanent farmworkers' lives in relation to various other actors in the field of Malapeng. These factors include farm management, the farm owner and other farmworkers, such as seasonal/casual labourers with whom they compete for jobs and whose lives and livelihoods are arguably even more precarious. A Bourdieusian framework is applied to contextualise and understand the neo-liberal and managerialist position the farm owner takes towards the labourers employed. Furthermore, this chapter looks to the study of *Grootplaas* (large farm) by Bolt (2015), to establish whether the findings hold true on Malapeng.

67

Although agriculture makes a significant contribution to the South African economy, farm workers are some of the least protected labourers in the country. Until March 2021, farm workers had an industry specific minimum wage that was lower than the national minimum wage (NMW). Farm workers earned a minimum of (South African Rand) R18.68 per hour, whereas the NMW was set at R20.76 per hour (Government of South Africa 2020). Since April 2021, farm workers have been paid the NMW, which is R27.58 per hour as of March 2024. The equalisation of the agricultural minimum wage has been met with severe opposition from farmers and farmer organisations, with magazines such as *Farmer's Weekly* encouraging farmers to apply for minimum wage exemptions (Phillips 2021). The agricultural sector is considered a special case when it comes to minimum wage discussions, as the sector is export oriented and subject to trade agreements and international

competition. Therefore, it was widely feared that fixing a minimum wage in this sector that is too high could lead to considerable retrenchment. Four years after the wage was equalised with the NMW, that fear appears to have been unfounded.

Claasen and Lemke (2019) illustrate that farmworker households are some of the most marginalised population groups in the country and that farmworkers (and their families) face many socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, food insecurity, little to no education, and limited access to government services. Farm workers are in fact, the most likely group in South Africa to experience food insecurity (Devereux, Hall and Solomon 2019). This is despite a range of policies instituted by the democratic government post 1994 that encourage fair labour practices and security of tenure. Claasen and Lemke (2019) suggest that the implementation and enforcement of these laws have mostly failed, and farm workers are reliant on informal networks and the farmer that they work for to survive. A key insight that the authors offer is that farm workers should not be treated as impassive or weak actors, since they are asserting their agency through their social networks to cope with the various insecurities they face (Claasen and Lemke 2019).

68   According to Anseeuw, Liebenberg and Kirsten (2015), the transformation of the South African agrarian sector post-1994 is minimal. The authors discuss the three most important features of the South African agricultural sector. These features are the deregulation of the economy (and by extension, the agricultural sector) since the late 1980s, the efforts to deracialise the agricultural sector and South Africa's spatial configuration since the end of apartheid and the persistent dualistic structure of the agricultural sector, which is divided into white commercial farms and black subsistence sectors (Anseeuw et al. 2015). The chapter in this source finds that the reforms that have been pursued by the South African government have not significantly contributed to transformation (social/racial, economic and spatial) (Anseeuw et al. 2015). As Bernstein (1998: 25) noted:

> In South Africa after apartheid, the land question retains a powerful symbolic and material charge, generated by the long history of dispossession and continuing widespread rural poverty and insecurity. There is also a widespread politics of land, and by extension, of fanning and livelihoods. At the same time, land and agrarian reform is politically marginal to the concerns of the ANC and the government.

It is important to note that black workers' access to national and global agricultural and agrofood

markets are mediated through white-owned farms which are operating in an agricultural sector that has been designed to exclude black Africans. Cousins and Scoones (2010) concur on the creation of a dualistic and racially divided agricultural sector in South Africa, which they suggest persists with a white-owned capitalist farming sector that monopolises national and global markets on the one hand, and a black peasant sector on the other.

Devereux (2020) discusses the violations of labour rights of farm workers in post-apartheid South Africa. His specific research focusses on female workers in the Cape provinces. However, Devereux's findings are consistent with other studies conducted across South Africa and are therefore useful to contextualise and understand the conditions of farm workers in post-apartheid South Africa. Devereux (2020) finds that although there is sufficient legislation meant to protect farm workers, there is a systematic failure by various actors in the agricultural field to comply and enforce the requirements. The author specifically mentions farmers (many of whom do not comply with basic requirements, such as providing contracts to workers and paying at least minimum wage), the government (who fail to enforce the relevant legislation) and trade unions (to hold other actors accountable for the good of the workers).

69

Devereux (2020) argues that the progressive legislation created by the ANC government has not been adequately implemented due to the neoliberal logic that the ANC champions. At the core of this is the idea that the government interfering and regulating the relationship between employers and employees is contrary to the core belief of allowing market forces to run their course. It is evident that the ANC is struggling to balance its revolutionary roots and its newer capitalist loyalties. Devereux (2020) goes further and argues that recent policies have served the interests of commercial farmers and not farm workers, and gives the example of farmers being able to apply for exemption from paying minimum wages. This once again illustrates that farm workers are not adequately protected by the state, and in some cases, the state goes as far as to explicitly place the interests of capital above that of the workers. Devereux (2020: 385) reaches the conclusion that 'farm workers have arguably been left more vulnerable than before'. This is due to a combination of two main factors. First, the lack of state enforcement of legislation and policies meant to protect farm workers, and second, the restructuring of the agricultural sector and in some ways, the weakened relationship between workers and farmers through the decline of the historical paternalistic relationship between farm owners and farm labourers. The paternalistic system that used to be prevalent on farms provided many workers with permanent accommodation and employment

and other informal benefits, such as the provision of meals and transport when needed. Although farmers no longer have total control over the lives of farm workers, the workers no longer have access to the benefits of "racialised paternalism".

It can thus be concluded, that literature shows a deeply unequal agricultural sector in South Africa, with farm labourers facing precarious conditions and poverty.

Data collection and analytical framework

This chapter will use political ethnography as its methodological framework. According to Halfpenny (1984: 8, as cited in Harrison and Callan 2013: 54),

> [e]thnomethodology is founded on the view that every occurrence within the social world is unique or indexical: that is, every event depends for its sense on the context within which it occurs, where the context is made up of the time, the place and the people involved.

This means that ethnomethodology can give insights as to how various actors make sense of the structures around them. This methodology therefore creates an opportunity to study how actors respond and relate to a system that is shaping their lives.

Two methods that fall under the umbrella of ethnographic methodology were employed for this study. First, observation was used to map the social interactions at the farm Malapeng. The research was conducted by participating in day-to-day activities with the farm labourers and engaging in formal and informal discussions regarding their lives at Malapeng. The second ethnographic method used was semi-structured interviews. Six interviews were conducted, each lasting an average of 40 minutes. The interview questions revolved around the relationships between the individuals on the farm, the management structures, and specific events that could help understand the dynamics of Malapeng. The interviewees consisted of the farm owner, a member of management, and four workers who are employed on a permanent basis.

Bourdieu's work, specifically the collection *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991b), helped the analysis of data collected. The crux of this work is that linguistic interactions express and recreate

the social order in which they happen, no matter how unimportant or personal the interaction may seem. Throughout the collection Bourdieu moves away from traditional linguistic analysis in multiple ways and argues that linguistic analysis cannot be effectively carried out by only looking at the grammar and form of language. Language and linguistic utterances cannot be understood without understanding the context—the field—that they are situated in. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 142) explicitly argues that 'linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power'. As such, understanding the linguistic market at Malapeng allows one to understand how symbolic power is exercised and distributed. Bourdieu's shift towards understanding symbolic power as a function of discourse aided this study in carrying out an analysis about legitimate and illegitimate discourses at Malapeng and how they reflect power hierarchies.

The main languages spoken by the workers were English, Afrikaans and Sepedi. To accommodate for this, the interviews were conducted in the language that the participant was most comfortable with. All interviewees chose to conduct their interviews in English. Some sections of interviews were answered in Afrikaans, as certain participants struggled with English and defaulted to their home language. These sections were translated into English for the purposes of analysis. Participants actively choosing a language that they are not completely comfortable with is analytically significant and will be addressed in the discussion section of this chapter, since there is a rich social history related to speaking these colonial and apartheid languages in South Africa, especially by black labourers.

Findings and discussion

Linguistic hierarchies

The overwhelming presence of English and Afrikaans (a colonial language and the official language of apartheid, respectively) is an indicator of what is linguistically considered valuable at Malapeng, which is referred to as 'linguistic capital' (Thompson 1991: 18). Thompson explains that:

> The more linguistic capital that speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction. For the forms of expression which receive the greatest value and secure the greatest profit are those which are most unequally distributed, both in the sense that the conditions

for the acquisition of the capacity to produce them are restricted and in the sense that the expressions themselves are relatively rare on the markets where they appear. (1991: 18)

It is essential to note the implicit hierarchy of language that is being articulated by the actions of these specific actors. One can reasonably assume that knowledge of English or Afrikaans is likely to be seen as more valuable and prestigious than any other South African language, which Bourdieu (1991b) would refer to as the 'legitimate language'. Additionally, participants who were Afrikaans felt comfortable defaulting to their home language, while those whose home language was Sepedi, did not feel that this would be an appropriate action for them based on the historical devaluation of indigenous languages through the explicit valuation of Afrikaans and English. This can be attributed to both the larger composition of the citrus field and the archetypical Afrikaans farmer, as well as the use of English by the owner and those in the main office. At various points of the fieldwork, different participants were vocal about their ability to read and write in English and/or Afrikaans, and how this separated them from other workers. A similar situation is described by Bourdieu (1991c) when discussing fieldwork that the author had participated in. Bourdieu (1991c: 78) states:

It is clear that the interviewer, as an 'educated' city-dweller, will only encounter strongly corrected French or silence; and if he uses Béarnais himself, this may well ease the tension of the exchange, but, whatever his intentions, it cannot fail to function as a strategy of condescension likely to create a situation no less artificial than the initial relationship.

The above author discusses the self-censorship employed by individuals with less symbolic and linguistic capital. This occurs when an individual engages with someone possessing linguistic competence closest to the recognised legitimate language of the field. Bourdieu reflexively includes the interviewer or researcher in his analysis of when different forms of French were used in that specific setting. Two key insights from this passage assists this chapter in understanding the significance of all the interviews being conducted in colonial languages.

First is the idea of "self-censorship". According to Bourdieu (1991c: 66), all linguistic exchanges are more than just communication, they are also 'an economic exchange which is established

between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit'. As such, all linguistic exchanges (including, if not especially, between the researcher and the research participants) can generate profit (such as the prestige of their proximity to the researcher, an actor with more symbolic capital than the labourers). Bourdieu (1991c) posits that the linguistic relation of power is not only dependent on the linguistic forces at play, rather, the whole structure of power is also present in each interaction. In other words, the distribution of linguistic capital is related to the distribution of other forms of capital. In this context, individuals assess the linguistic market they are acting in and modify (or self-censor) their speech (what is said and how it is said) based on how it would be received. Success would mean profits, such as prestige, whereas failure would lead to sanctions, such as a negative impact on their reputation (Thompson 1991).

One must note the role of anticipation in this process. The individual makes an implicit assumption of the structure of the market and pre-emptively modifies their discourse accordingly. As such, this is self-censorship based on anticipated sanctions or rewards (Thompson 1991: 20). In Bourdieu's (1991c: 77) own words, he describes self-censorship as:

> In the case of symbolic production, the constraint exercised by the market via the anticipation of possible profit naturally takes the form of an anticipated censorship, of a self- censorship which determines not only the manner of saying, that is, the choice of language- 'code switching' in situations of bilingualism - or the 'level' of language, but also what it will be possible or not possible to say.

If Bourdieu's (1991c) argument that linguistic capital is linked to and reflects other forms of capital is accepted, then it must be recognised that the farm labourers chose to have their interviews conducted in English as a form of self-censorship that recognised and reinforced the existing capital distributions at Malapeng, specifically related to race and language.

Limiting livelihood strategies

The lives of the permanent workers at Malapeng encapsulate the precariousness that is well-known in the South African agricultural sector. Almost all the workers interviewed agreed that they are either not earning a fair wage, or not earning enough to support their families. There is a consensus

that the wage is not enough.

The farmer seems to know that his wages are often less than is required for farmworkers to "survive", as he inadvertently reveals in the following quote:

> *'I think in terms of the industry, we are paying a fair wage. What is a fair wage? Answer that question. What is a living wage? Is this, what is your expectations? So, I mean, if I could pay my people more in terms of the business, could afford to pay more, I think I would, but that's a double-edged sword as well. If I pay people more, then they have to give me that value as well ... **I don't know how, you know, some of the staff survive on the salaries that they earn.** But in terms of the area, we [are] pretty much above average in terms of what the area pays, but I think we would like to, but then the same stage, I am also running a business. And I can't afford to pay people more than the value they give me.'* (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 25 February 2021)

The farm owner is quick to justify the wages paid based on a differentiation between "living" and "fair" wages. According to the farmer, the wages being paid are fair, "in the context of the industry". This speaks to the worker who agrees that their wages are fair compared to surrounding farms. There is a notable disconnect between the assertion that the wages are fair, and the fact that the farmer is not sure how some of the staff survive on the wages they earn. This point must be considered within the context of the South African agricultural field. The "rules" by which the field was constituted and by which it continues to function, produce the understanding of what a fair wage is due to the historically low wages, extensive exploitation, and illegal wage practices that have characterised the national agricultural economy.

The farm owner has banned the buying and selling of all goods if not done through an officially sanctioned farm shop, thereby restricting the livelihood strategies of the labourers working on Malapeng. The farm shop is "rented" to one of the labourers who has an exclusive mandate to sell necessary items on the property of Malapeng. The labourer does provide some credit for those purchasing from the store, however, several participants confided that they only bought from the shop in cases of emergency, since the goods being sold are overpriced.

Workers are also not allowed to trade amongst themselves to earn extra income. However, it is

unclear how successfully this rule is enforced. During fieldwork at Malapeng, some participants alluded that informal shops are set up during the picking season, whereas others denied the existence of any such shops. One can attribute this "inconsistency" to the process of self-censorship Bourdieu (1991c) discusses, implying that the information was withheld from the researcher by some participants because they were either unsure how the information would be received or that they did not trust the researcher enough to not report the existence of any shops not sanctioned by the farm owner.

The discussion around ad hoc buying and selling was the only time a labourer explicitly mentioned race in an interview: *'If we do that, we just keep it secret because **we know that we are black**. We have to protect each other. So, we just keep quiet'* (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 24 February 2021). The labourers are aware of the racialised nature of the hierarchy at Malapeng, even if they very seldomly verbalise it. There is a distinction being made between "us" versus "them", the nature of which is left vague and undefined for the majority of the time. However, in this instance, the difference between the labourers and the management is articulated explicitly as one of race. The conspicuous absence of race from the conversation in a very racialised context can be understood as a form of protecting workers through euphemising and self-censorship.

75

One participant sold airtime and single cigarettes and provided small loans to those who needed it. The participant makes it clear that if caught selling anything, he would be fired. When asked how he is supplementing his wages, the participant stated that he is just saving as much as he can. The topic of workers selling goods among themselves came up in the interview with the farm owner as well; when asked about the ban on trading among farmworkers, the farmer explains:

> *'It relates to conflicts in the workplace. Because what was happening was, every farm would have one or two little spaza shops. And then one worker would start a shop and maybe a bit more entrepreneurial and they would sell stuff, but invariably it would be on credit. And then the end of the month would come and one of the employees couldn't pay the money to fully pay the money and then there's conflict at work, because **now there's unhappiness between two employees, for a matter which is totally unrelated to their work, since it's a private matter** and we got to an extreme where we had one employee who was in a supervisory role and despite a direct order the person made a decision which was not based on what was best in the company's interest, or indeed the employee's interests; but ultimately her interests.*

*Because she was the spaza shop [owner] and it would have involved that the employees—it was casual workers—that would lose hours that weren't going to work certain hours. And she was fearful that by doing that, they wouldn't be able to pay her debt back. So, she made a decision which ultimately cost the business a lot of money. And so, you know, I think that was that was sort of the conflict and everything and that that was just the last straw. So, people selling invariably; **selling equals debt, debt equals conflict**. That's just the way it is. That's what it always... So that's why we don't allow them to sell anything other than obviously [the worker] who specifically has got the shop. I mean, that's the function, she used to work for us. She's taken over the shop, that's her function, that's her job. Well not her job, her, it's her business.'* (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 25 February 2021)

When a senior manager was asked about the ban on selling goods amongst workers, they also mention the senior worker that the farm owner brought up. However, the senior manager gave a different account: the real issue, according to the manager, is that the worker had been selling alcohol and wanted to keep selling after her dismissal. The language and sentiments that are evident in his answer speaks again to his managerial mindset; decisions must align with what is best for the business. No mention is made of the fact that workers are far away from the closest stores or the fact that their wages are, by his own admission, not living wages. Furthermore, the assertion that selling amongst themselves equals debt is re-contextualised when one remembers that there are those who avoid buying from the farm shop unless they need to buy on credit, hence, create debt.

In addition to this, workers are not allowed to keep livestock. The reason provided by the farm owner is that the livestock would become his responsibility and he would rather avoid the potential conflicts this would create, since it is unclear to him who would inoculate, take care of, and medicate potentially ill animals. However, one of the senior (white) managers who lives on the property owns several sheep that he keeps in a pen next to his house. It was made clear to the researcher that the manager is solely responsible for his sheep. Often the sheep roamed freely around the farm. It is noted that it is not the presence of livestock that is inherently problematic to the farm owner; rather the farmer does not trust the *labourers* to take care of *their* livestock responsibly. It can be interpreted that this is another instance of the infantilisation of the labourers by the farm owner.

On two of the four farms there are small food gardens run by the workers. In each case, one person oversees the garden, however, it appears that everyone contributes by watering and adding seeds,

when possible. One of the gardeners mentioned that he does not sell any of the vegetables or other food that he grows. When people need food, they can simply help themselves to what is needed for their subsistence. These findings are in line with what Wisborg et al. (2013) reveal in their research about farm dwellers in Limpopo, that is, that sources of livelihood generally include wages and grants, practices such as a food garden and keeping livestock, and access to other natural resources. Significantly, they show that wages are the most important source of livelihood.

Employees as units of labour

When referring to the employees, the farm owner speaks in terms of value, affordability and business. It is noted that the workers are valuable to the farm owner by virtue of the value they add to the business *'as units of labour'*, which as unskilled labourers, significantly reduces their value in the estimation of the farmer. The farmer uses managerial language to define his relationality to his farmworkers, a language that legitimises the farmers attempts to distance himself from the plight of the farmworkers. Throughout the interview, the farm owner delimits his role within a managerial frame of reference, rather than a paternalistic one, to emphasise the fundamental change in the historical relationship between the owner and the workers.

> *'We, in the 80s when my dad [was in charge], we moved from a very paternal system to more of an employee-employer relationship. The paternal system, which was the traditional system of agriculture was basically you fed all your workers, you would give, they would literally give mielie meal, they were given protein source of some sort, and they would give tobacco. And then at the end of the month would be given a small amount of money. But they were accommodated, when the child was sick or the employee was sick, they were driven to the hospitals, to a doctor, you know. They were fed twice a day at work, so food was made at work in the cafeteria, it was taken to them, they were fed. As the employees were moving off the farm and had homes, obviously that little bit of money that they were getting wasn't enough to keep the house going. So, we changed totally into a corp- normal, normal employee relationship. They would get given a salary and then it was their choice. So, they would get paid, and they were given money, but they had to bring their own food to work, they, if they if they wanted to go and buy food for home, then they'd go buy food for home.'*
> (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 25 February 2021)

This is the kind of technocratic language through which the poor black persons are "responsibilised" and through which efforts to produce a "calculative rationality" for the poor are routinely and paternalistically expressed in post-apartheid South Africa (Von Schnitzler 2013). In other words, by making it about workers' "choices", the responsibility for their wellbeing is shifted entirely onto the workers, who (it is implied) *'are free'* to make either "good" or "bad" choices (they have agency). When prompted about this statement and the fact that the farm owner had previously mentioned that the state fails to govern people in isolated rural areas, the farm owner continued:

> *'So, I can't make a decision for you. OK, so the one greatest thing about this country is that it's still a democracy. I truly believe it's still a true democracy. You know, the government that's voted in is the government that the majority of people want in power. You know, there's not a whole bunch of fraud and things like that.* **So, ultimately it is not my role. I'm an employer, I must keep my employees safe, I must keep them motivated and I must keep my business running, so that I can pay their salaries. And that's my responsibility as an employer. It's not my responsibility to provide healthcare, it's not my responsibility for education. That is a government's responsibility.** *But my employees have the power, even though they are a small group of people, but they have the power to make changes to their own personal situation. And that is ultimately their decision. You want to help them, but change your own destiny, you know? By helping them, you basically just make it easier for them to change their own destiny. If the government is not working, maybe it's just my opinion that the government is not working. Maybe it is working, then it's fine. And maybe the healthcare is good enough, maybe their education is good enough. Just from my point of view, it's not, but that doesn't mean it's the truth. That's just my opinion, understand? Don't take my opinion and force it on my employees. It's up to them and they make their decisions, and they are human beings and adults, they're not kids. I'm not going to treat them like kids.'*
> (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 25 February 2021)

In this lengthy quote, the farm owner is framing himself as not wanting to "overstep". The primary actor whose role the farmer would not want to be caught encroaching on is the democratic government. Importantly, he draws a discursive link between the state and farmworkers: *'The government that's voted in is the government that the majority of people want in power'*, and *'... my employees have the power, even though they are a small group of people, but they have the power to make changes to their own personal situation'*; together these statements are about saying that the

farmworkers need to look to the state for their needs beyond the very specific needs that the employer is required to provide. The fact that the farmworkers are a part of the "majority" who have voted the government into power: as part of who constitutes the "majority", they are the ones with the "real" power. Together with the fact that they are "adults and not children", this makes them "doubly" responsible for their situation.

The farm owner refers to the farmworkers as "human beings" twice in this quote, both times to insist that he *must* treat the workers as human beings. Here, one might be faulted for instantly reading this in terms of seeing the farm workers as more than just units of labour, but as people with the right to dignity and a living wage. The farm owner makes it clear that their "humanness" is connected primarily to their "agency", their "responsibility", and the need for them to "take control of their lives and their destinies". They "make their own decisions" and consequently must be held responsible for where those decisions take them, including the poverty they find themselves in.

The managerialist and technocratic discourse of value in the first quote merges seamlessly with the discourses of responsibility and agency in the second quote. Importantly, it should be noted that the two quotations speak to each other in terms of where the farm owner places himself (and all those like him) in the two quotes: in the first quote, farmers are placed front and centre through a discourse of "care" as actors who have willingly taken on responsibility for farmworkers health, nutrition and overall wellbeing. In the second quote, farmers are projected as helpless, as side-lined by the state which has assumed the primary role as caretaker of farmworkers. Where before, one was asked to think of farmworkers as being under the benevolence of the farm owner and their generosity, in the post-apartheid era the beleaguered, poverty-stricken farmworker has been rendered as such by a state that has failed them, however, they "irrationally" and stubbornly keep voting the party into power.

The farmer, in essence, proclaims his "innocence", something that Bourdieu demonstrates is a discursive strategy aimed at presenting oneself as lacking power, and reinforcing the legitimacy of the status quo:

> Having an interest in leaving things as they are, they attempt to undermine politics in a depoliticized political discourse, produced through a process of neutralization or, even better, of negation, which seeks to restore the doxa to its original state of

innocence and which, being oriented towards the naturalization of the social order, always borrows the language of nature… This politically unmarked political language is characterized by a rhetoric of impartiality, marked by the effects of symmetry, balance, the golden mean, and sustained by an ethos of propriety and decency, exemplified by the avoidance of the most violent polemical forms, by discretion, an avowed respect for adversaries, in short, everything which expresses the negation of political struggle as struggle. This strategy of (ethical) neutrality is naturally accomplished in the rhetoric of scientificity. (Bourdieu 1991a: 131–32)

The language of the farm owner, therefore, is an attempt to naturalise and obscure the political nature of the category "employer" and its political relationship to the category "employee", thereby establishing the vast gulf between himself and the labourers at Malapeng. Furthermore, by framing it as a product of economics and democracy—natural forces out of his control—the farmer further hides his own role (and the role of "farmers" as a class/ group) in creating and maintaining the hierarchies on Malapeng, including the category of farm labourers. Bourdieu (1991a) argues that the naming and description of this class category becomes a prediction of sorts, with the farmer

symbolically designating what and how their employees should be—not as a political action, but as a natural way of being. This symbolic violence extended when the farmer discussed the lack of (legitimate) cultural capital that the labourers possess:

> 'The quality of education they [the government] provided the youth is not great, but youth are coming to you, educated but not really employable, because they're not educated and don't have computer skills, all these things. So that impacts **my ability to uplift people, because you've effectively got to retrain them from the beginning** …. **So, on all levels, the government's lack of capacity, impacts on us. And as a result, because it's more expensive, more difficult to do business, obviously you're less inclined to invest in the business**.' (Personal Interview, Mookgopong: 25 February 2021)

This relates to the farmers previous quote wherein he stated that higher wages must be justified through workers adding higher value to the business. Most farm labourers are engaged in unskilled labour, therefore "computer skills" are not a requirement. Therefore, the only real loss of profits is symbolic in nature. The farm owner is essentially justifying the skewed distribution of power at Malapeng as something natural and self-evident due to a lack of "essential skills", without

acknowledging that it is an arbitrary requirement, not based on the actual needs of Malapeng. By following this logic, the farm owner further externalises responsibility for the working and living conditions of those employed on Malapeng. The farmer has created this arbitrary goal that he knows his employees do not have and will not need under his employment and declares them as "less valuable" for not meeting that goal. Through this, the distribution of capital (symbolic and otherwise) is not only reinforced, it is also legitimised and justified for all parties involved.

Conclusion

The exploitation and abuse of farmworkers in South Africa is a well-established fact in literature, which was only discussed briefly in this chapter. This chapter has explored a single case, the farm Malapeng, through ethnographic methods to further insights into the precarious livelihoods of the farm labourers. The chapter interrogated the discursive strategies of the farmer, consistent in some ways, and contradictory in others; the farmer's insistence on treating workers as "adults not children" and yet his continuous infantilisation of these workers in limiting their access to livelihood strategies. It is particularly through the farmer's discourse regarding conflict and conflict management that it can be seen how conflict discourses connect with a confident and deeply racialised knowledge of the farm workers. The farmer utilises discourses of paternalism and managerialism strategically to affect a distancing from the farmworkers and their socioeconomic situation (and the farmer's relationship to this through the wages paid), or to gain proximity to them to effect forms of "care" and control.

The findings of this chapter largely mirror Bolt's (2015) findings in the research on *Grootplaas*. Bolt dedicates a chapter to discussing the relationship between traditional paternalism and neo-liberalism in contemporary farms in Limpopo. The author argues that 'contrasting visions and interpretations of white agriculture are emphasised and de-emphasised strategically by certain farmers and employees' (Bolt 2015: 161). Like *Grootplaas*, the discursive practices at Malapeng are reflective of the strategic uses of discourses of managerialism and paternalism in the maintenance of labour hierarchies. This impacts how key agents in the field conceptualise and understand the field. At its core, this is about the production of, and control over discursive capital, and the ways in which access to economic capital shapes actors' control over, and access to forms of discursive capital. Furthermore, the findings of Devereux (2020) are also confirmed in terms of the material position that the workers find themselves in: they are facing new forms of vulnerability by virtue of the changing relationship between themselves and the farm owner.

References

Anseeuw, W., Liebenberg, F. and Kirsten J. 2015. Agrarian reform in South Africa: Objectives, evolutions and results at a national level. In: *South Africa's Agrarian Question*, edited by H. Cochet, W. Anseeuw and S. Freguin-Gresh. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Bernstein, H. 1998. Social change in the South African countryside? Land and production, poverty and power. *The Journal of Peasant Studies,* 25(4): 1–32.

Bolt, M. 2015. *Zimbabwe's migrants and South Africa's border farms: The roots of impermanence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. 1991a. Description and prescription: The conditions of possibility and the limits of political effectiveness. In: *Language and symbolic power*, edited by J.B. Thompson. Polity Press.

– – –. 1991b. *Language and symbolic power*, edited by J.B. Thompson. Polity Press.

– – –. 1991c. Price formation and the anticipation of profits. In: *Language and symbolic power*, edited by J.B. Thompson. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Claasen, N. and Lemke, S. 2019. Strong ties, weak actors? Social networks and food security among farm workers in South Africa. *Food Security,* 11(2): 417–430.

Cousins, B. and Scoones, I. 2010. Contested paradigms of 'viability' in redistributive land reform: Perspectives from southern Africa. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(1): 31–66.

Devereux, S. 2020. Violations of farm workers' labour rights in post-apartheid South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 37(3): 382–404.

Devereux, S., Hall, R. and Solomon, C. 2019, October 8. *The farm workers who produce our food are the most vulnerable to hunger*. The Mail & Guardian. [Online] Available at: https://mg.co.za/article/2019-10-08-00-the-farm-workers-who-produce-our-food-are-the-most-vulnerable-to-hunger/ [Accessed on 15 May, 2020].

Government of South Africa. 2020, February 24. Farm workers' living and working conditions in South Africa: Key trends, emergent issues, and underlying and structural problems. [Online] Available at:https://www.gov.za/speeches/new-nmw-base-rate-come-effect-march---department-employment-and-labour-24-feb-2020-0000 [Accessed on 4 June 2020].

Harrison, L. and Callan, T. 2013. *Key research concepts in politics & international relations.* London: SAGE Publications.

Phillips, L. 2021, February 16. *Farmer organisations clarify opposition to new minimum wage*. Farmer's Weekly. [Online] Available at: https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/agri-news/south-africa/farmer-organisations-clarify-opposition-to-new-minimum-wage/ [Accessed on 3 June 2021].

Rutherford, B. 2001. *Working on the margins: Black workers, white farmers in postcolonial Zimbabwe*. London: Zed Books.

Thompson, J.B. 1991. Editor's introduction. In: *Language and symbolic power*, edited by P. Bourdieu. Polity Press.

Von Schnitzler, A. 2013. Traveling technologies: Infrastructure, ethical regimes, and the materiality of politics in South Africa. *Cultural Anthropology*, 28(4): 670–693.

Wisborg, P., Hall, R., Shirinda, S. and Zamchiya, P. 2013. *Farm workers and farm dwellers in Limpopo, South Africa: Struggles over tenure, livelihoods and justice.* Cape Town: University of the Western Cape: Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies.

Chapter 5

Marginal Urban Farming in Avondale, Harare: A Political Ecology Perspective

By Michelle Masuku

Introduction

Cities and urban areas are ecological spaces, and understanding the nature of- and the nature in cities has played an increasingly significant role in understanding the socio-material construction of urban environments, their unequal distribution of resources and contestation over power and resources. These resource inequalities and contestations are at the heart of most urban food systems and are prominent in urban farming which has become a fundamental part of urban ecology.

85

Women in Harare have been transforming the urban farming landscape for decades, and the practice has transitioned from being solely for household food security to becoming a means of expressing their independence, asserting their positions as co-providers within their households and a way to generate income. Most accounts of Zimbabwean women in urban farming focus on legitimised forms of the practice such as on-plot agriculture (backyard farming) which is mostly practiced by women who have access to land and extension services. However, there is an overlooked group of women who—while participating in urban farming—are not acknowledged as legitimate farmers due to the marginal spaces in which they engage in the practice.

While there is vast acknowledgement of the existence of marginal urban agriculture (off-plot agriculture), it is often condemned in Zimbabwean agriculture discourse (Hanjra and Williams 2020; Moyo 1995) and as a result, minimal recognition is given to the positive impact it garners for the women who practice it and the communities that benefit from it. Marginal urban farming is the practice of cultivating crops or plants in areas that are considered unsuitable or prohibited for traditional agricultural activities within an urban environment. Areas which are typically overlooked for agriculture include roadsides, abandoned or unused plots of land, railway embankments, traffic

islands and underpasses. This practice, which is often born out of necessity, arises from a lack of access to suitable farming land which can lead people or communities to utilise unconventional spaces for cultivation (Csikó and Tóth 2023; McClintock 2010; Russo, Tomaselli and Pappalardo 2014). The limited access to land can be a result of factors which include urbanisation, population density and the high cost of accessing urban farming land. Despite these factors, it is important to highlight that marginal urban farming is not only characterised by a need for spaces to grow food, but also by innovation and the use of adaptive farming techniques to make the most of limited resources (Ahmadzai, Tutundjian and Elouafi 2021; Russo et al. 2014).

However, even with varied reasons for people engaging in agricultural activities in unconventional urban spaces, marginal farming has constantly been seen as an unfavourable, "rural" practice which negatively affects aspects of urban living, such as the health of urban residents and the aesthetic of urban spaces (Poulsen 2015). As a result, some forms of urban farming in Harare, and particularly in upper-middle class suburbs like Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe, have historically been discouraged and even criminalised (Mupangi 2013). Despite the slow increase in recognition of women's valuable contributions in this space, the significant number of women who actively participate in urban farming, but are neglected as resourceful, knowledgeable and innovative primary food producers, must be acknowledged. The urgent need to recognise and reposition women in urban political ecology, and the need to interrogate the contexts in which women practice urban farming are what have motivated this study.

Over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the roles' women play in feeding urban populations and transforming urban foodscapes (Fletcher and Kubik 2016; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga 2009; Swinbank 2021). This has assisted in changing urban policy frameworks in many cities. In Zimbabwe, efforts made to institutionalise gender equality and equity in urban farming are evident in policies like The National Gender Policy and in the various initiatives set up to support women farmers. However, the perceived impact of these actions only reflects the women who were able to utilise conventionally accessible resources. The fact remains, the implementation of these policies and initiatives excludes most of the urban women who only have the capacity to participate in marginal urban farming.

To have a comprehensive and multidisciplinary scope, the present study focusses mainly on Feminist Political Ecology (FPE), and uses indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) theory to emphasise

the importance of recognising the invisible actors in urban political ecology and the fluid dynamics of urban foodscapes.

FPE highlights how the universal, intersectional and political nature of gender should be taken into consideration in discussions of urban farming at academic-, policy creation- and intervention levels to ensure equity and sustainability (Resurrección 2017). The invisibility of some forms of women's urban farming work is clear in the ambiguity and gender gaps present in Harare's urban agriculture policy. These gaps have contributed significantly to the structural disadvantages faced by some women in urban farming at various scales. The use of a feminist theoretical lens as an analytical framework aided the review of urban agriculture in Harare, the various urban food systems that women contribute to and the subsequent foodscapes created by women. This study was done in accordance with literature on woman-led urban agriculture, women's role in agroecology, agriculture policy inclusivity and agrarian patriarchy.

In this chapter, I critique the dominant agriculture discourses in Zimbabwe that—while acknowledging women as instrumental urban food producers—largely ignore the social and institutional constraints at household and societal levels that impede most women from making recognised contributions in urban farming. Through interviews with women in the suburb of Avondale, Harare, participant observation and policy document analysis, the roles of, and the contributions made by women who practice marginal urban agriculture in Harare were examined. This chapter will draw from FPE perspectives to emplace the knowledge, experiences and perspectives of urban women involved in marginal agriculture within the broader context of Harare's urban agriculture landscape. More broadly, this chapter seeks to contribute to academic and policy-oriented discussions on urban food systems by connecting issues at multiple scales to provide a snapshot of the complex relationship between gender, urban political ecology and urban food systems. Additionally, the results from this study can be used to re-imagine urban farming in Zimbabwe's urban spaces, especially the food production landscapes that have been a point of tension between urban farmers and council authorities.

The political economy of farming in pre- and post-colonial Zimbabwe

To fully appreciate the value of urban farming in Harare, it is important to understand the history of agricultural practices and agricultural revolutions in the country, and how these have ultimately

shaped agriculture and urban farming in the present. As mentioned earlier, urban farming is not a new concept in Zimbabwe; the country has a long history of agriculture dating back to the ancient Kingdom of Mapungubwe in the thirteenth century (Cartwright 2019). During the pre-colonial era, women played a fundamental role in agriculture and were seen as the backbone of many societies because of their significant production of cash crops and contribution to agricultural labour. The customary laws that governed these societies made food production one of the key obligations of women within the gendered division of labour. The distribution of land was also presided by customary laws where chiefs and village headman allocated land as needed to male members of a lineage. Women's access to land was mainly through usufruct rights over land owned by their fathers or husbands (Bhatasara 2020; Mutondoro, Chiweshe and Gaidzanwa 2016).

The colonisation of Zimbabwe significantly disrupted these practices, and marshalled the first agricultural revolution from 1950 to 1980 (Eicher, Tawonezvi and Rukuni 2006). The lack of substantial mineral resources—which British-settlers expected to extract in Zimbabwe—led colonisers to shift their focus to the potential of agriculture. The country's diverse range of climates and landscapes allowed for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops, such as maize, wheat, tobacco, cotton and coffee, as well as the breeding of livestock. With that, settler farmers introduced commercial agriculture and capitalist agricultural development. Prime agricultural land was owned and controlled by settlers and the distribution of land, which was controlled by the colonial government, was highly unequal with black Zimbabweans being largely excluded from owning land or participating in the rapid growing commercial agricultural sector (Gwekwerere, Mutasa and Chitofiri 2018). This led to the displacement of subsistence farmers (who were largely women), and fractured the usufruct rights women held. Most notably, this resulted in land scarcity amongst black Zimbabweans which led to a severe decline in crop production due to the poor quality of land women were farming on. Increased white economic dominance restructured traditional Zimbabwean societies and the introduction of taxes and policies (such as the Native Land Husbandry Act) forced men to become migrant workers (G. Child and B. Child 2015). The colonial economy was driven by migrant labour and led to the creation of spaces in urban areas (such as the "No. 2 location in the capital city") for migrant workers and—for married men—their families as well. Additionally, policies like the National Development Policy were put in place to govern and balance 'urbanism and detribalisation' as 'the urban African worker ought to be half-ruralist' (Yoshikuni 2007: 76). A minority of black Zimbabwean labourers deemed to be a 'better class of native (sic)' were afforded accommodation spaces that had gardens so that women had

'some legitimate means of occupying their spare time' (Yoshikuni 2007: 75). This marked the beginning of urban agriculture for black Zimbabwean women.

Independence in 1980 brought with it the second agricultural revolution which focussed on bringing back small-scale/subsistence farmers into the country's agricultural economy. The post-colonial government aimed to boost the agricultural sector due to the start of political and economic instability. Various policies were introduced to aid with this which included the Command Agriculture Policy—which provided subsidies and other incentives to small-scale farmers—and the Zimbabwe Rural Act—which aimed to ensure that both spouses could hold a resettlement permit and jointly own land. Unmarried women were outrightly excluded from being permit holders, and in fact, very few women were joint permit holders with their husbands. By this point, urban agriculture was common practice in urban areas and was being carried out mostly by women for subsistence purposes, to supplement household food supply, save money on buying expensive foods and be self-sufficient as was done in rural areas. However, after independence in 1980, the government's attitude towards urban agriculture changed, and it was often viewed as an unfavourable, "rural" practice which negatively affected aspects of urban living, such as the aesthetic of urban spaces (Kutiwa, Boon and Devuyst 2017). As a result, these activities were discouraged and even criminalised.

While agricultural-production did increase during this time, ultimately the post-colonial government failed to maintain a highly productive, industrialised agriculture sector and Zimbabwe faced an agrarian crisis. In response to this, economic structural adjustment programmes were put in place to "free agriculture from the state". This controversial measure—coupled with inflation, low economic growth, droughts and unfavourable agricultural macro-economic policies—led to a gradual decline of subsistence or small-scale agriculture, as well as an increase in food insecurity and poverty.

In present day Zimbabwe, farming is still an essential part of the Zimbabwean culture and economy in both rural and urban areas. However, it has changed significantly since the early days of its history due to political and economic changes and instability. Along with changes in the agrarian landscape, expectations regarding women's roles as food producers at a household level remained unchanged, however, critical factors that impact women's ability to efficiently produce—such as access to resources—have changed, especially in urban areas. Despite various efforts to 'correct

historical imbalances in land distribution and ownership' (Sunday Mail quoted in FurtherAfrica 2021) through policy amendments and violent land seizures, the reality is that Zimbabwean farming is still dominated by large companies such as British American Tobacco and Innscor Africa that hire growers to produce on a commercial scale on their behalf, and it is largely a male-dominated sector. The historical issue of land access and tenure for women has resulted in the steady growth of a gendering of the urban farming landscape in Zimbabwe.

Avondale: A descriptive account

The study which was conducted in Avondale, a suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe, was selected as a main study site because of the prevalence of woman-led peripheral urban farming in the area. A key feature of Harare is the favourable climatic conditions which make it conducive for farming in general. One such condition is the '*vlei* [marsh] phenomenon' which Mbiba (2000: 286) describes as:

> ... seasonally waterlogged drainage systems that occur on both clay and sandy soils...
> [that] become heavily waterlogged, resulting in surface marshes along all drainage
> systems. The *vlei* "soils" get wet with the first rains and then retain moisture long into
> the next wet season.

These conditions have resulted in the steady growth of urban farming in Harare, since women have taken advantage of the climatic conditions and *vlei* properties to engage in food production.

The area of focus, Avondale, was selected due to the need to have a balanced account of marginal urban farming in different areas of Zimbabwe. Marginal urban farming is typically associated with low-middle class, high-density areas where there is a perceived lack of access to adequate food, employment and land. Avondale as a study area, challenges this perspective, and broadens understandings of why women engage in marginal farming. Avondale is a suburb in the north of Harare which is a predominantly middle- to upper-middle class. Previously a dairy farm before the country gained independence, Avondale was established as a suburb in the early 1900s, making it one of the earliest suburbs established in Harare (Property.co.za 2022). During Zimbabwe's colonisation, and for some years pre-colonisation, Avondale was predominantly occupied by white British residents. While urban gardening was acceptable within the confines of a person's residence, during this time, marginal urban farming was unheard of. With independence came more diversity

in the ethnic composition of the area. More black middle-class Zimbabweans moved to Avondale from more congested suburbs, such as Highfield and Mbare, and gradually the landscape of the area transformed, while still maintaining a degree of organisation. Avondale has seen an increase in on-plot and marginal farming, and residents have also been engaging in activities such as backyard chicken rearing, maize farming and small-scale aquaponic farming to diversify or create a source of income using the resources at their disposal.

Methodological approach

For this study, a qualitative research design was used for the collection and analysis of data to better understand women's experiences of position in- and contributions to the urban farming landscape in the context of marginal urban farming. Additionally, the image analysis of the agricultural landscapes that women use was conducted to substantiate the data from qualitative methods. To obtain images that were authentic, naturalistic observation was used to capture the natural environments where marginal urban farming takes place in Avondale in various seasons. This showed the diverse ways land is used during the different seasons of the year and highlights how idle land is used to sustain agriculturally-based livelihoods, and how political ecology struggles change during different times of the year.

Homogeneous sampling was used to select participants. The characteristics of a sample member in this study are women residing in Avondale, a suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe, who engage in urban agriculture in marginal spaces or women who reside in other areas, but own or use marginal spaces in Avondale for farming. Exponential discriminative snowball sampling was used to expedite the process to find and select suitable sample members. A total of fourteen women who engage in marginal urban farming were selected to participate in this study.

Semi-structured interviews were used, since the participants agreed to incorporate women's 'personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs' (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019: 2). A total of fourteen semi-structured individual interviews were conducted and the interview data was used in conjunction with images of landscapes to understand the political ecology experiences and perceptions of marginal urban farming by women who engage in the practice.

Theoretical grounding

FPE has played a considerable role in reshaping areas that look at development, landscape, resource use, agrarian reconstruction and rural-urban transformation (Hovorka 2006). It critiques the simplification of including women to statistical data and the dominant perspective that women are victims to environmental crises. FPE focusses on highlighting women as political actors who are capable of the production of unique knowledge, and the development and implementation of innovative ways of sustaining the environment (Sibanda, Hansen and Mukwada 2022). In line with this, FPE also questions the ways in which gender-based power relations influence and reinforce inequalities in decisions regarding environmental policies. This theory was applied in the present study to shape the understanding, deconstruction and assessment of the complex links between social, political and ecological processes in the suburb of Avondale, and how these processes influenced and constructed gendered socio-nature relations of power.

With one of the key aims of this study being to examine the role of women in marginal urban agriculture and urban political ecology, the IKS theory was an ideal theory to use, since it interrogates how IKS that provide a counter discourse can complete and fill the gap of conventional urban farming knowledge (Emeagwali 2021). Women using marginal urban spaces for farming have challenged and reconstructed urban political ecology in Avondale, and with the application of IKS, have a better understanding of how the knowledge systems they have developed is provided.

The IKS theory and the FPE theory complement each other as they both emphasise the importance of recognising, understanding and engaging women's knowledge and experience in urban agriculture and political ecology. Women are knowledge creators and innovators, and are at the forefront of an environmental revolution which calls for an integration of their embodied knowledge of urban ecological landscapes in formal food and agriculture discourse.

The urban farming landscape in Avondale - an overview

The urban farming landscape in the suburb of Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe has evolved from being confined to food gardens in people's backyards to farming plots on marginal land around the suburb. While marginal urban farming in areas like Avondale is often assumed to be the work of domestic helpers and other workers in the area, residents of the area are taking part in this practice.

It has been cited as an effective way to expand the useable land for farming, and diversify the types of crops that one can grow at the same time.

For most residents, they take part in marginal urban farming during the maize season to maximise on their yield. While others use marginal land near to their properties (as in Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3), other residents and people who live in neighbouring suburbs use any available land for the same purpose.

Figure 5.1: A resident using land outside their property during the maize season

Figure 5.2: A resident using land outside their property during the maize season

Figure 5.3: Marginal land next to a main road, outside a resident's property, being used to grow tomatoes and vegetables throughout the year

Marginal urban farming in Avondale is not restricted to crops. Although animal agriculture is still largely considered rural when compared to crop-based agriculture in urban areas, it is not uncommon for urban residents to run animal husbandry projects on their property. Backyard chicken farming and to a lesser extent, small-scale aquaponic farming are common in Avondale. Some residents, however, have utilised land for more unconventional animal husbandry as well. One resident has a goat project on their property, and often allows the goats to graze on the marginal land outside their gate. This can be considered unconventional in Avondale; however, it shows how diverse the uses of marginal urban land can be.

Figure 5.4: Goats grazing on marginal land in Avondale

It is common practice for there to be visible signage in urban areas restricting marginal urban farming activities, however, in Avondale these were scant. Although it is common knowledge that the city council does not allow this practice, the lack of signage does not reinforce this message—and this is an interesting dynamic, since signage is commonly seen in other urban areas in Harare. The places or properties that did include signage related to marginal urban farming which were privately owned, and signage was placed by the property owners. Figure 5.5 shows a sign disallowing cultivation on the periphery of a golf course as this can detract from the aesthetic of the course and is an eyesore for golf club members. However, despite this clear signage, Figure 5.6 shows the same area outside the golf course during the maize season with crops being grown there. While only small sections of the periphery have crops, the message to not cultivate was disregarded by some community members.

Figure 5.5: Visible signage disallowing cultivation on the periphery of a golf course before the maize season

Figure 5.6: Signage covered by crops growing in the same area during the maize season

Reframing local urban food systems through marginal farming

The local food system in Avondale has transformed over the years, with an increase in convenience stores, markets and home-based vendors. This is a result of the strong influence of capitalist globalisation ideology that has led to food systems failing to equitably meet the food needs of people. This failure can be attributed to the neoliberal strategies in Zimbabwe—which prioritise industrial efficiencies, production and free trade-ideologies—that underpin most of the country's agricultural and food policies. Moreover, popular discourses regarding food position, industrialised global or contemporary food systems as the most effective, efficient and logical means to ensure food equity. However, the obvious reliance on technological innovations and the guise of sustainability of these food systems has become evident to many people, as the volatility of the production, supply and access of food is influenced by volatile capitalist markets which significantly impact consumers. Zimbabwe has experienced the negative externalities created by global food systems and this has led locals to construct their own food systems.

In response to the negative impacts of the country's food systems, in Avondale there has been a clear emergence of alternative food systems which work in opposition to the dominant corporate food system. This system was created and is run by locals of the Avondale area as well as people from other areas, and it has created a space where the value of small-scale female food producers was acknowledged and harnessed. Some participants shared how they contribute to local food systems, and how these systems in turn, provide them with an easily accessible consumer base for their produce. Participant 3 (pictured in Figure 5.7), an elderly woman who lives in Avondale, specialises in sweet potatoes throughout the year which she grows on a strip of municipal land outside another resident's property. She is well known in the area for her sweet potatoes and while previously only growing them for her own consumption, she has started selling them.

> '*Mwana wangu ndiye akazondiudza kuti nditengese. Vanhu vayingouya vachikumbira. Munda wangu unozikanwa, ndayingoti enda unotora mwannagu. Asi zvandaakutengesa hadzichatokwane kuti ndidyewo* [laughs].' (Participant 3)
> (I was encouraged by my daughter to sell them because a lot of people would ask me for some and I'd tell them to go to my field. They all know where it is. Now I barely have enough for myself [laughs].)

Figure 5.7: A resident of Avondale with her sweet potato harvest

It was interesting to note that for other participants who sold the produce from their marginal land, re-investing or investing their earnings was a priority. Participant 7 emphasised that she does not use the money from her maize sales for anything other than purchasing stock for her boutique. As a season marginal urban farmer, she only invests in urban farming during the maize season. For other women, like participant 4, she tries to get optimum use of her land and uses it to grow legumes, sweet potatoes and vegetables, and re-invests her earnings into the piece of land she uses.

The paradox of being a woman urban farmer in Avondale

The wave of female empowerment in Zimbabwe has brought with it more recognition of the work women are doing in the agriculture sector as a whole. With women often being responsible for the provision of food in Zimbabwean households, urban farming activities are dominated by them. Urban farming has become a source of social and economic empowerment for women, since it provides alternative employment, complementary income, increased household status (respect, decision-making power) and a means to expand their food sources. However, despite the range of reasons for which women participate in urban farming, the dominant way of understanding this practice is related to food security and poverty alleviation. This perception is particularly prevalent in common ways of understanding peripheral urban farming.

While urban farming has been encouraged and supported in recent years, with policies being enacted to empower women who practice urban farming, there is still a segment of women who practice urban farming in alternative spaces who are excluded from these support structures. Agricultural activities in peripheral/unconventional urban spaces, such as roadsides, recreational parks and idle municipal land, have historically been seen as an unfavourable "rural" practice which negatively affects aspects of urban living, such as the health of urban residents and the aesthetic of urban spaces. This has led to debates on what is considered acceptable urban farming, and separated, discouraged and even criminalised different forms of urban farming. Despite the perceived increase in recognition of women's valuable contributions, there is still a group of women who actively participate; however, they are neglected as resourceful, knowledgeable and innovative primary food producers in Zimbabwe. These women must be recognised and repositioned in urban agriculture discourse, and the need to interrogate the varied contexts in which women practice urban farming must be understood in greater detail.

The gendered nature of peripheral urban land access

Historically, land has been one of the key resources to women's quality of life, economic freedom and to some degree, their struggle for equality. More than 50 per cent of urban women in Zimbabwe depend on land-based livelihoods, however, despite the importance of land to women, there is still a pervasive patriarch that controls urban land rights and discriminates against women. In the suburb of Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe, while the face of peripheral urban farming is female, there is strong contestation over who "owns" the land—commonly referred to as *munda* (land suitable for cultivation). Ownership in this context is self-appointed and refers to finding and using a piece of urban land for farming purposes. The land is typically idle municipal land. Forty per cent of the study's participants stated that while the land was used by them, the real "owner" was their husband as the person who found the land. While women typically favour land ownership for the freedom it provides them, for some of the participants, like Participants 4 and 5, owning the land was not as important as having access to any land. Participant 4 is a domestic worker in Avondale and her husband, who was formerly a gardener in the same area, is now self-employed selling handmade baskets. The land she uses has been owned by her husband for seven years, and she has become the primary user for the last four years.

99

'Ah, handitombo tambise nguva ndichitsvaga pekurima, ndinopawanepi padhuze nepandogara? Zvinontesa. Ini ndinototi ndine munda, iwowuyu. Ndewedu, hapadiwe mumwe.' (Participant 4)

(I don't waste my time looking for my own land, where will I find it so close to where I stay? It's a challenge; for me, I say I have land - this land. It's ours, I don't need my own.)

Similar sentiments were shared by Participant 5 who is also the primary user of her husband's land.

'...ndini ndinorimira pano, ndongoitawo zvandirikuda kunge icho chibage chamurikuwona apa. Munda ndewangu, nditori right pandiri.' (Participant 5)

(I'm the one who uses this [land], I do what I want on the land, like the maize you see here. It's basically mine, I'm okay where I am.)

These participants shared that in and around the area near their land, it was common for women to work on the land owned by their husbands or partners.

Figure 5.8: Vacant plot of land where Participants 4 and 5 use their husbands land for marginal urban farming

For most participants, land ownership was a great achievement and provided them with a sense of financial security and individuality, it also allowed them to freely explore various livelihood strategies. Women who migrated from rural areas to Harare were especially proud of owning land, since this defied discriminatory customary norms from their places of origin that typically do not allow, or make it difficult for women to be sole owners of land. Participant 1, for example, highlighted how land ownership invigorated her sense of agency.

> '*Ndinofara zvikuru kutarisawo kamunda kang- hausi muhombe - asi ndaatarira ndichingoziva kuti ndekangu...hapana anouya kwandiri achiti "Pano haparimwe mbabaira, rima ichi." Ndoite zvandinoda*.' (Participant 1)
> (I'm very happy, to look at this small land—yes, it's not much—but looking at it and knowing it's mine ... no-one can come tell me "We aren't planting sweet potatoes, plant this instead." I do what I want.)

Peripheral land ownership also brought with it a sense of status and power for women in the lower income bracket. This was evident in the interview with Participant 8. As an owner of two pieces of marginal land, she equates her ownership status to economic power and elevated household status.

> '*Vanhu vanotonditarisawo semunhu ane tunhu twake, kwete kungonzi Madhumbe.*' (Participant 8)
> (People see me as someone with something, not just *Madhumbe* [Shona slang for a domestic worker].)

Contrary to this, the middle-lower income earners who also engage in peripheral urban farming mainly viewed it as a means to supplement their income. Participant 7, a boutique owner who resides in Melbereign (a suburb near Avondale), has five pieces of marginal land in and around Avondale. For her, land ownership was more opportunistic and while claiming ownership to the land by referring to it as hers, she was aware of the temporal nature of ownership and did not attach much sentimental value to it like other participants.

> 'I find *tuminda twakawanda kuti chibage chacho chiwande. Asi ndinongorima pano panguva yechibage.*' (Participant 7)

(I find multiple pieces of land to use so I can maximise my harvest. I only really use this land during the maize season.)

Figure 5.9: One of the five pieces of land where Participant 7 grows maize

A trend that was noted in Avondale was an inheritance system when it came to marginal land ownership. Most of the marginal land that participants were using was inherited from women who formerly worked or lived in the area. There was also a sense of empowerment, collaboration and comradery among women engaging in marginal urban farming in the same area. Participant 6, a recipient of marginal land from a woman who was working in the household that she is currently employed at, shared gratitude for the sense of unity she felt when she moved to Avondale:

'Ndinotorimawo kuBudirio uko, ndine ghadeni nechimunda. Pandakauya kuno ahndina kutarisira zvekurima izvi. Ndakangouyawo kubasa. Asi mumwe musi ndakasanganawo naMai X—vanogara apo. Tayitaura vakandibvunza kana ndichirima, vakabvunza kana ndichida chimunda. Takataura kwemamwe mazuva vakazondiratidza munda wacho ndikatosangana nevanwe vakadzi vaneminda ipapo. Ndakambofunga kuti pane chisina kunayatsomira mushe. Vanga vachindipirei munda? Asi ndakazowona kuti ahh, vakadzi

ava vakabatana. Tinotoita kunge hama.' (Participant 6)

(I already have a garden and marginal plot in Budiriro. Coming here, I never thought about farming. I just came for work.But one day, I was approached by Mrs X—she worked over there. We were talking and she came and asked if I farm, and if I'd be interested in a plot. We spoke for a few days and she showed me the plot where we spoke and I met the other women who farm in that area. I thought it was strange at first. Why is she giving me this land? But I realised that the women here are just united. It's almost like a sisterhood.)

From a FPE perspective, the results clearly show that having women at the centre of natural resource use and management can solidify their position in ecological and urban farming discourse as being instrumental knowledge producers.

Strategies to navigating urban foodwork on marginal land

In Harare, Zimbabwe, marginal urban farming is an illegal offense which has been supported by two key legislations: the Environmental Management Act (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2002: Chapter 20:27 section 140), which forbids agricultural activities 30 meters from water sources such as wetlands, and the Harare City council by-laws. As previously discussed in this chapter, the restrictions on urban farming have been in existence for years and while Zimbabwe's political structure and leadership has evolved since colonisation, there is a need to rethink rather than adapt the existing urban agriculture policies that to some degree, still fail to accommodate changes in urban areas.

Location: Limited barriers to accessing land

This study found that it is public knowledge among women peripheral cultivators in Avondale, that farming in marginal spaces is prohibited by local agriculture bylaws. All participants had some knowledge of the restrictions set on marginal urban farming and some cited the existence of such laws as the main, dormant hurdle they faced. Historically, The Harare City Council has been known to slash crops grown in marginal spaces, often when the crops have reached maturity. While acknowledging the harshness of measures such as slashing crops, the council has stated that the existence of signage [as shown in Figure 5.5] indicating that farming is not permitted, should be enough to dissuade people from breaking the law (Shayanewako 2022), therefore, justifying their measures.

With strict legislative restrictions on marginal foodwork and extreme measures like slashing, the overarching perception in literature and media is that this discourages people from engaging in the practice. While these restrictions are largely ignored, the consequences of breaking the law are experienced in various areas, particularly high-density suburbs where marginal farming is more prevalent. In low-density areas like Avondale, few people have experienced repercussions for marginal farming and this has mostly been attributed to location. With Avondale being a low-density suburb, there has been a notable lower presence of council workers who remove crops. As a result, plots of land can be used for marginal farming for years on end, with the practice only stopping if a development is taking place on the land. Women engaging in marginal farming in Avondale have noted this, comparing this experience with other areas where they currently, or used to farm. One participant described Avondale as '*a safe area for our kind of farming*' (Participant 4), highlighting that she has not experienced the battles with council officials she constantly had to face in another area.

In general, location has been known to influence the viability of livelihood strategy with factors such as the proximity to facilities and weather conditions commonly being cited (Monts'i 2001; Peng et al. 2017; Yobe, Mudhara and Mafongoya 2019). In this study, Avondale, as a location, is seen as a "council free zone" where residents have the freedom to use vacant land productively. For women, this has freed them from harassment and loss of produce and more importantly, has given women the ability to produce crops primarily for commercial sale (production strategies will be explored further in an upcoming section). The sparse presence of restrictive signage related to farming was also an indication that marginal urban farming was not restricted to the same degree as in other areas (particularly high-density suburbs) where signage is vast. In an area like Avondale—as a previously middle-upper class suburb during colonisation—it is easy for people to have attitudinal biases and mistaken beliefs about the impacts of marginal farming on aesthetics and crime. This study, however, has found that these assumptions cannot be generalised to all urban areas.

Means of production

While there are numerous initiatives to provide rural women with means of production, especially in the maize season, when comparing urban access to similar resources, there is a notable discrepancy. Some participants emphasised the lack of resource support as a hindrance to their progress, particularly citing a need for the correct fertiliser at the appropriate time of crop growth as an important factor to success.

'Ipapa handina kuwana D [compound D fertiliser]*. Unotowna kusiyana kwechibage chacho. Kana paunodya kuntonzwa musiyano.'* (Participant 6)

(This time I did not get D [compound D fertiliser] on time. You can see the difference in the crops. They will taste different too.)

However, most women knew of, or used the support of organisations like SEEDCO and Klein Karoo Seed MarketingZimbabwe—seed producing companies in Zimbabwe that have agreements with marginal urban farmers to provide them with seed and place their signage in the area to advertise the seed.

Figure 5.10: Seed producing company advert on marginal land

Crop diversification

Crop diversification is not a common practice on marginal land, with many Zimbabweans practicing intense maize monoculture and occasionally growing sweet potatoes on the same land. This is largely attributed to the amount of attention and resources required for other crops when compared to maize, which is often left to grow naturally with attention mostly being required at

the planting stage. For the participants of this study, however, while maize is a key crop they grow, crop diversification—even in the maize season—was highlighted as an important way to reduce the risk and minimise the impact of crop failure.Participant 1 emphasised the ecological benefits of rotating crops on her piece of land, stating that she '*get[s] healthier crops*' using this method. She does not use contemporary methods to keep her land fertile and productive, but rather employs the knowledge and skills she learned growing crops in the rural areas with her family to boost her yield. Similar strategies were employed by Participant 2 who preferred the use of traditional crop and soil fertilising methods to contemporary fertilisers. In addition to maize, Participant 2 also grows sunflowers on the same plot to diversify her crops.

Urban areas are typically linked to modernity, technological advancement and scientific knowledge; and in many instances, western influences have overshadowed the importance of, and the need for indigenous knowledge, rather than leveraging its strengths. Here, it can be seen how women have incorporated IKS—which is often labelled a rural or traditional form of knowledge that is utilised by poor or underprivileged individuals—and this can be viewed as a means to acknowledge and preserve "rustic" knowledge in urban spaces. The use of IKS in urban spaces has slowed down in Zimbabwe, since the market for crop aides has expanded, however, it is important to document the value of traditional knowledge in urban agriculture. IKS and their application in marginal urban farming provide a counter discourse that can complete and fill in the gap of conventional urban farming knowledge.

Figure 5.11: Participant 2's sunflower field

Discussion

The discussion of women in urban farming is not new. Much attention has been paid to gender issues in various sectors, with agriculture being a main one, particularly in crop-dependent countries like Zimbabwe. Additionally, there has been a parallel increase in agricultural-based female empowerment initiatives that are geared towards increasing women's presence in both rural and urban farming spaces. However, there is a paucity of relevant, current research probing marginal urban farming which, arguably, is more prevalent in urban spaces, and has more women participants than conventional forms of urban farming, like backyard farming and urban gardens.

This chapter explored the history of urban farming in Harare and traced the connections between urban farming and broader neoliberal, extractivist and patriarchal processes that work to marginalise Zimbabwean women who engage in marginal urban agriculture. It has shown that while the face of marginal urban farming in Avondale, and in Harare at large, is female, issues related to land access and "ownership" (in the context of this study) are still prevalent in spaces where it is presumed women would have easier access to land. The land access challenges which are linked to culture-based patriarchy and neoliberalism are prevalent in different contexts, and the first step to resolving the broader issue would be the acknowledgement of existing, invisible urban farming structures that are only noted in a negative light unless they are tied to dominant foodwork discourses focussed on food security.

Consistent with existent literature, this study found that the common livelihood strategies women employ in the Harare suburb of Avondale, are mostly like those in other areas of the country and globe. Maize is a cash crop that is popularly grown on marginal land and in the suburb of Avondale, it has provided women with access to organic food for their families and the opportunity to sell enough to the Grain Marketing Board at a commercial level. Maize is regarded as a safe choice among other crops as it generally takes well to various soil types with the right kind of fertiliser, where required. While marginal land—particularly owned and worked by men—in the suburb of Avondale is often solely used for maize production, participants in this study emphasised the need for crop rotation, the application of indigenous family knowledge regarding crops and the importance of experimentation on the land to constantly have produce at their disposal.

A consideration of locality of marginal urban farming activities was uncovered in interviews with

participants as the lack of prohibitive signage, participants lack of experiences with council officials in the area and long tenure periods on marginal land. While it is obvious that marginal urban farming is deemed illegal, in some areas the opposite is true. Literature on urban agriculture in Zimbabwe consistently shows the negative experiences of residents in lower-income areas with regards to urban farming, with council officials more actively enforcing law in these areas. However, the practice is seemingly tolerated in low density areas with limited, to no council presence. Marginal urban farming is a normalised practice that has largely been accepted by the community.

Literature on the use of IKS in agriculture often links such knowledge systems to rural women. Little is said about how this knowledge has been used in urban agriculture to help mitigate the economical (in the form of purchasing fertilisers and other chemicals) and ecological urban political ecology challenges women face in urban farming. Contrary to common perceptions of why women resort to traditional, indigenous knowledge-based approaches—which are often linked to a lack of technology or access to resources—this study has shown that women use these methods as an economic strategy and for health-related reasons. The use of organic materials in crop cultivation has been highlighted as the main cause for produce tasting better.

108

The results from this study have brought some attention to the positive impact women's land ownership can have. While some women did not own the land they worked on—findings which align with the studies on gender equity, land and women—a number of participants "owned" the land they practice marginal urban farming on (albeit on a temporal, conscientious basis). There was a sense of freedom women had with having the sole decision-making power of how the land was used. Additionally, women expressed enjoying financial freedom that comes with keeping all the earnings from produce sold, the ability to expand their livelihood strategies by reinvesting earnings from produce sales into other projects and an expansion of healthy food choices using strategies like crop rotation.

FPE has played a considerable role in reshaping areas that look at development, landscape, resource use, agrarian reconstruction and rural-urban transformation (Hovorka 2006). It critiques the simplification of including women to statistical data and the dominant perspective that women are victims to environmental crises. FPE focusses more on highlighting women as political actors who are capable of the production of unique knowledge, and the development and implementation of innovative ways of sustaining the environment. In line with this, FPE also questions the ways in

which gender-based power relations influence and reinforce inequalities in decisions regarding environmental policies. FPE pushes for more attention to be paid to the affective and personified experiences of people's interactions with their environments and ways of existing within their environments. This helps with understanding the essence of socio-environmental conflicts and how interdependent the lives of people and their environments are.FPE does not consider the relationship between gender and environment as being biologically rooted, rather they are socially constructed which vary based on culture, class, interaction among individuals and society and geographical location.

Theoretically, the theories used to support this study played a vital role in understanding the data and recognising the value of the contributions made by women who practice marginal urban agriculture in the suburb of Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe, and in seeing the knowledge gap created by excluding these women's experiential farming knowledge from Harare's urban agriculture discourse. The FPE theory highlighted the importance of incorporating gender when understanding and addressing ecological issues which are linked to urban farming. IKS theory showed the important role of traditional, often disregarded ways of knowledge creation and how these influence ways of navigating and using ecological spaces in urban areas.

109

Conclusion

While literature on urban farming is vast, women are mostly depicted as under-paid agricultural labourers. There is little said about the women who are changing perceptions of women in farming and making impactful changes. There is a need for increased gender mainstreaming so that solutions to the challenges women face in farming are more nuanced and less generalised; and the contributions women make—both small and large—can be recognised as a shift in understanding how women engage with land in different contexts. Additionally, appropriate urban farming strategies that do not exclude certain forms of urban farming—like marginal urban farming—should be considered to fully understand the scope of women's urban farming work.

Study limitations

This research aimed to analyse the household, economic and knowledge-based contributions that are made by women who are engaging in marginal urban farming, and examined these women's

experiences in foodwork in precarious contexts in Harare, Zimbabwe. This was done, in part, by examining existing agriculture policies and highlighting the need for broader urban agriculture policies that do not criminalise marginal urban agricultural activities. This study does not attempt to draft new policy documents, rather it focusses on highlighting any gaps in existing policies that have posed as a barrier to urban women who engage in marginal urban farming.

Additionally, this study focussed specifically on the precarious foodwork experiences of urban women who engage in marginal agricultural activities in Harare. The research only discusses the experiences of this group of women; however, it is done so extensively. Their experiences and the challenges they are facing may not be representative of the experiences and challenges faced by women in different geo-locations who engage in marginal urban farming.

It is important to note that despite these limitations, measures were taken to ensure that the research was sensitive to the nuances of the interview sample that was obtained. Close attention was paid to the unique experiences of the participants, considering the context in which they are now farming, and how their engagement in illegal urban farming has in varying degrees, been influenced by local historical and cultural factors, such as migration patterns land use practices. This allowed for group idiosyncrasies, such as innovative crop growing techniques, community collaboration and the resourceful use of limited space to be understood in a deeper way. This insight is often lost because of the oversimplification of, and superficial understandings of illegal urban farming in Harare. Consideration for such nuances allowed for adequate analysis that drew out many important factors involved in this case study of Harare's female-driven urban farming.

References

Ahmadzai, H., Tutundjian, S. and Elouafi, I. 2021. Policies for sustainable agriculture and livelihood in marginal lands: A Review. *Sustainability*, 13(16): 8692. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su13168692 [Accessed on 20 January 2024].

Bhatasara, S. 2020. Women's access to land and security of tenure post 2013 Constitution in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*, 3(1): 186–194. Available at: https://doi.org/10.48346/IMIST.PRSM/ajlp-gs.v3i1.18321 [Accessed on 7 January 2023].

Cartwright, M. 2019. Mapungubwe. In: *World History Encyclopedia*. https://www.worldhistory.org/Mapungubwe/ [Accessed on 7 February 2023].

Child, G. and Child, B. 2015. The conservation movement in Zimbabwe: An early experiment in devolved community based regulation. *African Journal of Wildlife Research*, 45(1): 1–16. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3957/056.045.0103 [Accessed on 12 February 2023].

City of Harare. n.d. *By-laws*. https://www.hararecity.co.zw/resources/of/by-laws [Accessed on February 15 2023].

Csikós, N. and Tóth, G. 2023. Concepts of agricultural marginal lands and their utilisation: A review. *Agricultural Systems*, 204. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2022.103560 [Accessed on 20 January 2024].

DeJonckheere, M. and Vaughn, L. 2019. Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: A balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 7(2): e000057. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057 [Accessed on 18 February 2023].

Eicher, C.K., Tawonezvi, P. and Rukuni, M.S. 2006. Synthesis. In: *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution Revisited*. Edited by M. Rukuni., P. Tawonezvi., C. Eicher., M. Munyuki-Hungwe and P. Matondi. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Emeagwali, G. 2021. African indigenous knowledge systems and the empowerment of African women. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, pp. 123–134. Edited by O. Yacob-Haliso and T. Falola. Chamden: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fletcher, A.J. and Kubik, W. 2016. Introduction context and commonality: Women in agriculture worldwide. In: *Women and agriculture worldwide: Key issues and practical approaches*, pp. 1–10. Edited by A.J. Fletcher and W. Kubik. Abingdon Oxon: Routledge.

FurtherAfrica. 2021. *Are white farmers behind Zimbabwe's latest agriculture boom*? https://furtherafrica.com/2021/11/01/are-white-farmers-behind-zimbabwes-latest-agriculture-boom/ [Accessed on 2 December 2023].

Gwekwerere, T., Mutasa, D.E. and Chitofiri, K. 2018. Settlers, Rhodesians, and Supremacists: White authors and the fast track land reform program in post-2000 Zimbabwe. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(1): 3–28. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934717739400 [Accessed on 7 January 2023].

Hanjra, M.A. and Williams, T.O. 2020. Global change and investments in smallholder irrigation for food and nutrition security in Sub-Saharan Africa. In: *The role of smallholder farms in food and nutrition security*, pp. 99–131. Edited by Y. Gomez, S. Paloma and K. Louhichi. Camden: Springer.

Hovorka, A.J. 2006. The no. 1 ladies' poultry farm: A feminist political ecology of urban agriculture in Botswana. *Gender, Place and Culture,* 13(3): 207–225. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690600700956 [Accessed on 2 December 2022].

Hovorka, A., De Zeeuw, H. and Njenga, M. 2009. *Women feeding cities: Mainstreaming gender in urban agriculture and food security*. Practical Action Publishing, Rugby.

Kutiwa, S., Boon, E. and Devuyst, D. 2017. Urban agriculture in low income households of Harare: An adaptive response to economic crisis. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 32(2): 85–96. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2010.11906325 [Accessed on 15 February 2023].

Mbiba, B. 2000. *Urban agriculture in Harare: Between suspicion and repression*. City case study, Harare. http://www.ruaf.org/index.php?q+system/files/files/Harare.PDF [Accessed on 28 November 2022].

McClintock, N. 2010. Why farm the city? Theorizing urban agriculture through a lens of metabolic rift. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(2): 191–207. Available at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1092&context=usp_fac [Accessed on 20 January 2024].

Monts'i, D.R.P. 2001. *The impact of urbanization on household livelihood strategies: A comparative study of Maputsoe and Fobane*. Master's thesis, Centre for Environment and Development, University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg, Pietermaritzburg.

Moyo, S. 1995. *The land question in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Southern Africa Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust.

Mupangi, S. 2013. *The urban agric revolution*. https://www.herald.co.zw/the-urban-agric-revolution/ [Accessed on 7 February 2023].

Mutondoro, F., Chiweshe, M.K. and Gaidzanwa, R. 2016. *The intersection of women, land and corruption in Zimbabwe: Case study of women in Chisumbanje and Chinyamukwakwa villages in Zimbabwe*. Available: https://fepafrika.ch/wp-content/uploads/TIZ-Women-Land-Corruption-study-Zimbabwe.pdf [Accessed on 24 February 2023].

Parliament of Zimbabwe. 2002. *Environmental Management Act 13 of 2002*. Available at: https://ucaz.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ENVIRONMENTAL-MANAGEMENT-ACT.pdf [Accessed on 16 January 2023].

Peng, W., Zheng, H., Robinson, B.E., Li, C. and Wang, F. 2017. Household livelihood strategy choices, impact factors, and environmental consequences in Miyun Reservoir Watershed, China. *Sustainability*, 9(2): 175. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su9020175 [Accessed on 28 January 2023].

Poulsen, M.N. 2015. *"They got corn out here in the heart of the ghetto?" Community perceptions of urban farming in Baltimore, Maryland*. Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland.

Property.co.za. 2022. *Neighbourhood on spotlight - Avondale*. https://www.property.co.zw/blog/neighbourhood-on-spotlight---avondale [Accessed on February 15 2023].

Resurrección, B.P. 2017. Gender and environment from 'women, environment and development' to feminist political ecology. In: *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, pp. 71–85. Edited by S. MacGregor. Oxon: Routledge.

Russo, P., Tomaselli G. and Pappalardo, G. 2014. Marginal periurban agricultural areas: A support method for landscape planning. *Land Use Policy*, 41: 97–109. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2014.04.017 [Accessed on 20 January 2024].

Shayanewako, S. 2022. *Come and get permits, Harare tells urban farmers*. https://www.herald.co.zw/come-and-get-permits-harare-tells-urban-farmers/ [Accessed on 16 January 2023].

Sibanda, W., Hansen, M.M. and Mukwada, G. 2022. The appropriation of African indigenous knowledge system in WASH activities by women at Tongogara Refugee Camp, Zimbabwe. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2108229 [Accessed on 15 February 2023].

Swinbank, V.A. 2021. *Women's food matters: Stirring the pot*. Chamden: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yobe, C.L., Mudhara, M. and Mafongoya, P. 2019. Livelihood strategies and their determinants among smallholder farming households in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. *Agricultural Economics Research, Policy and Practice in Southern Africa*, 58(3): 340–353. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03031853.2019.1608275 [Accessed on 28 January 2023].

Yoshikuni, T. 2007. *African urban experiences in colonial Zimbabwe: A social history of Harare before 1925*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Chapter 6

Participation and Land Access of Urban Smallholder Farmers: Implications for Food Production

By Nthabeleng Tamako and Joyce Chitja

Introduction

Urban agriculture (UA) is motivated by a wide range of factors, including the desire for high-quality food, improved health, environmental considerations, economic incentives including social and individual factors, which may transcend food security and economic gains (Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO] 2019). Urban farming, often operated by subsistence and smallholder farmers and community groups, play a crucial role in promoting local food production and environmental renewal, thus enhancing food security, well-being and fostering resilience in the face of climate-related disruptions (Eigenbrod and Gruda 2015). These benefits encompass building communities and fostering social capital, reclaiming a sense of belonging, enhancing psychological well-being and cultivating a sense of purpose and self-worth (Battersby and Haysom 2018). Upreti et al. (2018) emphasises UA's role in supplying sustenance and social support in urban areas. Participation in UA is driven by a range of factors, with social and personal benefits frequently surpassing concerns about food security and economic advantages (De Swardt et al. 2005; Nzimande 2017). Although food sovereignty and food security are often seen as antagonistic, participation in subsistence and profitable smallholder farming by citizens may dispel this anatomy. Hence, the recent advocacy by researchers and policy-makers to include agency and sustainability in the definition and pillars of food security is important (Chitja et al. 2016; Clapp et al. 2022). In the context of urban smallholder farming, food sovereignty entails ensuring that farmers have the autonomy and agency to participate in decision-making processes that affect their food production activities. It can be said that food sovereignty entails to "guard and invigilate" the process and power dynamics in the process and value chain of ensuring food security for all. By participating in collaborative initiatives and partnerships, farmers can leverage their collective strength to address common challenges, such as access to land, water and inputs, while also promoting social cohesion and solidarity within urban farming. Participation is defined by the Food and Agricultural

115

Organisation as the involvement of individuals interested in a particular intervention to respond to their needs or obstacles (FAO 2016). Participation is critically viewed as a form of power due to its potential to empower people and transform their lives through knowledge and skill exchange as well as shared experiences from other actors (FAO 2019; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2012). The idea of food sovereignty in urban food farming embodies principles of self-determination, autonomy and equity in food production and distribution, enabling communities to exercise control over their own food systems.

Farmers in South Africa face numerous challenges which include, but are not limited to: access to agricultural land due to competition for land use for housing development, poor extension services and lack of access to agricultural inputs (Bisaga, Parikh and Loggia 2019; FAO 2019). Land access for farmers has been a challenge for years, especially for women accessing fertile farming land (Asiama 2005; Jacobs and Xaba 2008). Land, often considered a natural resource, is frequently in short supply in Africa, especially in urban areas. This is particularly important for the African population, both economically and socially, since it shapes their identity, cultural practices and social relations (Pattnaik et al. 2018). Land access is a critical determinant of the viability and sustainability of urban smallholder farming. Limited availability of land, high land prices, insecure land tenure and competing land uses, pose significant barriers to sustainable urban food production. Ensuring equitable access to land for smallholder farmers is essential for expanding UA, increasing local food production, environmental renewal and promoting food sovereignty (Blessing 2019). For South Africans, especially farmers, land ownership and accessibility give identity and add-on opportunities to tap in for social and financial opportunities, that is, to use the land as collateral for credit, and to participate in initiatives because of land access and ownership privilege (Bisaga et al. 2019). Despite advancements in South Africa, urbanisation, land ownership and access remain a pervasive challenge, with women smallholder farmers being disproportionately affected due to the pervasive patriarchal land access practices and socially embedded practices even in urban households (Glazebrook, Noll and Opoku 2020). The gender disparity in property access is a critical factor contributing to the broader gender gap in economic well-being and social standing (Hadebe and Mpofu 2013).By prioritising local and appropriate food production, urban food gardens, through land access, could contribute to food sovereignty by reducing dependence on external food sources and promoting food security at the local level (Modibedi, Masakoameng and Maake 2021).

The primary aim of this study is to delve into the participation aspect of smallholder farmers in UA and food production. Additionally, the research examines the access to land for urban farming for both genders as well as the obstacles they confront. This framework centres on the key elements that shape livelihoods within a specific region and highlights both the constraints and facilitators that influence the utilisation of other resources (Morton 2007). In UA, most farmers usually own smaller individual agricultural plots, primarily intended for household consumption and seasonal produce (Kanosvamhira 2019; Kanosvamhira and Tevera 2020).

Most farmers in UA usually have access to smaller individual agricultural plots, mainly for household consumption and seasonal produce (Kanosvamhira 2019; Kanosvamhira and Tevera 2020). Currently, there is a growing trend of women actively participating in social associations and cooperatives to gain access to resources and information and to acquire power (Woolcock 2001). Additionally, both women and men are actively participating in registered cooperatives and new, unregistered farmer's groups, all with a similar objective of gaining access to resources (Gamhewage et al. 2015). Studies have shown that cooperatives that are female-dominated have access to nearby land, compared to those that are male-dominated or equal, and that they are able to acquire larger fields of land (FAO 2016).

117

Conceptual framework

It has been revealed that individuals' needs and desires are driven by extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Maslow's theory of needs points out that a person remains at a certain level until their needs are satisfied before stepping up to a higher level (Trivedi and Mehta 2019). The theory consists of five levels, namely psychological needs; security needs; social needs; appreciation needs and the need for self-actualisation. When applied to the context of food security and food sovereignty, Maslow's hierarchy provides a useful lens for understanding the complex interplay between physical nourishment, socio-economic empowerment and cultural identity. At the base of Maslow's hierarchy lies physiological needs which include food, water and shelter (Poston 2009). Food security, defined as the consistent access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life, is foundational to fulfilling these physiological needs (Herforth et al. 2020). Without adequate food security, individuals and communities are unable to satisfy their most basic requirements for survival and physical well-being. Thus, addressing food insecurity is essential for promoting human health and resilience.

Moving up Maslow's hierarchy, food sovereignty emerges as a concept that transcends mere access to food and encompasses broader notions of autonomy, self-determination and cultural identity (Trivedi and Mehta 2019). Food sovereignty asserts the rights of individuals and communities to define their own food systems, including the production, distribution and consumption of food, in such ways that are ecologically sustainable (Herforth et al. 2020), socially just and culturally appropriate. By prioritising local and traditional food systems, food sovereignty empowers communities to reclaim control over their food. Food sovereignty entails empowering farmers, particularly marginalised groups such as women, with the autonomy to control their food production, distribution and consumption. This encompasses ensuring equitable access to resources and fostering collaboration within farming communities.

Moving up Maslow's hierarchy, issues of safety and security become increasingly salient (Trivedi and Mehta 2019). In urban areas, where space is limited and land is often scarce, women's access to land for agricultural purposes may be constrained by various social, economic and institutional factors. Limited access to land undermines women's ability to grow food for themselves and their families. Secure access to land and resources is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of women engaged in food production. Beyond safety concerns, issues of belongingness and esteem are also implicated in women's access to land and their participation in food production in urban areas (Chitja et al. 2016; Herforth et al. 2020). Engaging in agricultural activities provides women with a sense of belonging to their communities and contributes to their social identity and status (Pattnaik et al. 2018). However, social norms and cultural stereotypes may limit women's opportunities for meaningful participation in UA. Participation can be motivated by several factors which are driven by individuals' needs and desires. The current study focussed on the participation and land access of smallholder farmers engaged in UA for food production. To explain the motivations underlying participation, the study draws upon Maslow's theory of needs. This theory suggests that individuals start with fulfilling fundamental physiological needs, such as sustenance, shelter, water and security, and then progress to social interaction needs like self-esteem and personal growth.

Despite ongoing discussions about issues such as gender inequality and resource accessibility, smallholder farmers continue to play pivotal roles in agriculture, despite facing multiple challenges (Ndinda et al. 2021). According to Chitja and Mkhize (2019), gender is part of peoples' communities and their existence which reflect on their role in social structure. When applied to the issue of food security, the Gender and Development framework (GAD) highlights the need to tackle the root

causes of gender inequality, such as unequal access to land, water and other productive resources. Employing this framework in the context of UA necessitates acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by female farmers, promoting gender-sensitive policies and tackling cultural impediments to women's participation. The GAD approach not only focusses on unequal power relations between men and women, but also on how social roles, reproductive roles and economic roles connect to gender inequalities in households and communities (Voleníková and Opršal 2016). The GAD theory argues that unequal relations limit women from tapping into opportunities and benefits, such as agricultural extension services and leadership opportunities in the development processes, among others (UNDP 2012; UN Women 2018). Moreover, the GAD theory further recognises that patriarchy operates, that is, societal structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women within and across classes to oppress women (Mwije 2014; UNDP 2012). The current study is grounded based on the GAD theory, since the theory focusses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women, furthermore, emphasising the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations to identify the inequalities that constrain women from participating in development (Ragasa, Aberman and Mingote 2019) that is, UA.

Geography 119

This study was conducted in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa, focussing on the township of Sobantu, located to the east of the city of Pietermaritzburg. Most of the population in this township found employment as wage workers, with women predominantly engaged in domestic services, while men are involved in urban industry and construction. Agricultural resources, including income derived from small gardens, were primarily supplementary for many households. In the IDP (2020/21) report, it states that elderly retirees with limited educational backgrounds were among the farmers cultivating horticultural crops in Sobantu township (Msunduzi Government 2020/2021). These farmers, predominantly women, tended to possess small plots of agricultural land that they both owned and worked on. However, women often struggled to obtain agricultural inputs. Despite these challenges, urban farmers in Sobantu township demonstrated collective unity and engaged in social groups within their respective wards to address their community and farming-related issues. Collective action is a common practice in many developing countries, particularly in agricultural activities. Overall, this study highlights the importance of collective action in addressing challenges faced by urban farmers in Sobantu township, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa.

Generated narratives

A mixed technique approach to collect data was utilised to ensure the goals of this research could be achieved.The participants in this research were urban farmers who operated community gardens in Sobantu township, Pietermaritzburg. Both primary and secondary sources were used to gather data for this study, with the study area chosen based on local authority community garden activities. A total of 98 urban farmers who responded to a questionnaire survey were used for data collection (Mthuli 2021), and focus group discussions were conducted. These individuals were selected based on their engagement in local authority community garden activities, ensuring that they were representative of the target population. The questionnaire investigated current urban farming practices, understanding of urban farming and resource availability.

Findings and discussions

Participation dimension of Sobantu farmers

The study's results provided insightful information on the patterns of farmers' participation and their utilisation of social organisations and networks to obtain land for farming. With regards to the participation dimension, the study disclosed that a small percentage of farmers (17 per cent) were members of formal groups. A high portion of farmers (68 per cent) indicated their involvement in UA as individuals. This trend could be attributed to their limited access to land, which was confined to the community-designated areas, often encompassing household development zones. A smaller percentage (15 per cent) belonged to informal cooperative groups. Notably, both men and women were actively engaged in registered cooperative groups and newly formed, unregistered farmers' groups. These groups shared common objectives, such as access to land and agricultural resources. By actively participating in agricultural activities, farmers from Sobantu township assert control over their food production activities and promote self-reliance, autonomy and their agency.

The study's outcomes indicated that urban farmers effectively utilised their social organisations and networks to gain access to plots for their agricultural food production. These findings align with a past study conducted by Gamhewage et al. (2015), which observed a similar trend among urban farmers, especially women. Farmers from the Sobantu township have formed farmers' groups to overcome barriers and secure access to urban farming land. These social systems do

not only facilitate land access, they also enable knowledge and skill sharing, contributing to skills development and empowerment among farmers. The establishment of farmers' cooperatives and groups serves as a means of pooling resources and tackling challenges collectively. From the group discussions, farmers indicated that they initially began farming as individual entities. However, over time, a shift occurred and the importance of unity and collective effort among community farmers became evident. Gradually, the farmers started coming together and established farmers' groups that embodied the principles of community engagement and shared resources. Although their reasons for forming and joining these groups varied, they were united by a common desire to achieve sustainable food production in their community. The farmers expressed a deep yearning to be actively involved in their society and to feel connected to the thriving pulse of their community. Within these groups, they discovered not only networks of fellow farmers, but also a collaborative approach to accessing government resources and essential inputs that could enhance their food production.

Despite the formidable obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted the established systems of interaction and compelled several farmers to abandon their participation in farmers' groups while continuing with individual farming practices, the participants in these social farming groups were driven by a shared commitment to community engagement, social cohesion and household food security. These farmers, mostly retired pensioners who rely on government support, found strength and resilience in the bonds they formed through their participation in these groups. They were passionate about ensuring household food security, sharing knowledge, pooling resources and adopting improved practices. The level of participation among these farmers varied based on the scale of their farming operations, as depicted in the accompanying figure. Some farmers engaged in individual farming activities, tending to their plots, while others participated in both individual and group farming endeavours. This diversity begs the question: what motivates urban farming participation?
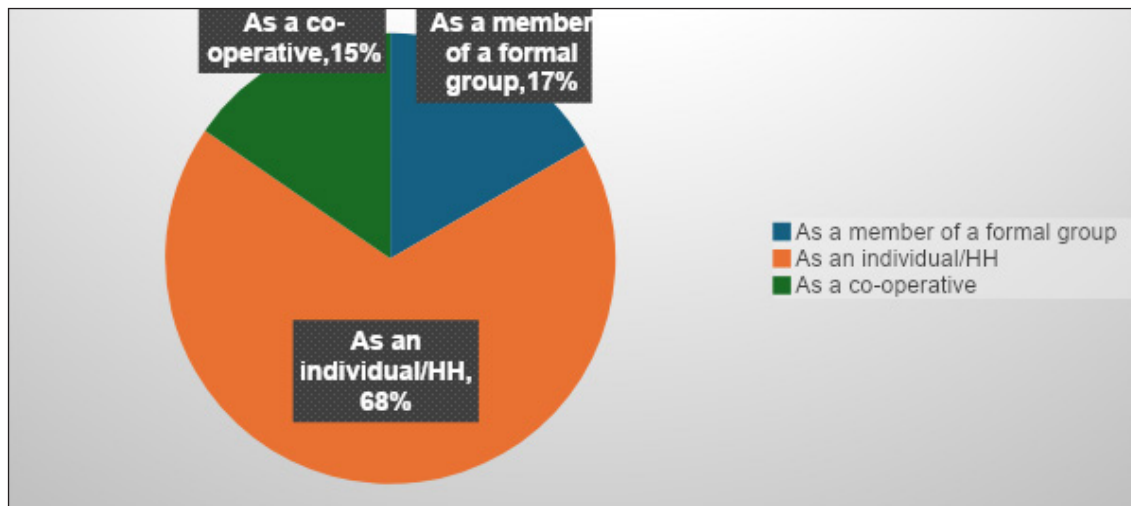
Figure 6.1: Participation of farmers in UA

The following paragraphs will explore the factors that contribute to the engagement of these farmers in the social farming groups. The participation of farmers in social farming groups is influenced by a range of factors that encompass both individual and contextual determinants. Such factors include the socio-economic background of farmers, which may encompass their level of education, farming experience, and financial status.

Diverse motivations behind urban farming participation

In the urban setting, farmers are driven by various motivations and interests when participating in UA. These motivations include financial incentives, social connections and food production. According to the biographies of farmers and township settings, the motivations of Sobantu township farmers are a combination of financial aspirations, social well-being and the timeless act of nourishing through food production. Participation in urban farming empowers individuals and communities to assert control over their food systems, promote food sovereignty and challenge dominant narratives of food production. Despite these motivations, the spirit of ubuntu, which is deeply embedded in the culture, brings forth a sense of social connection and unity. The concept of ubuntu is highly practiced in this township, as illustrated in Figure 5.2 below. The diverse motives behind urban farming participation in Sobantu township each hold their own significance, and a discussion of these motives is provided.
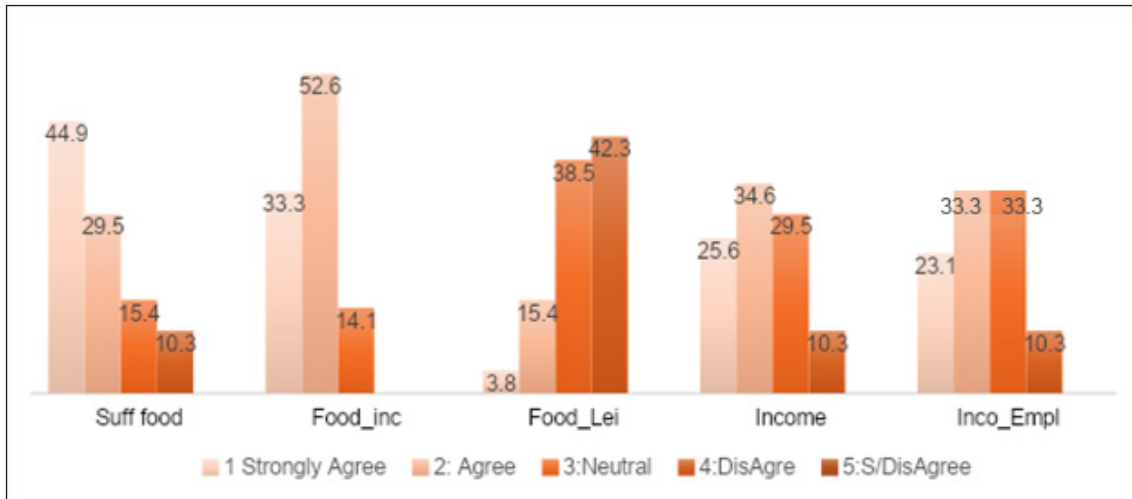
Figure 6.2: Motivations for engaging in UA
**Note: Likert scale responses were used where 1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree, 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree
and 5=Strongly Disagree**

123

Household consumption

For most Sub-Saharan African families, smallholder farming is mainly a livelihood survival strategy rather than an occupation. Figure 6.2 above, illustrates the driving force behind smallholder farmer involvement in urban farming. Many of the farmers who participated in the study stated that their primary motivations for farming were to ensure they had sufficient food (44.9 per cent) and to sustain their households' food basket (29.5 per cent). It has been highlighted that smallholder farmers produced crops to make a greater contribution to household food security through small farms, particularly in areas with limited development where populations prefer to eat locally produced food over food that is brought in from elsewhere (FAO 2016). From the focus group discussions, farmers mentioned that:

Farmer 5: *'Because I'm a pensioner, so I participate to feed my household.'*
Farmer 3a: *'I engage because I'm a widower who has to feed my family.'*

From the highlighted statements, the farmers' social and financial issues were the drivers to their

participation in urban farming to feed their households. In most African households, elderly and retired women often assume caregiving responsibilities for their families and grandchildren. A caregiving role encompasses various aspects of well-being, including nurturing behaviour, fulfilling roles and ensuring access to food. Moreover, the distinction between households led by a single head and those led by two heads plays a pivotal role in shaping their participation in UA.

Household consumption and income stream

Several studies (FAO 2016, 2017, 2019) indicate that smallholder farmers, especially women, perform most of the agricultural activities mainly for their households' food security, and may produce a meagre surplus to sell in the informal markets. In urban settings, where access to food can be limited, many farmers, especially women, adopt various livelihood strategies, including UA, to support their families and alleviate poverty and food insecurity (Hlahla and Hill 2018). The participation in UA by farmers from Sobantu township is driven by the dual objectives of providing for household food consumption and generating income to meet essential needs. This aligns with broader livelihood strategies observed among smallholder farmers, where agricultural production serves as a primary means of supporting households, particularly for retired citizens like many Sobantu farmers. These farmers engagement in UA complements social grants received by some households, further contributing to food security and economic stability. These findings are like those of Keil, Saint-Macary and Zeller (2013), finding that smallholder farmers produce a variety of crops on small plots of land for their household consumption, with only a small surplus potentially sold to the local community. From the focus group discussions, Sobantu farmers mentioned that:

> Farmer 1: *'I participated in urban agriculture with the purpose of selling the produce, for household consumption and generating income which in terms used to buy other food items which cannot be produced.'*
> Farmer 1a: *'I joined in urban agriculture in order to sell goods, utilise them for my household, and generate income that might be spent on certain foods that are not producible.'*

Household consumption and healthy lifestyle

Even though some farmers (3.8 per cent) would plant enough for food and leisure, 42.4 per cent disagreed with this statement. From the above-highlighted discussions, household food

consumption is the priority and the major motivation behind participation in UA. Other drivers, such as healthy lifestyles and leisure are additional motivations to household food consumption. Only 25.6 per cent of farmers grew crops to generate income, while 10.3 per cent of farmers produced crops to also ensure their subsistence.

From the focus group discussions, Respondents mentioned that:

> Farmer 3: *'The purpose was to make sure that everyone residing at Sobantu have access to food, food which is produced from the community gardens and be sold to the community. Also, was to supply my household and a way to relieve stress level.'*
> Farmer 2a: *'I needed to find the means to reduce stress and provide for my family. In addition, our cooperative wanted to make sure that everyone living at Sobantu could access food that was grown in communal gardens and sold to the neighbourhood especially older citizens.'*
> Farmer 2: *'Urban farms make it easier to get fresh food. Overall, food produced by urban farmers in their communities helps promote healthy living.'*
> Farmer 3a: *'Group members have increased, not just women, now we also have male active participants in urban food production and food gardens.'*

During the focus group discussion, a significant emphasis was placed on the social motives behind engaging in UA, a sense of belonging within their community. This further connected them to each other and fostered a deeper connection to their community.

Income stream and source of employment

Some of the farmers (23.1 per cent) considered farming as their primary source of employment and income, whilst 10.3 per cent of the farmers saw farming more as a leisure than as their primary income stream. This argument is highly supported by several sources (Robertson 2013; Schmidt, Magigi and Godfrey 2015; UNDP 2012), arguing that the large participation is motivated by economic and food security benefits. Thus, understanding the motivations of farmers and the types of crops produced from the gardeners and the benefits they report, is key to measuring the impacts that UA generates to their households and livelihoods. The study shows that these urban farmers are likely to choose to engage in types of UA that align with their household's needs for food security and to support their livelihoods. Moreover, smallholder farmers effectively manage their farming to make a living,

and many consider their daily farm activities as full-time jobs rather than just hours worked. From the focus group discussions, respondents mentioned that:

> Farmer 2: *'I'm engaged in agriculture because I'm not working, I decided to take part so that my household can have access to fresh vegetables such as cabbages, spinach, etc. and not depend on buying from the markets.'*
>
> Farmer 4: *'The reason for my participation was motivated by the community kitchen which am part of, the idea was to produce vegetables and supply for it and sell at near hospital such as Northdale. The Northdale Hospital requested farmers who produce spinach to supply the hospital.'*
>
> Farmer 2a: *'I started working in the community gardens as a labour assistant personal, especially in those gardens owned by elderly women. The farmers would employ us as a group to assist with soil preparation, before the planting stage, then also assist in terms of harvesting the produced crops. In doing so this generated casual income for my household. See the goodness of agriculture, I then joined community food gardens and production.'*

Doing urban farming as a foodscape

Farming has become a pool of social networks and a resourcing platform for poor-resourced farming communities. It has been highlighted that communities have had other social networks, that is, financial- and funeral social networks, however, over the years, there has been a massive growth of farmers' groups, organisations and cooperatives established to source agricultural inputs, credits, skills, capacity and recognition from the government, non-governmental organisations and the societies. However, despite the efforts of farming together, there are still barriers and challenges faced by farmers of both genders, which discourage and reduce their participation in urban farming. The farmers highlighted in the focus group discussion that:

> Farmer 1: *'We received agricultural input from organisations (NGOs), universities and also government agencies.'*
>
> Farmer 5: *'Urban farming helps people to learn new farming skills and they can also improve other farmers.'*
>
> Farmer 1a: *'Many people come together, and people form good relationships among members of the community. And we are able to provide food for poor people in the community.'*

Barriers to urban farming by smallholder farmers

Even though there are developments and agricultural initiatives, farmers both in rural and urban areas are still facing social, financial, market access, policy and environmental challenges in South Africa. These challenges impact the gender and age distribution of participating farmers, shape the scale of farming operations and influence the choice of production systems employed and crops selected by the farmers. Among the various barriers faced by smallholder farmers, the reliance on social grants emerges as a prevalent issue. For many farmers, social grants serve as their primary source of income, highlighting the financial vulnerability of this demographic. The heavy reliance on social assistance limits farmers' capacity to allocate additional funds towards agricultural inputs, hindering their ability to invest in essential resources necessary for farming activities. Due to financial constraints, farmers are often forced to prioritise immediate household needs over long-term agricultural investments. The choice often leans towards addressing short-term household requirements, such as purchasing basic food, maize, flour, etcetera, rather than seeds or fertiliser for food production. Despite their ambitions to enhance food security and economic stability through UA, smallholder farmers often grapple with the challenges posed by financial instability. Figure 6.3 below presents a visual depiction of the challenges highlighted by the sampled urban smallholder farmers.
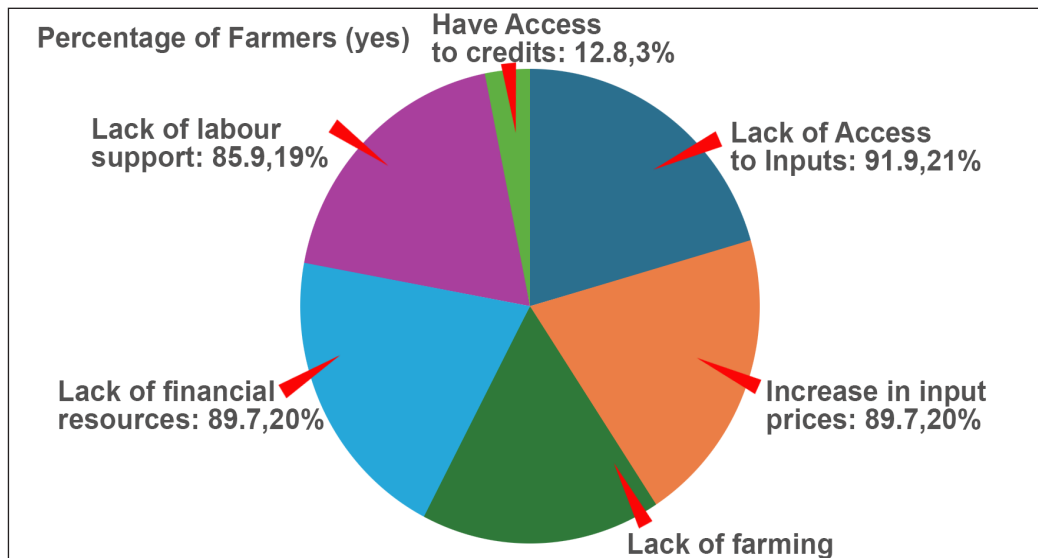
Figure 6.3: Challenges mentioned by farmers in UA
Note: Respondents could select "Yes" or "No". Only "Yes" responses are reported

Figure 6.3 above indicates that the farmers are faced with financial issues, a lack of resources and inputs and a lack of access to knowledge and soft skills in farming, which are necessary to build resilient food production. The results indicate that most of the smallholder farmers (91.9 per cent) are faced with a lack of access to agricultural inputs, that is seeds, fertiliser and chemicals. The selection of seeds and fertiliser are crucial as these inputs influence the quality and quantity of crop yield. Baloyi (2010) highlights that the availability of inputs determines the ability of smallholder farmers to produce adequate crops for both consumption and sales in the markets. From the focus group discussions, respondents further highlighted that:

> Farmer 4: *'We struggle with seedlings and other materials such as fencing, gates, and planting equipment, that is, water pipes, and protective nets for our gardens. Sometimes during the planting seasons, we do not get certain crops we want to produce, and also the prices can be high, and we cannot afford them as we depend on social grants.'*

While it is difficult for smallholder farmers to reach input markets, most (89.7 per cent) face the challenges of price fixing by the input suppliers. According to Jayne, Chamberlin and Headey (2014), the tendency to produce a minimum surplus on small farms leads to problems in buying required inputs. The issue of lacking financial resources was raised by most smallholder farmers (89.7 per cent), as most farmers had to finance their farming activities with their additional source of income, that is, pension, social grants, wages or salary.

> Farmer 1: *'We also struggle with accessing markets that we can supply with our produced crops; seasonal and annually. We are an elderly and retired generation, we struggle with managing the plots especially if it is a bigger size plot, we have to hire people to assist in soil preparation and harvesting stages, meaning that we have to pay money for hiring them.'*

There were smallholder urban farmers (74.4 per cent) that still find it difficult to access farming knowledge and skills. This limits the knowledge the farmers have on farming techniques that are good for the environment, while also achieving maximum productivity. The farmers also mentioned that the lack of financial resources results in their inability to hire additional labour (85.9 per cent) which is related to labour costs. The lack of financial capacity and limited labour assistance significantly results in failure to produce at optimum capacity, since these farmers use time-consuming techniques of land preparation as well as planting, that is, labour-intensive techniques.

Furthermore, Figure 6.3 above, illustrates that 12.8 per cent of the farmers stated that they had access to micro-finance institutions for credit, while 87.2 per cent had no access to credit. This suggests that farming is an essential coping strategy for vulnerable urban dwellers as it offers job creation and sets to achieve food and nutrition security.

All the participating farmers indicated that they do not have access to an agricultural advisor/officer, even though they know their community has been allocated an extension advisor by the government. This adds to the social and political challenges facing urban farmers. Access to extension advisors is a crucial network for farmers, since the partnership provides access to knowledge, government resources and inputs for improved agricultural production.

From the focus group discussions with farmers, they further highlighted that:

> Farmer 2: *'Water is also another issue; we use our household water tap for watering our crops in the gardens.'*
> Farmer 1a: *'Thefts of crops by locals, they steal crops from the gardens, this other time during the harvest period they steal peppers and maize.'*
> Farmer 3: *'Another issue is the lack of a permit for the sites we use as farmers, which also causes conflict with housing development projects because initially, we start this garden by cleaning unoccupied spaces, then when people want sites for new comes in the area, they first look at these garden sites.'*
> Farmer 2a: *'Climate change has been an issue and has resulted in a huge loss of crops and infrastructure in the community, it's been raining heavily the past 2 years, especially during the planting seasons. We have experienced flooding disasters in KZN and in South Africa.'*

Land access in Sobantu farming township

In Sobantu township, as in many parts of South Africa, land access remains a persistent challenge with significant implications for farmers' participation in food production. Urban settings, particularly, face intensified pressures due to growing populations and urbanisation. The increasing demand for urban development, infrastructure and urban planning often conflicts with the need for land for food production.

Despite these challenges, urban farmers in Sobantu township have utilised various mechanisms to access land for farming, both through formal and informal channels. These mechanisms may include engaging with formal institutions such as municipalities or community organisations to secure land for agricultural purposes. Additionally, farmers may leverage informal arrangements or community-led initiatives to access land for farming, demonstrating their resilience and resourcefulness in navigating the complex landscape of land access in urban areas.

However, the continued demand for land for urban development and competing interests present ongoing challenges for urban farmers in Sobantu township. As the population continues to grow and urbanisation accelerates, addressing land access issues will be crucial for ensuring the sustainability of UA and meeting the food security needs of local communities.

Figure 6.4 below, investigates the availability of land for farming among both male and female urban farmers, focusing on the types of land accessible for agricultural purposes. The findings reveal a significant gender disparity in land ownership trends.
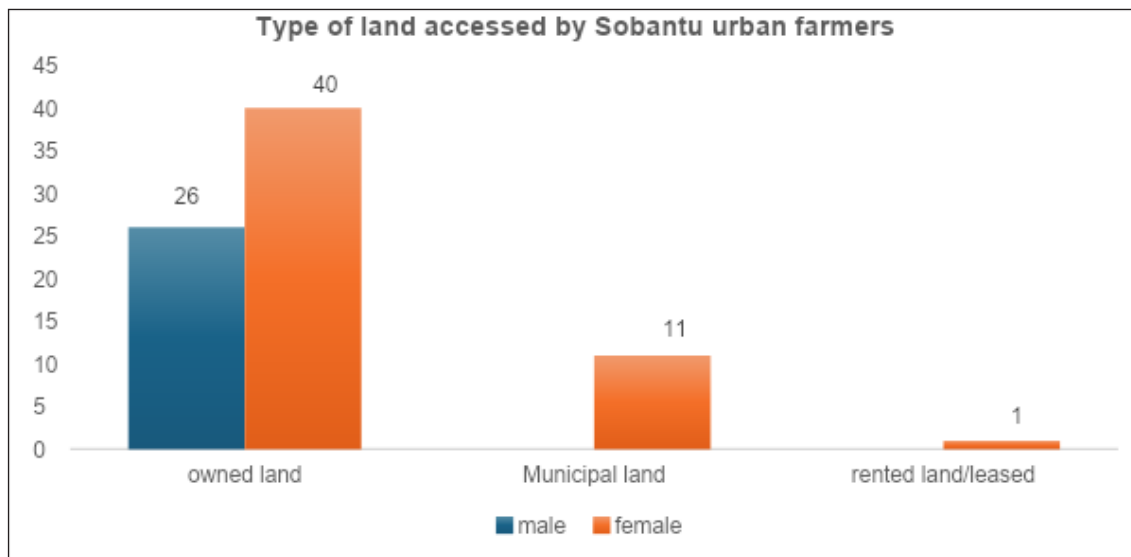
Figure 6.4: Land access by Sobantu urban smallholder farmers

Most efforts aimed at enhancing smallholder farmers' livelihoods and food security may fall short of the desired objectives unless the land ownership and gender-specific barriers that urban smallholder farmers face are addressed. The study further explored the type of land that is accessible to both male and female urban farmers for the purposes of farming. The findings reveal a significant gender disparity in land ownership patterns. Most of the urban women farmers, as opposed to men, cultivated their own land areas. As shown in Figure 6.4, the results indicate that roughly 66 per cent of urban farmers utilise their own land for agricultural production, while only a small percentage rely on municipal or rented land. Despite some access to land, the size of the land plots available to farmers remains an issue. Most of the farmers possess less than a hectare of land, which encompasses the household structure and a small area designated for food gardens. This limitation has notable implications for the pillar of food security, particularly regarding utilisation. The constrained access to land for urban farmers, reduce farmers' capacity to produce crops at a large scale and thus, leaves their crops vulnerable to natural disasters, crop diseases outbreak, flooding, drought, etcetera (FAO 2016). Urban farmers still struggle to find suitable land for UA despite their significant contribution to food production. The unoccupied public and semi-public land (municipal land) is provided to urban farmers for temporary agricultural use and is accessible to urban farmers through cooperative engagement, making it available and accessible to farmers. Access to municipal land is normally supported with a title deed or formal documents as evidence to the allocated user. During the focus group discussions, the respondents highlighted some of the processes they follow to acquire urban land for urban farming (household and community food gardens) stating that:

> Farmer 2: *'Because we had an unoccupied space where people used to dump waste, we decided to clean the space to produce food. However, we do not have a title deed. Initially, the space was reserved for a shopping centre by the community developer.'*
> Farmer 3: *'We bought the site while we were moving from rural areas. So, people were buying from the community committee which were focusing on selling the plots (20 years ago).'*
> Farmer 4: *'The plot of our cooperative that we are using was allocated by the community councillor for the farmers group.'*

Conclusion and recommendations

Engaging in UA is influenced by a multifaceted interplay of factors, with social and personal benefits commonly prioritised over food security and economic advantages. In the context of South Africa, farmers confront various challenges, notably the scarcity of agricultural land due to competing land uses. The study reveals variations in participation levels linked to the scale of farming. Farmers' motivations encompass financial incentives, social well-being, connections and food production.

Significant gender disparities in land ownership are evident, where most urban women farmers are actively cultivating their land, compared to men. However, these women typically have access to limited land, mainly comprising household structures and small-scale food gardens. This restricted land access carries substantial implications for food security, specifically concerning resource availability and utilisation.

The availability of inputs directly impacts smallholder farmers' ability to generate sufficient crops for both domestic consumption and market sales. Despite having access to their own land, issues such as soil fertility, moisture and environmental conditions affect the land's utility, subsequently affecting crop production. Despite the substantial impact on food production, urban farmers still grapple with finding suitable land for UA. Given that organic farming relies on locally available resources, it becomes an accessible and viable option for farmers, particularly those facing resource limitations. Varied UA activities appeal to participants with diverse requirements. Through thoughtful planning and incentives, it is feasible to align specific UA types with the unique needs of the community. Urban planners and garden organisations involved in urban food production must comprehend the broader social impact of UA—going beyond its food value—to substantiate the rationale behind obtaining land access. Gender-sensitive approaches should be integrated into food security and agricultural programmes to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women farmers, including access to training, capacity-building and support services. Initiatives that empower farmers, particularly marginalised groups such as women, should be prioritised by providing them with decision-making authority over their food production, distribution and consumption processes.

References

Asiama, S.O. 2005. Land accessibility and urban agriculture in Freetown, Sierra Leone'. *Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana),* 25(2): 103–109.

Battersby, J. and Haysom, G. 2018. *Linking urban food security, urban food systems, poverty, and urbanisation.* Urban food systems governance and poverty in African cities, pp. 56–67.

Baloyi, E.M. 2010. An African view of women as sexual objects as a concern for gender equality: A critical study. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 31(1): 1–6.

Bisaga, I., Parikh, P. and Loggia, C. 2019. Challenges and opportunities for sustainable urban farming in South African low-income settlements: A case study in Durban. *Sustainability*, 11(20): 5660.

Blessing, O.D. 2019. Challenges encountered by urban women farmers in their agricultural activities. *Agricultural Extension Journal*, 3(3): 158–164.

Chitja, J. and Mkhize, G. 2019. *Engendering agricultural transformation*. Transforming agriculture in Southern Africa. Constraints, Technologies, Policies and Processes.

Chitja, J., Mthiyane, C.C.N., Mariga, I.K., Shimelis, H., Murugani, V.G., Morojele, P.J., Naidoo, K. and Aphane, O.D. 2016. Empowerment of women through water use security, land use security and knowledge generation for improved household food security and sustainable rural livelihoods in selected areas in Limpopo. WRC Report No. 2082/1/15. *Water Research Commission.*

Clapp, J., Moseley, W.G., Burlingame, B. and Termine, P. 2022. The case for a six-dimensional food security framework. *Food Policy*, 106: 102164.

De Swardt, C., Puoane, T., Chopra, M. and Du Toit, A. 2005. Urban poverty in Cape Town. *Environment and Urbanization*, 17(2): 101–112.

Eigenbrod, C. and Gruda, N. 2015. Urban vegetable for food security in cities. A review. *Agronomy Sustainable Development*, 35: 483–498.

133

ETC-RUAF and CGIAR-URBAN Harvest. 2004 Women feeding cities: Gender mainstreaming in urban food production & food security., *Workshop September 2004, Accra, Ghana*.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). 2012. *Growing greener cities in Africa. First status report on urban and peri-urban horticulture in Africa*.

———. 2016. *The state of food and agriculture: Climate change, agriculture and food security*. Available online: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/state-food-and-agriculture-2016-climate-change-agriculture-and-food-security [Accessed November 2023].

— — —. 2017. *The state of food and agriculture. Leveraging food systems for inclusive rural transformation*. Available at: http://www.fao.org/3/aI7658e.pdf%0Ahttp://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24897208%5Cnhttp://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1319478/.pdf [Accessed April 2023].

— — —. 2019. *The state of food and agriculture. Moving forward on food loss and waste reduction.* Available online: http://www.fao.org/3/CA6030EN/CA6030EN.pdf [Accessed November 2023].

— — —. 2020. *Thestate of food and agriculture*. Available online: https://gfair.network/news/fao-state-food-and-agriculture-2020-report [Accessed date November 2023].

Gamhewage, M.I. Sivashankar. P., Mahaliyanaarachchi, R.P., Wijeratne. A.W., and Hettiarachchi. I.C. 2015. Women participation in urban agriculture and its influence on family economy - Sri Lankan experience. *The Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 10(3): 192–206.

Glazebrook, T., Noll, S. and Opoku, E. (2020) Gender matters: Climate change, gender bias, and women's farming in the global south and north. *Agriculture*, 10(7): 267.

Hadebe, L.B. and Mpofu, J. 2013. Empowering women through improved food security in urban centers: A gender survey in Bulawayo urban agriculture. *African Educational Research Journal*, 1(1): 18–32.

Hlahla, S. and Hill, T.R. 2018. Responses to climate variability in urban poor communities in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Sage Open*, 8(3): 2158244018800914.

Jacobs, P. and Xaba, T. 2008. Women in urban and peri-agriculture: Sustaining livelihoods in the Cape metropolitan area. *Agenda*, 22(78): 186–197.

Jayne, T., Chamberlin, J and Headey, D. 2014. Land pressures, the evolution of farming systems and development strategies in Africa. A synthesis. *Food Policy*, 48: 1–17

Kanosvamhira, T.P. 2019. The organisation of urban agriculture in Cape Town, South Africa: A social capital perspective. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(3): 283–294.

Kanosvamhira, T.P. and Tevera, D. 2020. Urban agriculture in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town: Examining the linkages between urban gardeners and supporting actors. *South African Geographical Journal*, 102(1): 116–131.

Keil, A., Saint-Macary, C. and Zeller, M. 2013. Intensive commercial agriculture in fragile uplands of Vietnam: how to harness its poverty reduction potential while ensuring environmental sustainability? *Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture*, 52(1): 1–25.

Modibedi, T.P., Masakoameng, M.R., and Maake, M.M.S. 2021. The contribution of urban community gardens to food availability in Emfuleni Local Municipality, Gauteng Province. *Urban Ecosystems,* 24: 301–309.

Morton, J.F. 2007. The impact of climate change on smallholder and subsistence agriculture. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(50): 19680–19685.

Msunduzi Government. 2020/2021. Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP). 2020/2021 Financial Year. [accessed online: http://www.msunduzi.gov.za/site/search/downloadencode/Msunduzi%20 IDP%202020-21%2016.03.20%20(1).pdf.

Mthuli N.C. 2022.*Environmental management of urban farming and water quality: Implications for food security.*Doctoral dissertation.

Mwije, S. 2014. A paradigm shift from women in development (WID) to gender and development (GAD) examining why there was a paradigm shift from WID – WAD to GAD in an effort to address gender inequalities, pp. 0–21.

Ndinda, C, Moolman, B, Adebayo, P, Chimbwete, C, Ngungu, M, Maree, G., Parker, A. Lynch, I. and Shozi, M. 2021. 'Gender equality', Chapter 5.4. In: *South Africa Covid-19 Report* [First edition], Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) & National Research Foundation (NRF), Pretoria, pp. 370–420.

Nzimande, P. 2017. Does urban agriculture create job opportunities? Thesis, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa (November 2013), pp. 0–25.

Pattnaik, I., Lahiri-Dutt, K., Lockie. S. and Pritchard. B. 2018. The feminization of agriculture or the feminization of agrarian distress? Tracking the trajectory of women in agriculture in India. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 23(1): 138–155.

Poston, B. 2009. An exercise in personal exploration: Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *The Surgical Technologist,* pp. 347–355.

Ragasa, C., Aberman, N.L. and Mingote, C.A. 2019. Does providing agricultural and nutrition information to both men and women improve household food security? Evidence from Malawi. *Global Food Security*, 20: 45–59.

Robertson, C. 2013. *The role of gender in urban agriculture: A case study of Cape Town's urban and peri-urban Townships* p. 135. Master's thesis, University Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Available at: https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/7760/Robertson_Carolyn_201312_MSc.pdf?sequence=1

Schmidt, S., Magigi, W. and Godfrey, B. 2015. The organization of urban agriculture: Farmer associations and urbanization in Tanzania. *Cities*, 42(Part B): 153–159.

Trivedi, A.J. and Mehta, A. 2019. Maslow's hierarchy of needs-theory of human motivation. *International Journal of Research in all Subjects in Multi Languages,* 7(6): 38–41.

136

UN Women. 2018. Womens' participation in the agricultural sector, rural institution and community life.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2012. Gender, agriculture and food security, pp. 1–30.

Upreti, B.R., Ghale, Y., Shivakoti, S. and Acharya, S., 2018. Feminization of agriculture in the Eastern Hills of Nepal: A study of women in cardamom and ginger farming. *SAGE Open*, 8(4): p.2158244018817124.

Voleníková, L. and Opršal, Z. 2016. The role of urban agriculture in household wellbeing: Case study of community-based urban agriculture in Ndola, Zambia. *Development, Environment and Foresight*, 2(2): 80–90.

Woolcock, M. 2001. The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2(1): 1–35.

Part 2:

Food, Subjectivities, Identities

Food is not rational. Food is culture, habit, craving and identity.
Jonathan Safron Foer (Sophisticatedgourmet.com)

The saying 'You are what you eat' is not just a nutritional adage (Guptill, Copelton and Lucal 2013: 18-19). Food holds a special meaning, not only because it is a micronutrient that provides vitamins and minerals for life and good health. While nutrition is essential, food is about much more than *what* humans need for biological function. As this section and the book will illustrate, food is multilayered in its relevance to individuals, communities and societies and holds a particular salience that is fundamentally human and social. Food triggers and enables a deep suite of entanglements that signal relationships that have much to do with social identities, values and cultural practices. Food is also, as we note in the essays in this section, about ontology (our being in the world) and its epistemology (the knowledge that it produces). It is a mode of inquiry and practice, a set of ideas and beliefs. It moves beyond the private and the public domains within which it arises and is shape-shifting and dynamic. Food, its ingredients, production, preparation, cooking and eating form an indelible part of extended relationships and interactions, not simply as acts of gendered labour, technology and care. Therefore, as the chapters in this section will illustrate, food, cooking and eating are more than the material. Instead, they encode what we have as "shared knowledge and experiences". In other words, food addresses us materially, aesthetically, viscerally, visually, sensorially, biologically and much more. It encapsulates many meanings that speak to its multimodal dimensions, including food justice, food archives, food memories, food systems, food labelling, genetic modification, collective action, hunger and food ethics.

139

Additionally, food opens up dimensions of mediated intimacies if, by the latter, we mean proximity, shared understanding, affection, and warmth in both spatial and temporal terms. According to Pratt (1991), it is a 'contact zone', and essential 'groundwork' (Baderoon 2017) (especially in its relationship to land, soil, and sand) in its imbrication in deep and shared histories. Food is also what Kopczyńska (2017: 637) calls 'economies of acquaintance', especially its deep embeddedness in its network of relations (the author emphasises the location of food in its economic exchanges) from farm to

fork. Perhaps equally relevant is what literary and cultural scholars label food as intertextual (in other words, its relationship to interconnected systems of traces that give rise to and constitute its meanings).

Section 2 of the book titled **'Food, Subjectivity and Identities'** provides a template for a suite of essays that offer broad coverage of the theme in distinctive, diverse and rich ways that represent some emerging bodies of work. If we have claimed earlier, either implicitly or explicitly, that food matters in its textured and nuanced ways beyond its singularity as a human necessity, this section uncovers a set of perspectives that also confirm the idea that food is also illusive and elusive, perhaps even contradictory and complicated that prompts more profound interpretations to unsettle its paradoxical meanings. By "subjectivity", we mean the act and processes that lead to knowing and making sense of the world through various processes (for example, feelings, emotions, experiences), noting that subjectivity is not cohesive and highly differentiated). According to Hall (2011), identity is deeply immersed in and shaped by culture. In Hall's (2011) view, identity arises to 'rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices' (2) and is 'constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation' (3). For Hall (2011) identities are never uniform, stable and fixed, they are inherently fractured and 'multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions' (4). Hall (2011) further argues that 'identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render "outside", and abject. Every identity has its "margin", an excess, something more' (5).

Several scholars have made strong links between food and identity, including food as cultural heritage (Brulotte and Di Giovine 2016), food as cultural politics (Ayora-Diaz 2021), and food as an edible identity (Xu 2007). Others, like the authors in this section, have written about food as a cultural symbol and inter-relationality with several identity markers, such as race, class, gender, sex, place, gender, ethnicity and taste. In Chapter 7: *'Symbolic Meaning-making in Traditional Wedding Foods amongst the AmaZulu in KwaZulu-Natal'*, for example, Balungile Zondi writes on the cow as a cultural symbol and beef as a staple food in traditional AmaZulu weddings in KwaZulu-Natal province, in South Africa. Notably, Zondi highlights how, as a form of food, beef fulfils our energy needs and has a social function. Moreover, beef reflects and influences perceptions of masculinity and femininity and conveys gender stereotypes that marginalise women and impact people's food choices.

The second chapter in the section is Ayanda Tshazi's *'Thinking Through Food in South Africa: Identity-making, Embodiment and Representation'* (Chapter 8), which focusses on addressing the marginalisation of black, elderly women in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa from knowledge generation in critical food studies and related fields. Ironically, this is one of the provinces where, due to the migrant labour system, grandmothers are primarily responsible for the care of young children, including their nutrition. The nature of this knowledge, how it is inventively adapted, preserved, and passed through generations, is not always apparent to most researchers in the academic community. Rather than focussing on written or cognitive knowledge, Tshazi's chapter identifies and analyses their grandmothers oral and sensory understanding of food. Through participatory visual methodology, specifically collage-making, we follow Ayanda Tshazi and the grandmothers as they engage and narrate food knowledges and food practices, and the latter's role in preserving and transferring the indigenous knowledge and the many crucial traditional food practices to the younger generation.

In Chapter 9, *'Recipes as Alternative Archives: A South African Perspective'*, Rachel Botes argues that throughout history, researchers have relied on established and formally recognised methodologies and sources and to ignore significant alternative resources, Botes weaves people's narratives, nuances, and lived experiences that accompany recipes in manuscripts, cookery books and other formats in alternative archives, into the history of food. The chapter uses an inclusive historical lens to explore a slice of South African history using local recipes, manuscripts, and recipe books written primarily by women. In this gendered food archive, the chapter analyses the trans-cultural role that food has played for many women and the enduring silences that influence our understanding of the archive. Notably, the methodology deepens one's understanding of the relationship between food, memory, provenance, and sentiment, an outcome that is often challenging to achieve through conventional sources.

Following this memory trend, in *'Pakkies aan Boetie: Christian Afrikaner Women Remembering Conscription in South Africa between 1980 and 1990'* (Chapter 10), Dominique Wnuczek-Lobaczewski uses food as a lens to offer a historical analysis of the narratives told by mothers, sisters and wives as they remembered those conscripted as troops into the apartheid South African Defence Force between 1980 and 1990. To maintain contact with their families, the women sent letters and photographs to the border to keep in touch, and *[p]akkies* (packages) containing durable homemade snacks such as *Troepekoekies* (troop cookies) to keep them connected to home. The

tokens depict the reality of Christian mothers whose sons were conscripted into the military during apartheid. Wnuczek-Lobaczewski uncovers a narrative that we seldom read about, mainly through the Critical Food Studies lens, that of the trauma and survival of the conscription of young white men into the apartheid army. The un-silencing of this narrative signifies the essential analytical and pedagogical role food, narratives of food and food archives might play in facilitating the much-needed dialogic engagement South Africa needs to inform a national identity.

In Chapter 11, Nina du Preez and Christi Bleeker's visual essay, *'Goeie Grond: A Visual Journal on the Elandskloof Community Garden Project'* focusses on a collaboration between members of a particular community and the CRITICAL Project to develop a garden project. The essay (journal) depicts the journey of the Elandskloof garden, highlighting the influence of indigenous knowledge systems and food heritage on the cultivation of the garden. However, the authors note the continuing adverse impact of climate change in Elandskloof, not only on the physical environment, but also on how residents interact with their heritage. The visual essay features vital figures from Elandskloof who have shown significant resilience, leadership and creativity in addressing community challenges. With the garden's success, Du Preez and Bleeker suggest collaboration with marginalised indigenous communities to redeem and restore their autonomy.

142

To conclude the section, the final two chapters (Chapters 11 and 12) are interviews conducted by Rory Bester. In Chapter 11 (Interview 1: *'On kitchens and cookbooks'*), Bester interviews Karen Dudley, an internationally recognised South African chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, and food entrepreneur. In their conversation, Bester and Dudley explore food, memory, identity and roast chicken 101 through their interest in kitchens and cookbooks. In the last interview presented in Chapter 12: *'Kitchens, Archives and Cookbooks'*, Bester is in conversation with three students: Shireen Abrahams, Limpho Makapela and Amber Poggenpoel. The focus of the discussion was on the cookbooks the students had produced as part of the assessment task in the Department of History module, *'"Kitchen Histories" in 2023: Cooking Curiously'* by Shireen Abrahams, *'Ous Beauty's Kitchen'*, the *'Kitchen of a Trade Unionist'* and *'Pseudo Vegan'* by Limpho Makapela and *'Poggenpoel Cookbook'* by Amber Poggenpoel. Using the History Making Lab as a methodology for thinking history through making history that views the kitchen as a complex site of memory and archive with cooking as an opportunity to engage and curate, the cookbooks were created over four months of intense creativity, a series of seminars on creolisation, migration and diaspora. In the interview, we hear (read) about lovingly prepared meals, generously shared with others. Finally, we "hear" about

the students' debating issues with friends, family and strangers and getting enabling feedback and insights from expert cookbook authors who engendered rigour in the work.

References

Ayora-Diaz, S.I. (ed.). 2021. *Cultural politics of food, taste, identity: A global perspective*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Baderoon, G. 2017. Food and groundwork. Presented at the *Food Politics and Cultures Festival November 2017, Cape Town*.

Brulotte, R.A. and Di Giovine, M.A. (eds.). 2016. *Edible identities: Food as cultural heritage*. London and New York: Routledge.

Guptill, A.E., Copelton, D.A. and Lucal, B. 2013. *Food and society: Principles and paradoxes*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Hall, S. 2011. Introduction: who needs 'identity'? In: S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1–17). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kopczyńska, E. 2017. Economies of acquaintances: Social relations during shopping at food markets and in consumers' food cooperatives. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 31(3): 637–658.

Pratt, M.L.. 1991. Arts of the Contact Zone. *Profession*, pp. 33–40. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469 Accessed 30 June 2024.

Xu, W. 2007. *Edible identities: Reading food in Asian American literature*. University of Hawaii Press.

143

Chapter 7

Symbolic Meaning-Making in Traditional Wedding Foods among the AmaZulu in KwaZulu-Natal

By Balungile Zondi

Introduction

> Anthropologists have been historically interested in what people eat, where people eat, why people eat the food they eat, and what food represents to them. (Mead 1970: 2)

As this chapter will illustrate, by reinforcing group identity, shared experiences and cultural distinctions, food practices in families and communities establish social boundaries between and among individuals and groups. This can result in a sense of "us" versus "them" among different groups based on their respective food traditions and practices. For example, these divisions are reflected in the symbolism derived from how different ethnicities cook, share and consume meat. In addition, in some African communities, food creates age and gender boundaries, where it is taboo for women and girls (or in other instances, boys and men) to eat certain foods, and where particular cuisines are prepared and eaten by women and young girls, while others are prepared and eaten by men and boys. Thus, '[f]ood is central to the lives of people and their rituals. This means that food is ritualized' (Anderson 2005: 10). For example, food opens ideas of geographic boundaries by identifying people of the same lineage, village and religion.

As Modi (2009) notes, while food still holds an important cultural significance for many societies, colonisation, apartheid, globalisation, modernity and other socioeconomic transformations have resulted in a deterioration in traditional food practices over time. Trigg (2004) and Cope and Earle (2013) argue that understanding the history of food and eating practices in different contexts can help one to better understand that the practice of eating is inherently complex, involving not only the physiological act of consuming sustenance, but also a complex interplay of cultural, social, psychological and symbolic dimensions. In other words, the meaning of food goes beyond basic

145

nourishment and lies in its capacity not only to address our fundamental biological requirements, but also to serve as a means through which essential relations between physiological links, sensory perceptions, emotions and memories are understood (Chen and Antonelli 2020). The act of eating is, thus, entangled with cultural norms/values, economic systems, power dynamics and identity formation.

While critical food and social science research has long demonstrated the centrality of food and its symbolic meaning in shaping sociocultural identity (see for example, Byarugaba 2017; Fielding-Singh 2017; Reddy and Van Dam 2020; Sobreira, Garavello and Nardoto 2018), many scholars in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa focus their studies on food security and nutrition. Research that seeks to understand how humans interact with and experience food within socially defined contexts, is in its infancy. Thus, this chapter explicates and reflects on how beef as the staple meal at traditional weddings of the AmaZulu in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, South Africa, accrues symbolic meanings that are socially constructed to influence cultural and ritual celebrations and foodways. In social science, foodways encompasses the cultural, social, and historical practices related to food, including how it is produced, prepared and consumed within a specific group or community (Lawrance and De la Peña 2012). According to Harris, Lyon and McLaughlin (2005, viii–ix), foodways draw attention to '[o]ur attitudes, practices, and rituals around food' and offer a 'window onto our most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves'. The term "cuisine" refers to the characteristic methods of cooking and preparing food associated with specific regions or cultures. The chapter highlights how foodways and cuisines during traditional AmaZulu weddings, tend to conceal gender stereotypes and patriarchal and age dominance.

Traditional wedding foodways and cuisine subject rural women to food exclusion and place them as secondary eaters of cooked beef. This aspect of rural women's lives has not received enough attention in current critical food studies and social science research, which mostly focusses on how African rural women secure food for their families. The chapter reflects on the gender stereotypes and food taboos that are associated with caregiving, which conceals consumption norms that confine women to consuming specific parts of the cow. In addition, it reflects on the role men play, a role in which they dictate women's food choices within an undocumented indigenous knowledge (IK) framework of gendered food taboos, which is transmitted across generations. While scholars praise and postulate the importance of IK which is also known as "past orientation" of people, particularly men, the traditional food consumption norms in families and communities that tend to

146

marginalise girls and women remain largely unresearched. This chapter further problematises the ontology and epistemology of IK and critically questions the norms that exclude women.

Why a focus on traditional food?

Over the years, food has been ritualised in ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals and special prayer meetings, and has shaped identities (Mead 1970). Haaland (2007) contends, culture is a suite of close and extensive relationships, the identity of which often involves food as part of rituals embedded in cosmological and ideological beliefs. Within this context, food is intricately woven into a culture's understanding of the universe and cultural convictions. This chapter also focusses on beef as a traditional food of the amaZulu people of KZN in South Africa, and the symbolic meanings attached to *who* cooks and eats *what* parts of a cow slaughtered during a traditional wedding. Rocillo-Aquino et al. (2021) maintain that studies focussing on traditional food have a longstanding history and have recently gained interest owing to their cultural, sensorial and nutritional properties. These studies have led to insights into the holistic nature of food as both a cultural artefact and a source of sustenance that engages our senses and impacts our health. However, with the commercialisation and marketing of national cuisines and produce in global markets, for food to be considered traditional, it must belong to a defined geographic place, whether it is local, regional or national. Ricillo-Aquino et al. (2021: 3) further state that many foods are granted what is termed 'designation of origin' and 'geographical indication', which are legal and regulatory terms used to protect and recognise the link between the quality and characteristics of a product and the specific geographical area it comes from. The designation of origin and geographic indication enable consumers to identify and trust the authenticity and unique qualities of products from specific regions, as the specific geographical environment can influence their characteristics. Thus, traditional food is often linked to space, place and a territory, shaped by history and a constellation of associated knowledge, meanings, values and practices. It can be indigenous or introduced during ancient times, however, integrated into the local daily survival routine. As confirmed by Ivanova and Terziyska (2014: 124), 'traditional culinary traditions' are passed through history, with each new generation learning the recipes, eating habits and tastes of their ancestors. Culinary traditions reproduce a culture and are combined with regional specificity in terms of an authentic way of cooking according to the ancestral teachings of elderly people, a history of being consumed over centuries, since the time of our grandparents and linkages with IK and symbolic meaning.

A second conceptualisation of traditional food links it to the inter-generational transmission of knowledge and the use of local raw material (Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996). This demonstrates the "autochthony" of traditional food, or its characteristics as indigenous, native or originating in a particular place or region. Time plays a significant role in the categorisation of food as traditional food. This implies that the meanings of traditional food should ideally have a documented history demonstrating its social construction and evolution over generations, passed down from ancestors. Thus, the cultural significance of traditional foods is intricately bound to the passage of time. In other words, food gains symbolic meanings in both spatial and temporal terms. As time elapses, traditional food gathers profound meaning, encompassing its ritualistic and symbolic qualities that are intricately interwoven with the core of each culture. Through these processes, traditional food stands out distinctly from others. As discussed by Gartuala et al. (2020: 79), the 'categorisation of traditional food or foods came from IK' which is unique to a specific cultural context and is transmitted through socialisation processes and interaction among household members.

The continuing legacy of food colonialism

As indicated earlier, this chapter reflects on the traditional food and foodways in traditional weddings among the AmaZulu people of KZN province, in South Africa. As a region, KZN was colonised primarily by the British with the arrival of European settlers and traders in the nineteenth century. Dominy (1993) explains that the arrival of colonial settlers in KZN reconstructed Zululand, and this is where the present study was conducted. Colonial settlers also imposed 'their own social and political identities' (Trapido 2008: 52). Chanaiwa (1980) also confirms that the expansion of European material culture into Zululand was accompanied by the equally expansionist social and religious norms of the European world. Thus, the cultural context of the province, which includes their foodways and cuisines like that of many parts of the country and other countries, suffered the consequences of colonialism or food colonialism as termed by scholars, when colonial settlers took over their lands (Eriksen 2013; Garcia Polanco and Rodriguez-Cruz 2019; Steckley 2016; Whyte, Caldwell and Schaeper 2018).

McKinley and Jernigan (2023) interpret food colonialism as cultural genocide and a form of historical oppression, which undermined the indigenous foodways and cuisine of the colonised. Kesselman (2023) refers to food colonialism as the coloniality of food experience, emphasising the effects of colonialism as extending beyond the historical period of colonisation and as continuing

to shape how individuals and communities interact with food. Furthermore, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) and Ng* ug* i wa Thiong'o et al. (1986), food colonialism dismembered the cradle of African foodways and cuisine and destroyed Africa's food heritage. Singley (2012) maintains that food colonialism promoted western dishes over traditional African food, which was deemed non-nutritious.

Kuper (1960) explains that food colonialism not only enforced western traditions, but it also permitted the introduction of Indian dietary ideals, cultural traditions and nutritional norms associated with race, social status and gender; it also manifested in food preferences and eating etiquette that disregarded other cultural practices. This imposition of dietary standards, linked to the ideals of the colonisers, often clashed with existing cultural traditions and offended various societies. Kesselman (2023) points out that the colonial influence in South Africa exacerbated significant injustices within food systems. Colonialisation led to the marginalisation and exploitation of indigenous foodways and local knowledge, perpetuating deeply rooted inequalities and imbalances in the way food was produced, distributed and valued.

The impact of food colonialism extends beyond dietary choices; it encompasses cultural, social and economic dimensions that continue to resonate in contemporary societies. For example, a recent study conducted by Reddy and Moletsane (2021) on Indian curry, shows that Indian cuisine has received considerable scholarly attention in the past few decades in South Africa in contrast to the comparatively limited exploration of cuisines from other ethnic groups. This discrepancy underscores the unequal legacy of colonialism, where certain cultural elements are elevated and studied more extensively, while others are marginalised or overlooked.

In other spheres, Shostak (2023) highlights that food colonialism introduced socio-economic factors, which determined access and affordability, dietary ideologies and idolised food regimes. In other words, certain groups within colonised societies experienced limited access to, and affordability of certain foods owing to economic inequalities, which could lead to food insecurity and unequal nutrition. Colonialism also propagated dietary ideologies, impacting what foods were considered acceptable or desirable, which suppressed the dietary traditions and ideologies of colonised communities. Food colonialism idolised food regimes favoured by colonial powers, at the expense of indigenous food practices. This was the birth of inequalities that were imposed on colonised countries. Because of subordination by the coloniser over the colonised, food colonialism

led to the undermining and eventually to the weakening of indigenous culinary epistemologies (knowledge about local foods, from traditional recipes to the understanding of the nutritional and cultural value of certain ingredients). This loss was not only a result of cultural exchange, it was also a consequence of the uneven power dynamics between the colonisers and the colonised (Janer 2007). Thus, Bodirsky and Johnson (2008) and McKinley and Jernigan (2023) elucidate that food colonialism was a colonial trauma that pruned many African countries of the shared identity and the meaning attached to traditional food.

Other impacts of food colonialism include the replacement of African traditional foods with western and Indian traditional foods and the criminalisation of African ceremonial gatherings, which involved traditional foodways and cuisine (Dennis and Robin 2020). Furthermore, according to Beagan, Power and Chapman (2015), food colonialism not only controlled food systems in colonised countries, it also engendered social class trajectories along which different social classes or groups within society. These trajectories had an impact on the distribution of resources and opportunities and led to dietary inequality determined by the availability and affordability of food resources in communities.

Studying and thinking through food

Studying food is important in critical food studies and the social sciences, since humans are consumers of food, and the different cultures attach socially constructed meanings to the food they eat. Everett (2016) and Sibal (2018) assert that food plays an essential role in society by shaping identity and fostering the development of shared values. Almansouri et al. (2021) agree that food holds a special cultural and social meaning evident in celebrations. Food, for example, establishes cultural authenticity, transmitted across generations, fostering connections among people in shared cultures who gather to celebrate specific foods and dishes. Through food, people who have a shared culture embrace a sense of belonging and share memories of the past, which are drawn from IK systems, which is the wisdom of ancestors (Joseph and Turner 2020). Furthermore, food permeates social constructs and categories, which, for example: (i) shape people's cultural roots; (ii) influence how food is prepared and (iii) define who eats the food in terms of age, gender and marital status (Zeng, Zhao and Sun 2014). As such, over time, several discourses of food and foodways have emerged in critical food studies literature. One example identifies food as a symbol of common identity and socio-cultural heritage.

Haalad (2007) reasons that cultures are composed of intricate and extensive connections, with food serving as a central component of their identity, and that in an African context, it serves as a symbol of Ubuntu (meaning a shared humanity to others) used to strengthen familial and community ties. Similarly, Kesselman (2023) maintains that traditional food systems are revered because they embody principles of reciprocity and collectivity. In other words, traditional food practices involve a give-and-take approach within communities, where sharing and cooperation are valued. When consumers engage with a traditional food system, they celebrate the interconnectedness of individuals and their willingness to share resources. This fosters a sense of unity and mutual support, enriching the overall cultural experience tied to traditional foods (Quaranta and Salvia 2011; Trichopoulou, Soukara and Vasilopoulou 2007). In addition, food incorporates cultural beliefs, which shape *how* it is prepared, with *what* type of utensils, by whom, when, where and who can eat the food, either as a group or individually (Aktas-Polat and Polat, 2020; Meigs 1987; Sobreira et al. 2018). Thus, in African communities, as in other contexts, food has never merely been about the simple act of eating, it encapsulates the history, heritage and the identity of its consumers. Highfield (2017), for example, wrote a comprehensive analysis in relation to African narratives through diverse cultures.

151

Food is not simply a material reality as a micronutrient, but rather opens a deeper narrative which is understood by people that have been socialised into specific cultures (Watson and Caldwell 2004). To illustrate, almost three decades ago, Meigs (1987) identified three interrelated ways in which different communities or cultures understand food and foodways. Firstly, many cultures identify with their food heritage and use it to describe who they are individually and collectively, which means that food acts as a collective cultural identity. Secondly, food is a mediator and a referential touchstone for self-identification, having both a material and symbolic significance. This suggests that food is not simply a dish that is served, it also has both nutritional and symbolic value, which shapes and expresses individual and group identity. Thirdly, food comprises social constructs to which indigenous meanings are attached. More recently, Almansouri et al. (2021) and Grimaldi, Fassino and Porporato (2019) suggest that in a local context, food consumers celebrate what is known as a food heritage, which preserves traditions and consumer behaviour and is the cradle of the culture of many ethnic groups.

As illuminated by Siebert and Laschewski (2016), foodways and cuisines constitute cultural knowledge, which is treasured and preserved for future generations. Because food is linked to

specific locations, has a symbolic meaning and makes place or space unique and reflects its identity and values, the loss of cultural foodways and cuisines implies a loss of identity. Furthermore, as Waldstein (2018) argues, food enforces social control and morality and sustains the identity of a particular culture. Food ensures commonality, homogeneity, intimacy and solidarity. In some contexts, for example, people even define kin not by shared blood ties, but by shared food ties (Crowther 2018; Klein and Watson 2019). Further, food establishes intercultural and intergenerational relationships, transmitting IK as history, which serves as a bridge between the past and the future (Aktas-Polat and Polat 2020).

Understanding AmaZulu traditional wedding foodways

AmaZulu traditional foodways and cuisine for ceremonial events such as weddings have also been replaced or diluted by colonial foods over time. The latter were believed to better contribute to nutritional well-being and enhance the quality of life. This may have led social science and humanities scholars to pay scant attention to AmaZulu traditional foodways as an area of research, a gap this chapter in part addresses. In addition, the chapter identifies implications for future research on traditional food and foodways and cuisines of the AmaZulu in KZN.

Influenced by the scholarship of Mead (1970), a prominent anthropologist, who asserted that food has long been a subject of human interest and exploration and had become a language universally recognised and understood by people across cultures and backgrounds, I (the current author) conducted an ethnographic study focussing on symbolic meaning-making in traditional wedding foods among the AmaZulu in KZN. This study was further motivated by the insights brought by Durkheim (1997), who contends that new dimensions of food patterns, due to ecological and economic changes, colonisation, globalisation and urbanisation, require research into how they have impacted symbolic meaning-making in traditional food. Moreover, Johnston and Baumann (2015: 30) insist that research must proceed beyond what people eat to include '(i) how cultures talk about [and] use food in … rituals and social gatherings, (ii) how they have sustained familial connections through food and (iii) how food knowledge and attached meaning is preserved or disseminated from one generation to the next'. Conducting such research would necessitate an in-depth ethnographic approach to gather local (indigenous) knowledge of the intricate ways in which food is ritualised and commemorated. This would involve engaging closely with communities to understand their cultural practices, beliefs and traditions associated with food to uncover not

only surface-level rituals, but also the underlying meanings attached to different culinary practices. Furthermore, the research also delves into how these communities maintain their connections with food amidst the evolving landscape of evolving humanistic values, development initiatives and economic changes.

Based on the above-mentioned reasons, the present study was located within a decolonial indigenous paradigm, which challenges the hegemonic dominance (overwhelmingly dominant influence) of western paradigms. Steyn and Mpofu (2021) as well as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) are some contemporary African scholars who actively engage on how European models minimised African ontologies and epistemologies. As a counter, the misrecognition of African history can be redeemed through the production of decolonial scholarship. By decolonising/challenging the centrality of Eurocentrism, this paradigm facilitates the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of indigenous and previously subjugated African knowledges from the perspectives of the Africans themselves (Chilisa and Kawulich 2012; Held 2019). In other words, a decolonial indigenous paradigm counteracts the singular importance assigned to Eurocentric insights, and mobilises other modes of knowledge that are of equal relevance. Informed by this paradigm, an ethnographic research study was conducted with fifteen families in the rural communities of Elandskop, uLundi, Kokstad, eZabelweni and Bulwer in KZN province, South Africa, who were celebrating or had celebrated traditional weddings where indigenous food was cooked and served to guests. These communities had been subjected to food colonialism, however, since the democratic dispensation (post-1994), had resumed celebrating traditional weddings and cooking traditional food for guests.

To honour the voices of the present study's participants and their narratives, and informed by the decolonial indigenous paradigm, in-depth interviews with the participants were conducted in isiZulu, their first language (and the author's). The interviews were transcribed verbatim before being translated into English. While it is acknowledged that some meanings might have been lost in translation, as a first language speaker of isiZulu, firstly, I carefully listened to each audiotaped session before transcribing it myself, followed by a meticulously reading and re-reading of the transcripts to ensure an impartial and unbiased representation of the data set. Finally, key understandings of the findings were taken from each participant's interview and given back to them to confirm the accuracy of the interpretation and to correct where needed.

The analysis and interpretation of the participants' narratives were underpinned by the theory

of food agency and the indigenous knowledge systems theory (IKST). As discussed by Made and Breakfast (2023) and Stewart (2009), philosophical foundations of the IKST are dependent on what is socially constructed. The theory of food agency is situated within the philosophical and social scholarly literature on human agency and food (Abbots 2017; Gorton and Barjolle 2014). In the context of qualitative research, Crotty (1998) and Schwandt (1994) suggest that the interpretation of peoples' experiences is contingent on their lived experiences. Language and culture influences what is known by people (Zhao 2020). The theory recognises that food patterns result from a web of corridors of knowledge construction of social, cultural, economic, environment, political and personal influences, which produce meanings, and the influence of IK (Gorton and Barjolle 2014). Tlhompho (2014) states that IK includes the unique traditional and local knowledge that exist within, and develops around, the specific conditions of women and men who are indigenous to a specific geographical area. Persens (2005) further defines IK as a contrast to the knowledge generated within the international system of universities, research institutions and private firms. IK is often used as a basis for decision-making, especially regarding food preparation and distribution. IK shapes identities and creates food taboos that are inherited by generations through their socialisation. From this understanding, IKST focusses on the knowledge, practices and beliefs passed down within traditional communities. The theory recognises the unique wisdom and expertise that these communities have accumulated over generations concerning their environment, culture and social systems. Williams (2019) asserts that both food agency and IKST theories recognise the wealth of knowledge within African society, encompassing its culture, traditions and rituals. In the present ethnographic study, these theoretical lenses helped facilitate the generation and analysis of data on symbolic meaning-making IK attached to AmaZulu traditional wedding food preparation, consumption, foodways and cuisine by accessing the memories and IK systems of participants who reside in the rural communities of KZN.

Symbolic meanings attached to traditional wedding foods

During the data generation, the elders from these research sites were pleased that an interest had been taken in studying traditional wedding food, since they felt that the ritualisation and celebration of such culinary traditions were often unrepresented and regarded as archaic or less valued. This was evident in a male participant, who stated, '*Nkosazane ngizwile kancane ukuthi uphuma eThekwini esikhungweni semfundo ephakame, nokuthi ufuna ulwazi ngohlobo lokudla esidlayo emgcagcweni*' ('*Miss, I heard a little that you come from Durban, from a higher education institution, and that you*

want information about traditional foods in ceremonies.'). After I replied that I was from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus), he stated the following:

> *'It is interesting to know that our traditional ceremonies are catching the interest of people who are coming from such institutions. I take pride in being umZulu who has still preserved the knowledge that I learned from obabamkhulu bami (paternal grandfathers).'*

Maintaining eye contact, the old man then implored me to '*Please use isiZulu as a medium of communication because I did not go to school, but I know what I was taught by obabamkhulu bami (my paternal grandfathers)'.* Talking to women participants proved to be a different experience in several ways. For example, in an interview with a female participant about the preparation and consumption of traditional wedding food and where it was cooked and by whom, she did not maintain eye contact, but faced down and continuously rubbed her hands while responding to my question:

> *'We don't consider a woman that did not observe her ongagcagcanga (traditional wedding) as an umalokazane (wife), because umalokazane (also wife) is someone who has been introduced to ancestors through ... the cow where the incoming mlobokazi (newlywed wife) is expected to "khomba inxeba"(pointing the wound which is considered as an important ritual for the incoming wife) , as an indication that "I" consent to be fully integrated into my husband's name. We have seen young, educated couples getting married in isiZulu, and we celebrate this as it implies that ziyabuyela emasisweni (going back to our roots).'*

155

When I questioned what she meant by *zibuyela emasisweni (going back to our roots),* instead of responding, the woman turned to the male elder that was present in the room for a response, the male participant responded as follows:

> *'Abelungu (white people) came over to colonise us and how we used to do things. We lost our identity and how we celebrated our rituals. At some point in time, we were not allowed to meet as black people to celebrate our rituals. They also introduce their own food which undermined our traditional meals. We find joy when seeing our children going back to roots of being umZulu (a zulu person) which is celebrated through the slaughtered cow.'*

The narrative above highlights the experience of food colonialism which, as mentioned earlier, food scholars have illuminated. The experiences conveyed in the above confirm the validity of the existing literature on the experiences of the colonised. Turning to meat as a food item in cultural practice, the next section addresses the relevance of beef.

Beef

As discussed by De Garine (2004), beef is highly valued and slaughtering a cow constitutes the central ritual of a ceremony held in a family or community. Recent studies on traditional weddings reveal that when the AmaZulu talk about traditional wedding foods, they do not mention curry and rice, which is common amongst other ethnic groups (Gumede 2022). For example, as Dabasso et al. (2022) explain, the cattle (especially bulls) are slaughtered for meat consumption, rituals and high value ceremonial purposes. For the AmaZulu, the slaughtered cow or beef is a symbol of traditional wedding food and other ceremonies (Khanyile 2022). Boiled beef, in particular, becomes the staple item on the menu of the ceremony. The slaughtered cow represents and symbolises the presence of ancestors, situates IK into practice and ensures a successful traditional wedding. To illustrate, during data generation, a male participant indicated that traditional weddings are guided by ancestral knowledge:

> *'We learned and observed from obab'omkhulu (paternal grandfathers/ancestors). Before the cow gets slaughtered, we take it to the esibayeni (enclosure) where a male elder in the family declares the cow to our ancestors by reciting family clan songs. The cow is given ancestral integrity, which is officiating the beginning of the traditional wedding. Traditional wedding foods are also confirmed because the slaughtered cow meat becomes the staple meal of the ceremony. This meat that is served is cooked/boiled by us using water and salt in the pot where dumplings are cooked. This is where we resume culinary responsibilities as men in the family. Remember that we have the responsibility to ensure that we don't deviate from the teachings of our ancestors ... ababeyipheka, bayephule (to cook and remove pots from the fire or from the stove).'*

> *'Iphenduka "ifuthu/ifutho (traditional fresh meat or crops)" because it is mixed with izinto zabelungu (western teachings). Different cow body parts are cooked and displayed as guided by the teachings of our ancestors or elders in the family. The display of cooked meat is first*

*presented to the ancestors in a house called "kwagogo nomkhulu (kwagogo nomkhulu)",
also known as the ancestral house where AmaZulu believed that ancestors are resting. The
meat has to be first consumed by the ancestors spiritually before it can be be served to other
family members and guests during traditional weddings.'*

The above narrative reveals the role of IK in a traditional wedding and the traditional food served to guests.

When probed why beef is considered traditional wedding meat, a female participant volunteered, '*Baba, le izophendulwa nguwe (husband, please respond to this question)'*, shying away from maintaining eye contact and covering her face with her hand. Her husband responded:

*'Inkomo (cow) is considered a traditional wedding staple food because you don't just
slaughter it. You slaughter because the head of the house has died. It is a way of dignifying
his send off. We also slaughter the cow during weddings because, we declare it at the kraal
(enclosure) where we believe that our ancestors are resting. If I can take you back, the
wealth of our ancestors was tied up on how big is isibaya (kraal). We learned from them
that umakuhlatshwe inkomo, lowo umcimbi ungowesintu not iphathi nje (when a cow is
slaughtered, that ceremony is considered a traditional ritual and not just a party). Secondly,
our ancestors died crying because umhlaba wabo nemfuyo yabo eningi yadliwa ilaba
abafika bezosidlela umhlaba (he grazing land of their cows was taken over by western
settlers). As we grow, we have not forgotten the scars of colonisers and how they have altered
our traditional rituals and ceremonies. When AmaZulu speak about umcimbi wesinti
(traditional ceremony) we want to eat inyama yenkomo nedombolo because that is our
traditional food. Hai lezicoficofi ezafika nabelungu namandiya (western cuisines). Where
there is only curry and rice, guests would say there was no food, bringing shame to ancestors.'*

157

These words imply that ancestors do not recognise non-traditional weddings, which are blamed on what is termed *impucuzeko* (modernity) and its lack of recognition of the symbolic meaning of traditional food and the slaughtering of a cow. What makes a slaughtered cow important as a staple food in traditional weddings is that it symbolises the presence of ancestors. The narrative above confirms that beef is recognised as the staple dish of ritualised events amongst the AmaZulu. As Adams (1990) confirms, many continents in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America consider

meat as the main dish served during traditional ceremonies and ritualised events. According to Adams (1990), men tend to consume more meat than women. Among the participants of this study, beyond the gendered consumption patterns that were skewed against women in terms of quantity, women also demonstrated a submissive deferral to men in terms of responding to certain questions related to traditional wedding foods and ceremonies. Their reluctance to respond directly in the presence of men generally as well as in the presence of their husbands, indicated entrenched patriarchal codes and unequal gender dynamics that were not fully anticipated as an outsider to these communities. Bhana (2010), Hosegood (2013) and Ifechelobi (2014) state that patriarchy silences women's voices mostly in the rural parts of the world.

The gendered consumption of meat among the AmaZulu

In their reflective study on meat consumption across states of human life, Ritzel and Mann (2021) indicate that age and gender are variables that have been used to determine who should consume what part of the meat and who should not. These are food taboos that perpetuate patriarchy in rural communities. Food taboos marginalise women from consuming specific foods which are consumed only by men in society. This is another aspect of gender-inequality in the context of food consumption. Choi and Jin-Lee (2022) confirm that in most cultures, eating meat is usually presented as a masculine activity, while vegetarianism is consistently associated with feminine qualities. The rite of passage of boys and girls or of men and women amongst amaZulu, as well as in many African ethnic groups, determines who should eat what kind of meat. Yount-André and Zende (2023) indicate that among South Africa's many African ethnic groups, meat is central to processes of redistribution that underpin networks of intergenerational reciprocity among kin and which allow young people to achieve social adulthood. Eating meat and feeding meat to others is a means through which people (especially men) might transition to adulthood, that is assume an appealable and desirable status in terms of age, wealth and power. Thus, meat has become a marker of unequal social roles.

Gender scholars have argued that one significant way contemporary hegemonic masculinities are constructed and reinforced is through meat consumption (Carson 2021). Meat consumption can also be seen to feed into patriarchal structures of human-male supremacy, celebrating a primitive masculinity and normalising aggressive characteristics by tying them to male, gendered and perceived as ("natural") behaviours. According to Carson (2021), feminists' scholars and

ecofeminists specifically, argue that there is an inherent connection between the systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice for women. When men eat meat, they are also symbolically participating and colluding in an act of domination over the natural world and women.

In the context of this chapter, narratives from all participants reveal that the cooking, distribution and the consumption of cooked cow body parts during the AmaZulu traditional wedding has led to gendered unequal social roles. Male elders disallow the *inhloko* (head of the cow) to be consumed by underaged boys, young women and married women. In patriarchal terms, the head of the cow is believed to be a special and important part of the animal and is to be consumed by married men. This confirms the superior status of married men in the family as well in the community. In this sense, marriage (as a heteronormative institution) assigns a gendered, special, idolised and exclusive value that enables married men to exclusively qualify and be deserving of eating *inhloko.* Further, a married man is regarded as the head of the household, a decision-maker as well as someone that is closely linked to the ancestors. Such ancestral linkage and lineage therefore provide the man certain privileges and powers in the home and community where he is perceived as the repository of ancestral knowledge. Thus, serving a married man *inhloko,* demonstrates his standing and the respect he is afforded in the family. In this context, while boys, girls and women are often expected to prepare food dishes*,* they are prohibited from eating parts like *inhloko* and other body parts of the cow that are reserved for men. Rodrigues, Goméz-Corona and Valentin (2020) and Zhao's (2022) research on food studies confirm that the consumption of food in many cultural groups is informed by hierarchies. These hierarchies are shaped by sex, age, marital status and gender.

The distribution of what remains to be served is equally relevant. For example, in addition to the head, married men are also served *isibindi* (liver) and *inhliziyo* (the heart). In turn, they serve what remains or what they would not eat, including *amanqina enkomo* (feet or trotters,), lungs and offal to boys, girls and women. The entrails or internal organs of animals are edible parts known as offal. In colloquial and linguistic terms, offal also references meanings about refuse, rubbish or garbage. While entrails and internal organs are eaten in many cultures (contingent on recipes, cooking methods and flavours), they are assigned meanings linked to waste which is supposedly meaningless and worthless, and therefore, that is to be discarded. Furthermore, the participants' narratives on traditional food in this study also suggest that *ibele (*the udder) a body part meant for milk production, is served to *omama* (mothers or married women). The indigenous meaning attached to *ibele* is that because like *omama* who use their breasts to feed their babies*,* it involves milk

production, only married women may eat the cow udder. However, in the Elandskop community, the *ibele* is also served to *izintombi* (girls and unmarried women), which indicates different inherited IK and meaning attached to the organ. *Umlenze* (the leg) and thigh are cooked and served to all guests attending the traditional wedding.

The findings above suggest that the positive meanings attached to the various body parts of a cow (*inhloko* in particular) are that they are reserved for the heads of households, while those that are assigned negative meanings such as waste, rubbish or garbage are reserved for boys, girls and women (those regarded as the less important in families and the communities) (Borona 2019; Manan and Tul-Kubra 2022). This chapter asserts that while calls to reclaim IKs and systems are gaining momentum among scholars and communities globally, the findings from literature and the present ethnographic study suggest that some of the social norms and values contained in the IK around traditional food, its preparation and consumption, are hierarchical and unequally gendered. Therefore, these revered ancestral teachings often carry discriminatory elements, in this case, leading to the marginalisation of young boys, girls and women, including married women, and using the consumption of traditional foods as a weapon of gender and age marginalisation. As Sewenent and Schwarcz (2021: 1) observe, such 'unwritten food norms' lead to taboos that are socially based and that prohibit people from consuming certain types of food. If food, and especially particular types of food are central to the AmaZulu wedding traditions, it is also appropriate to conclude that the food ritual and the food that is served also take on a particular gendered saliency. For example, according to Ruby and Heine (2011), due to its long-standing association with manhood, power and virility, meat is a symbol of patriarchy. According to these authors, due to the power and privilege that patriarchy affords them in their family and community, men especially, are therefore likely to selectively maintain the traditions that benefit them, and by extension, maintain the gendered taboos in traditional foods and foodways and the symbolic meanings that sustain their power over women, girls and boys.

Mengie et al. (2022) assert that women are disadvantaged by cultural food taboos in which certain foods are prohibited to them. De Garine (2001) explains that prejudice and stereotypes relating to food habits operate in a much harsher way within the framework of a society. Food habits can, therefore, be considered as playing a stronger part of a social marker than a cultural marker. They underline basic differences and even augment barriers between social classes; hence inequalities exist because of food consumption and statuses that are attached and owned as the identity of

societies. Mengie et al. (2022) further state that compared to urban and better educated populations, rural and less educated cultures tend to have a higher prevalence of food prohibitions. Women are more affected than men.

Learning from the perspectives of rural people

The dynamics between gender and associated factors including power, social systems and complex food landscapes, influence decision-making with respect to the intake of food to dictate the quantity of what kind of food, including animal sources of foods is consumed when and by whom in the households (Bukachi et al. 2022). As motivated, the ethnographic study described in this chapter spotlighted an understanding of a component in the foodways and cuisine of the AmaZulu during traditional weddings. It recognises the importance of articulating the meaning of food from the perspectives of rural people themselves and by so doing, contributes to the draws on the IKs of rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal.

The insights gleaned from the participants' narratives indicate that IK operates as a singular, patriarchal and dominant narrative that confers power and authority to men. A single narrative refers to a dominant perspective that holds sway over a particular received meaning that is a supposed grand truth. It suggests that there is a prevailing viewpoint that shapes and influences decisions, actions and practices (Mkhwanazi 2016). Thus, in the context of the present study, shaped through cultural and patriarchal conditioning, IK assigns men a primary decision-making role in various aspects of traditional AmaZulu weddings, including matters related to food preparation, consumption and the ceremony itself. To illustrate, the participants' narratives reflect that the IK inherited from ancestors, of which men are custodians and by extension, have the power to police the participation of boys, girls and women in traditional ceremonies, including weddings, assigns food taboos and symbolic meanings that favour the former and are negatively skewed against the latter. Specifically, the symbolic meanings attached to beef, which is the staple food of traditional wedding ceremonies, and the various body parts reserved for the consumption of men, are steeped in patriarchal norms and values that support the food taboos that disadvantage women, girls and boys. Insights arising from the data suggest that as the custodians of local, ancestral wisdom and IK, men and elders in the community rigidly pass these understandings and food taboos across generations. Such ongoing socialisation further entrenches and underscores traditional gender roles and unequal power dynamics within the community, leaving women marginalised and excluded.

Entrusting the IK transmission role primarily to men, perpetuates gender stereotypes and food taboos. For example, positioning men as the primary custodians and conveyors of IK, reinforces the pre-existing notion that certain domains of expertise are reserved for them. This way IK forms part of the marginalisation of women and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and food taboos in families and communities. As Sewenet and Schwarcz (2021) conclude, gender stereotypes and food taboos are a result of food norms that are written, and unwritten standards which govern people's behaviour. Food norms instruct individuals of a society about the cultural codes concerning food production, distribution and the consumption of food. For example, various traditional practices are based upon men's superior position that trigger negative consequences for women, including cultural abuse and violence. Many harmful traditional practices tend to benefit men and ensure women's low status within the family and society, preventing them from escaping various forms of abuse, including food marginalisation. In the context of this study, the exclusion of women from certain aspects of traditional food practices, such as which parts of the cow they may consume, underscores the unequal power dynamics between men and women. Such exclusions not only restrict women's participation, but symbolically reinforces their marginalised status in the family and community through gendered food taboos (Msuya 2020).

162

Achieving gender equality cannot be attained if the foundations of IK are not troubled, unsettled and unquestioned. Further investigation of the interrelated dynamics of gender roles, IK transmission and food practices could contribute to an understanding of cultural traditions, societal norms and gender dynamics that may lead to an inclusive agenda of activism against the marginalisation of women in traditional wedding foods and contribute to gender equality amongst the amaZulu. By exploring the complex relationship between gender roles and the transmission of IK, future research could uncover the historical, social and cultural factors that underpin this interaction and its impact on individuals and communities and contribute to ongoing scholarly debate on these topics. In addition, future studies could explore avenues for promoting gender equity, thereby challenging traditional standards and fostering inclusive representation within traditional practices, such as wedding foodways and cuisine.

Conclusion

This chapter focussed on beef as the staple meal in traditional weddings among the AmaZulu in KZN province, South Africa, and on the symbolic meanings they assign to its preparation and

consumption, as well as their influence on community foodways and ceremonial celebrations. As this chapter has demonstrated, food not only fulfils our energy needs, it also has a social function. Food has a strong alignment to and impacts on perceptions of masculinity and femininity as well as conveys gender stereotypes which influences our food choices (Zhao 2022).

The insights in this chapter also suggest that IK involves at best, an incomplete, partial and at worse, a questionable understanding or concept of the ontology and the epistemology which mostly marginalises women. Because of this understanding, women continue to be excluded in the food preparation and consumption during traditional weddings amongst the AmaZulu. This suggests that IK is largely discursive and should be contested if it marginalises women, while assigning men supreme power. Such problematisation of IK will also assist gender activists to address multi-faceted layers of patriarchy and social inequalities which constantly exclude women in both domestic and public spaces in society (including, during ritualised events such as traditional weddings). Horsthemke (2008) asserts that to be declared IK, the body of data or of learning must be factual or declarative, it must meet the requisite criteria: beliefs, truth and adequate justification. In the context of this chapter, IK is considered as invalidated and not legitimised knowledge, since the framing of this knowledge remains unidirectional as it perpetuates the dominance of men over women.

163

Scholars, policymakers, community leaders and activists in communities have a responsibility to work together to find solutions to gender inequality in communities generally, and to the food taboos that marginalise women in traditional wedding ceremonies among the amaZulu. This would enhance the policy, programmes and activism in resolving gender inequality and heeding the call to ensure that women are treated as human beings with equal rights in all spaces. However, as this chapter has illustrated, it is only when one has a deep understanding, from the perspectives of the local people themselves, of the symbolic meanings attached to traditional food in rural communities generally, and to the preparation and consumption of beef as a staple meal in traditional wedding ceremonies among the AmaZulu in KZN, that one can understand their foodscapes and foodways. This would contribute to scholarship in the Humanities, and to IK and Critical Food Studies scholarship specifically. In relation to activism and programming, this would contribute to addressing gender inequality and women's lack of access to resources and decision-making as well as participation in food preparation and consumption during traditional ceremonies. Traditional wedding foods and associated taboos should not marginalise women.

The distribution of food should respond to deepening gender inequalities and food taboos. South Africa could learn from the experiences of neighbouring African countries. For example, the Borana people of Northen Kenya also slaughter a cow in celebration of ritualised ceremonies based on their IK which determines social and cultural values. It remains remarkable that in celebration of their ceremonies, Borana women enjoy the same eating privileges that men have. The foundation of their behaviour towards women is informed by their IK system. Women oversee livestock products (milk and meat) and decision-making regarding the buying and cooking of food remains solely in the women's domain. Men are mainly engaged in pastoralism (Dabasso et al. 2022).

References

Abbots, E-J. 2017. *The agency of eating: Mediation, food and the body.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Adams, C.J. 1990. *The sexual politics of meat: A feminist vegetarian critical theory*. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Aktas-Polat, S. and Polat, S. 2020. A theoretical analysis of food meaning in anthropology and sociology. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal,* 68(3): 278–293.

Almansouri, M., Verkerk, R., Fogliano, V. and Luning, P.A. 2021. Exploration of heritage food concept. *Trends in Food Science & Technology,* 111: 790–797.

Anderson E.N. 2005. *Everyone eats. Understanding food and culture*. New York University Press, New York.

Beagan, B.L., Power, E.M. and Chapman, G.E. 2015. Eating isn't just swallowing food: Food practices in the context of social class trajectory. *Canadian Food Studies/ La Revue Canadienne Des études Sur l'alimentation*, 2(1): 75–98. https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v2i1.50

Bhana, D. 2010. Here in the rural areas they don't say that men and women are equal! Contesting gender inequalities in the early years. *Agenda,* 24(84): 9–18.

Bodirsky, M. and Johnson, J. 2008. Decolonizing diet: Healing by reclaiming traditional indigenous foodways. *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures*, 1(1). Available at: https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/cuizine/1900-v1-n1-cuizine2503/019373ar/

Borona, K. 2019. *Reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems: Towards sustainable people-forest relationship in Kenya*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Bukachi, S., Ngutu, M., Muthiru, A. W., Lépine, A., Kadiyala, S. and Dominguez-Salaz, P. 2022. Gender and sociocultural factors in animal source foods (ASFs) access and consumption in lower-income households in urban informal settings of Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 41(30): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41043-022-00307-9

Byarugaba, G. 2017. "The Influence of Food Symbolism on Food Insecurity in South Africa: How Relevant Is the Eucharistic Celebration?" *Scriptura* 116 (1). 1–19. https://doi.org/10.7833/116-1-1335.

Carson, S. 2021. Eat like a white man: Meat-eating, masculinity, and neo-colonialism. *The Pegasus Review: UCF Undergraduate Research Journal*, 13(2), Article 5: 50–61. Available at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/urj/vol13/iss2/5

Chanaiwa, D.S. 1980. The Zulu revolution: State formation in a pastoralist society. *African Studies Review,* 23(3): 1–20.

Chen, P.J. and Antonelli, M. 2020. Conceptual models of food choice: Influential factors related to foods, individual differences, and society. *Foods 2020, 9*(12):1898. doi: 10.3390/foods9121898

Chilisa, B. and Kawulich, B. 2012. *Selecting a research approach: Paradigm, methodology and methods*. Los Angeles. SAGE Publications.

Choi, S.E. and Lee, K.J. 2022. Ethnic differences in attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of meat consumption among American young women meat eaters. *Nutrition, Research and Practise*, 17(1): 73–90. https://doi.org/10.4162/nrp.2023.17.1.73

Cope, R.D. and Earle, R. 2013. The body of the conquistador: Food, race and the colonial experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700. *The American Historical Review*, 118(5): 1565–1566. https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/118.5.1565

Crotty, M. 1998, *The foundations of social research.* Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Crowther, G. 2018. *Eating culture: An anthropological guide to food.* Second edition, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

165

Dabasso, B.G., Makokha, A.O., Onyango, A. N. and Mathara, J.M. 2022. Beyond nutrition: Social–cultural values of meat and meat products among the Borana people of Northern Kenya. *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 9(46): 1–15 https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-022-00160-5

De Garine, I. 2001. Views about food prejudice and stereotypes. *Social Science Information.* 40(3): 487–507. Doi:0539-0184[200109]

De Garine, I. 2004. *Meat: Between ritual and gastronomy*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252089529

Dennis, M.K. and Robin, T. 2020. Healthy on our own terms: Indigenous wellbeing and colonized food system. *Journal of Critical Dietetics,* 5(1): 4–11. Available at: https://journals.library.torontomu.ca/index.php/criticaldietetics/article/view/1333

Dominy, G. 1993. Frere's War? A reconstruction of the geopolitics of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. *Natal Mus. J. Humanities,* 5(10): 189–206. doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA16815564_370

Durkheim, E. 1997. *The division of labor in society*. Free Press. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.

Eriksen, S.N. 2013. Defining local food: Constructing a new taxonomy – three domains of proximity. *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica, Section B – Soil & Plant Science,* 63(sup1): 47–55, DOI:10.1080/09064710.2013.789123

Everett, S. 2016. *Food and drink tourism: Principles and practices*. London: Sage Publication.

Fielding-Singh, P. 2017. A taste of inequality: Food's symbolic value across the Socioeconomic Spectrum. *Sociological Science* 4: 424–48. DOI: 10.15195/v4.a17

Garcia Polanco, V. and Rodriguez-Cruz, L. 2019. Decolonizing the Caribbean diet: Two perspectives on possibilities and challenges. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 9(B): 25–30.

Gartuala, H., Patel, K., Shukla, S. and Devkota, R. 2020. Indigenous knowledge of traditional foods and food literacy among youth: Insights from rural Nepal. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 73: 77–86. Elsevier Publishers.

Gorton, M. and Barjolle, D. 2014. Theories of food choice. In: Barjolle, D., Gorton, M., Milošević Đorđević, J., Stojanović, Ž. (eds) *Food consumer science* (pp. 15–26). Springer, Dordrecht.DOI10.1007/978-94-007-5946-6_2

Grimaldi, P., Fassino, G., and Porporato, D. 2019. *Culture, heritage, identity and food. A methodological approach*. Percorsi di ricercar.

Gumede, L.T.J. 2022. *Representation of Zulu weddings on the reality television show Our Perfect Wedding: A case study of selected episodes of Zulu weddings*. Master of Arts Film and Television. Unpublished dissertation. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Haaland, R. 2007. Porridge and Pot, Bread and Oven: Food Ways and Symbolism in Africa and the Near East from the Neolithic to the Present. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 17:2, 167–83 © 2007 McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research doi:10.1017/S09597743070000?? Printed in the United Kingdom.

Harris, P., Lyon, D. and McLaughlin, S. 2005. *The meaning of food: The companion to the PBS television series*. Globe Pequot Press.

Held, M. B. E. 2019. Decolonizing Research Paradigms in the Context of Settler Colonialism: An Unsettling, Mutual, and Collaborative Effort. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods Volume 18: 1–16.* DOI: 10.1177/1609406918821574. Sage publishers

Highfield, J.B. 2017. *Food and foodsways in African narratives: Community, culture, and heritage.* London and New York: Routledge.

Horsthemke, K. 2008. The idea of indigenous knowledge. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, 4: 129–143. DOI 10.1007/s11759-008-9058-8

Hosegood, V. 2013. Women, marriage and domestic arrangements in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Acta Juridica,* 2013(1): 143–168.

Ifechelobi, J.N. 2014. Feminism: Silence and voicelessness as tools of patriarchy in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. *African Research Review,* 8(4): 17–27.

Ivanova, L., Terziyska, I. and Trifonova, J. 2014. Characteristics of traditional food – the of viewpoint of tourism business. *Service Management 3/2014,* 14: 123–130. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280304903_Characteristics_of_traditional_food_-_the_viewpoint_of_the_tourism_business (Accessed on 25 August 2023).

Janer, Z. 2007. (In)Edible nature: New world food and coloniality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3): 385–405.

Johnston, J. and Baumann, S. 2015. *Foodies: Democracy and distinction in the gourmet foodscape* (2nd ed.). Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. New York: Routledge.

Joseph, L. and Turner, N.J. 2020. The old foods are the new foods! Erosion and revitalization of indigenous food systems in Northwestern North America. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems,* 4:596237. doi: 10.3389/fsufs.2020.596237

Kesselmann, B. 2023. Transforming South Africa's unjust food system: an argument for decolonization. *Food, Culture and Society*, 1-18. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/15528014.2023.2175483?scroll=top&needAccess=true&role=tab

Khanyile, N.P. 2022. An examination of the significance of the cow body parts during traditional rituals of AmaZulu households in the Mpola community. Unpublished Master's thesis of Social Science in Anthropology. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

Klein, J.A. and Watson, J.L. (eds) 2019. *The handbook of food an anthropology*. Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York.

Kuhnlein, H.V. and Receveur, O. 1996. Dietary change and traditional food systems of indigenous people. *Annual Review of Nutrition*, 16(1): 417–442.

Kuper, H. 1960. *Indian people in Natal*. University Press.

Lawrance, B.N., and C. De la Peña. 2012. *Local foods meet global foodways: Tasting history*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203723500

Made, Z.J. and Breakfast, N. 2023. An analysis of indigenous knowledge systems through the eye of 'iintsomi' (folk tales). *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS),* 4(14): 121–129. https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202341411

Manan, S.A. and Tul-Kubra, K. 2022. Reclaiming the indigenous knowledge(s): English curriculum through 'Decoloniality' lens. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 17(1): 78-100, DOI: 10.1080/17447143.2022.2085731

McKinley, C.E. and Jernigan, V.B.B. 2023. "I don't remember any of us…. having diabetes or cancer": How historical oppression undermines indigenous foodways, health and wellness. *Food and Foodways,* 31(1): 43–65.

Mead, M. 1970. The changing significance of food: A discussion of the interrelationship between the diet of Americans and their capacity to provide for the poor and starving at home and abroad. *American Scientists* 58(2): 176–81.

Meigs, A. 1987. Food as a cultural construction. *Food and Foodways*, 2(1): 341–57, DOI:10.1080/07409710.1987.9961926

Mengie, T., Dessie, Y., Egata, G., Muche, T., Habtegiorgis, S.D. and Getacher, L. 2022. Food taboos and associated factors among agro-pastoralist pregnant women: A community-based cross-sectional study in Eastern Ethiopia. *Heliyon,* 8: e10923. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10923

Mkhwanazi, N. 2016. Medical anthropology in Africa: The trouble with a single story. *Medical Anthropology*. 35(2): 193–202. 10.1080/01459740.2015.1100612

Modi, M. 2009. The nutritional and modified traditional food in KwaZulu-Natal. Unpublished Master's dissertation of Agriculture (Food Security), School of Agriculture and AgriBusiness. Faculty of Science and Agriculture. University of KwaZulu-Natal, PMB Campus.

Msuya, N.H. 2020. Advocating positive traditional culture to eradicate harmful aspects of traditional culture for gender equality in Africa. *Obiter*, 41(1): 45–62. Retrieved January 22, 2024, from http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1682-58532020000100003&lng=en&tlng=en

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2015. Decoloniality in Africa: A continuing search for a New World Order. *Australasian Review of African Studies,* 36(2): 22–50.

Ng* ug* i wa Thiong'o., Ngugi, J., Gugi, J., Thiong'o, N.W. and Thiong'o, N.W. 1986. Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature. London: Portsmouth, N.H.: J. Currey; Heinemann.

Persens, J. 2005. Indigenous knowledge systems: Striking a balance. *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems,* 4(1): 136–143, retrieved 14 March 2014, from https:// journals.co.za/content/linga/4/1/EJC61481.

Purnamasari, D. 2010. Assessing the world's food taboos. Retrieved on the 23rd January 2-24 from http://www.helium.com

Quaranta, G. and Salvia, C. 2011. *Preserving the Mediterranean landscape: The role of local traditional food*. Survival and Sustainability: Environmental concerns in the 21st century, 187-194. Available at: https://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ress_doc/opac_css/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=37682

Reddy, G. and Van Dam, R.M. 2020. Food, culture and identity in multicultural societies: Insights from Singapore. *Appetite,* 149: 104633. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666319311602

Reddy, V. and Moletsane, R. 2021. In search of the perfect curry: A gender perspective on Durban curry in two contemporary cookbooks. *Gender Questions,* 9(1): 1–27. https://doi.org/10.25159/2412-8457/7427

Ritzel, C. and Mann, S. 2021. The old man and the meat: On gender differences in meat consumption across stages of human life. *Foods 2021,* 10(11): 2809. doi: 10.3390/foods10112809

Rocillo-Aquino, Z., Cervantes-Escoto, F., Leos-Rodríguez, J., Cruz-Delgado, D. and Espinoza-Ortega, A. 2021. What is a traditional food? Conceptual evolution from four dimensions. *Journal of Ethnic Foods.* 8(38): 1–10. 10.1186/s42779-021-00113-4

Rodrigues, H., Goméz-Corona, C. and Valentin, D. 2020. Femininities & masculinities: Sex, gender, and stereotypes in food studies. *Current Opinion in Food Science,* 33:156–164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cofs.2020.05.002

Ruby, M.B. and Heine, S.J. 2011. Meat, morals and masculinity. *Appetite*, 56(2): 447–450. doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2011.01.018

Schwandt, T.A. 1994. Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In: N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 118-137. Sage Publications.

Sewenent, A. and Schwarcz, P. 2021. The impacts of food taboos and preferences on food security in developing countries: Evidence from Ethopia. *EU agrarian law,* 10(1): 1–11.

Shostak, S. 2023. Food and inequality. *Annual Review of Sociology,* 49: 359–378.

Sibal, V. 2018. Food: Identity of culture and religion. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327621871_FOOD_IDENTITY_OF_CULTURE_AND_RELIGION

Siebert, R. and Laschewski, L. 2016. Creating a tradition that we never had: Local food and local knowledge in the Northeast of Germany. In: *Naming Food After Places,* pp. 61–75. *Routledge.*

Singley, B. 2012. 'Hardly Anything Fit for Man to eat': Food and Colonialism in Australia. *History Australia, 9(3),* 27-42.https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2012.11668429

Sobreira, L.B., Garavello, M.E.P.E. and Nardoto, G.B. 2018. Anthropology of food: An essay on food transition and transformations in Brazil. *Journal of Food, Nutrition and Population Health,* 2(1): 1-8. DOI:10.21767/2577-0586.10039

171

Steckley, M. 2016. Eating the social ladder: The problem of dietary aspirations for food sovereignty. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 33(3): 549–562.

Stewart, S. 2009. Family counselling as decolonization: Exploring an indigenous social-constructivist approach in clinical practice. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 4(2): 62-70. https://doi.org/10.7202/1069330ar

Steyn, M. and Mpofu, W. (eds). 2021. Decolonising the human: Reflections from Africa on difference and oppression. *Wits University Press*. https://doi.org.10.18772/22021036512

Tlhompho, G. 2014. African indigenous food security strategies and climate change adaptation in South Africa. *Journal of Human Ecology,* 48(1): 83–96, viewed 14 March 2015, from https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2014.11906777

Trapido, S. and Phimister, I. 2008. Imperialism, settler identities and colonial capitalism: The hundred year origins of the 1899 South African war. *Historia,* 53(1): 45-75. Available at: http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hist/v53n1/06.pdf

Trichopoulou, A., Soukara, S. and Vasilopoulou, E. 2007. Traditional foods: A science and society perspective. *Trends in Food Science & Technology,* 18(8): 420–427.

Trigg, H. 2004. Food choice and social identity in early colonial New Mexico. *Journal of Southwest,* 46(2): 223–252.

Waldstein, A. (2018). *Food, Anthropology of*. The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology. John Wiley & Sons. DOI:10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1605.

Watson, J.L. and Caldwell, M.L. 2004. *The cultural politics of food and eating: A reader.* Wiley, New York & London.

Whyte, K., Caldwell, C., and Schaefer, M. 2018. Indigenous lessons about sustainability are not just for "All Humanity". In: *Sustainability: Approaches to environmental justice and social power*. J. Sze, Ed. New York: University Press, 149-179.

Williams, M. 2019. *Of yaks and dignity: The cultural construction of food and memory*. Honors thesis, University of Arkansas. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.232624.20485

Yount-André, C. and Zemde, Y. 2023. Consuming inequalities: Vegetarianism, climate crisis, and political upheaval in South Africa. *Anthropology of Food,* 17. https://doi.org/10.4000/aof.14021

Zeng, G., Zhao, Y. and Sun, S. 2014. Sustainable development mechanism of food culture's translocal production bases on authenticity. *Sustainability,* 6(10): 7030–7047.

Zhao, H. 2020. Explicating the social constructionist perspective on crisis communication and crisis management research: A review of communication and business journals. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* 32(3–4): 98–119. https:doi:10.1080/1062726X.2020.1802732

Zhao, Y. 2022. Analysis of the gender stereotypes on food preferences. In: *2022 6th International seminar on education, management and social sciences,* 3688–3693, 2022. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-31-2_433

Chapter 8

Thinking through Food in South Africa: Identity-making, Embodiment and Representation

By Ayanda Tshazi

Introduction

In many parts of rural South Africa, elderly women in their role as grandmothers, wield significant influence on a household's access to food and nutrition (Madzorera and Fawzi 2020). As caregivers, their practices and foodways are also often key to securing children's positive development outcomes. Literature reveals interesting insights into how indigenous foodways practiced by older women influence food distribution within poor households. For example, a study on the coping strategies of poor households in an informal settlement in South Africa, found that especially female pensioners produce a significant positive impact on the food needs of children in their care, compared to households with no pensioners (Devereux and Waidler 2017; Koetaan et al. 2018; May 2016; Oldewage-Theron, Dicks and Napier 2006).

It is interesting to compare patterns revealing older women's relative strengths in networks of food distribution and access with many women's conventional roles in patriarchal societies. In patriarchal societies, women often share a subordinate social status with children and therefore, appear to be highly dependent on others for their own nutrition (Jarrott et al. 2019; Madzorera and Fawzi 2020). Yet, as Madzorera and Fawzi (2020) argue, women are the most food-productive group, and their empowerment translates into improved nutrition outcomes for the entire family, especially children. This is because women's traditional roles are anchored around food and childcare. Maternal caregiving enables children to enjoy better nutrition, especially children who share in gender and cultural roles involving food work (Devereux and Waidler 2017; Olderwage-Theron et al. 2006). Further, gendered roles often bind female caregivers and younger girls together in households and food-making chores; giving children (girls) better nutrition outcomes. As such, the argument for the inseparability of women and children as they are tied together by social and cultural relations is compelling, mainly because of their membership into the marginalised social

group in patriarchal societies. This paper reveals that there is even more specificity surrounding the role of grandmothers as a particular category of women.

While the role of grandmothers as child caregivers is widely recognised in society, the influence of their caregiving practices on children's general development and wellbeing seems to go largely unexplored, specifically, their food practices and their impact on the children in their care remain unidentified. It is also significant that the indigenous food practices with which older women are familiar and are often experts on, are embedded and (re)produced within patriarchal systems. Fleming (1997) and Fraser (1985) provide leads to explore the above-mentioned power relations surrounding this chapter's topic.

In rural contexts such as rural Kwazulu-Natal (KZN), a specific form of patriarchy informs family relations, community and daily life in significant ways, even though these contexts are situated within capitalist systems. Capitalist societies exhibit patriarchal relations, although these are not manifested in women's gender roles and lives within communities—as they are in rural KZN. In KZN, as in other similar rural contexts, patriarchy informs the culture, norms and daily life in rural communities in ways that invariably favour men (Oyowe 2013). What, therefore, might it mean to consider and explore older rural women's everyday resistance, rebellion and autonomy in decisions about food, food work and meal distribution in their homes? This research was approached with a deep awareness of intersecting forms of power, and the need for a theoretical and methodological approach to unpack these. In terms of my methodological work with older women, I wanted them to reflect on their contestations of dominant values by co-creating a civil space wherein they could give insights into their own actions, rather than being defined by dominant myths in their society, racial and regional myths in the national context or the assumptions of urban-oriented and elitist scholarship.

This study was undertaken in Lower Molweni, a rural village near Hillcrest nestled between the Umgeni River in the north and the Kranzkloof Nature Reserve in the eastern and south eastern boundaries of KZN province, South Africa (Reserve 2009). Lower Molweni is under traditional authority. Only 16 per cent of houses have piped water, while 41 per cent of houses still use pit toilets without ventilation. Children under fourteen years make up a third of the population in the village of Lower Molweni (StatsSA 2011), with many of these children being orphans and being raised by their grandmothers (University of the Witwatersrand 2018). Lower Molweni is still governed by

cultural norms and practices, including virginity testing of girls and abstaining from cultivating a garden whilst in mourning. Many families here practice subsistence farming through gardening and keeping chickens, goats and sometimes cows.

I engaged eight elderly women, seven of whom were pensioners, and all of whom were grandmothers providing care to grandchildren in primary school. My efforts to solicit these older women's actual voices and understand the significance of their actions were facilitated by what has been known as participatory visual methodology (PVM). As Ngidi and Moletsane (2018) show, participating in research through PVM does not depend on literacy, it encourages the researcher's sensitivity to research participants' sensory, intuitive and orally acquired knowledge which they discuss and reflect on using readily available tools and skills. As such, marginalised, elderly women can participate meaningfully in research using innate, familiar and easy to learn modes of data generation, such as making collages by selecting relevant or resonant images from magazines (Ngidi and Moletsane 2018; Treffry-Goutley, Moletsane and Weibesiek 2018). Haffejee, Banda and Theron (2018) argue that the process of making and discussing visual artefacts elicits self-reflection and critical thinking; inviting participants to become co-creators of knowledge, especially regarding everyday actions that may often go unchallenged or taken for granted, like food practices. By using magazine images to think through the questions, participants were able to distance themselves from their everyday food practices and apply a critical lens to the values that inform their actions.

This chapter, therefore, focusses on exploring the indigenous food practices of rural grandmothers, and the impact on children in their care by asking, "what are the indigenous food practices of grandmothers as child caregivers", and "how do caregiving grandmothers understand the influence of indigenous food practices on children's development outcomes". Moreover, how can one define "indigenous food practices", given the extent to which food practices in rural areas in South Africa have undergone several centuries of transformation through agriculture and through corporate-driven food production and food selling. The above questions are explored by focussing on the participants' use of mainstream magazines to create collages to critically examine these ideas. The analysis and insights in the chapter are not only derived from the data generated, but also from the research process itself; which seeks to demonstrate the use of PVM with marginalised groups in well-considered and meaningfully inclusive ways.

Grandmothers writing self-narratives about meals

The aim of using visual methodologies was to present the participants with various images, mainly from popular magazines, to allow them to write or narrate their own stories involving their role in providing food. Words such as in writing and text were therefore avoided, and it was perceived that this allowed these older women far greater freedom to be active producers of knowledge and writers of their own stories. The approach that the participants often settled on after playing around with various images and magazines, was the practice of collage-making. Once they completed their collages individually, they were regrouped for presentations and discussions to provide meaning and narrative to the collages. Organically, the presentations took a fun and fantasy-play format where participants, as presenters, would self-identify with the people and activities taking place in their chosen images. For example, instead of identifying what the person in the image is doing, the women would pretend to be the people in the pictures, presenting self-narratives around their choices of images in the first person as below:

Figure 8.1: A woman with shopping bags and a picture of a man

'This is me coming from the shops ... I bought things for the house ...
This is my husband coming from the garden', participant MaMbambo, aged 63.

Overall, the collages reflected participants' priorities regarding their use of food and related food work, also exploring their idealised or perceived ideal food practices as reflected in the magazines. The discrepancy between the older rural women's lived experiences and the images portrayed in the magazines expose significant age, racial and class divides between the women and their urban counterparts. This exemplifies how the older women navigate mainstream popular culture (and centres of knowledge in general), which construct standards of labour and achievement that are simply not accessible to them. Participants were able to bridge the racial and class divides during group discussions by creatively repurposing mainstream representations, imaginatively using language to speak to their narratives. This multi-layered process of constructing narrative through images, narration and interpretation generated several important themes related to a key concern in all the women's lives: the cooking of affordable food for those under their care, these often being their grandchildren.

The women discussed at length the differences and commonalities between meals they grew up on and what children eat today. The main difference centred on breakfast foods which they called "soft foods". These are manufactured foods like noodles and cereals which take a shorter time to prepare than their traditional equivalents and are perceived by the women to be easier to digest. Noodles and cereals are reserved for children and often prepared for them to have in the morning for breakfast before going to school. The ritualising of breakfast for children in the South African context has been explained by Viljoen, Botha and Boonzaaier (2005), who argue that the early-morning meal was introduced in African families in the 1950s. Breakfast catered mainly for school-going children—as is often the case among black families in the present. Prior to the mid-1900s, when schooling for children had become widespread, Africans traditionally had two meals in their daily diet. The main purpose of breakfast is to feed children quickly, with the morning meal prioritising convenience and deviating significantly from the traditional repertoire of foods. Breakfast mainly comprises of manufactured and convenient foods that were not familiar to the women when they were growing up or raising their own children. One participant stated: '*The cereals, eggs, apples, and bananas are new to us. We started having these things when our children became [working] adults. We give them to the grandchildren because they build the bodies of young children.*' Here, participant MaKheswa not only confirms how "soft foods" that are easy to cook acquired a place in African

179

homes, but also how they were associated with the buying power of working adult children, and therefore signalled the financial status of the extended family. Participant MaGwensa reiterates the need for money to afford the newly introduced meal and its soft food preference when she says, *'now that I can afford them, I buy them for my grandchildren, so they can have better than what I had'.* However, the participants not only take affordability and efficiency into account, they also consider choice and variety important. As participant MaGumede says, *'what will the children use to alternate when they only have one kind of cereal? ... You can't expect children to eat only one kind of cereal'.*

Equally significant is the fact that even though the participants did not necessarily prefer "soft foods"; they found them efficient for feeding schoolchildren in the morning, yet simultaneously believe that "traditional foods" are healthier. Participant MaKhweswa attests to this when she says, *'cereals are easy to digest for young children and provide a quick meal in the morning before school, but mielies (corn) porridge is more important because it is more nutritious for a child's growing body. Porridge is a very important traditional staple'.* Participant MaKheswa refers to mielies porridge as a *'traditional staple'*, confirming the status of maize as an *'indigenised'* crop in South Africa, and widely considered a traditional crop. This thinking is consistent with the definition offered by Mabhaudhi et al. (2019), that traditional crops are those that have been extensively cultivated in a society even if it is not indigenous. Maize was introduced into Africa in the 1600s, and has been farmed privately and commercially in South Africa since 1655 (Sihlobo 2022). Mabhaudhi et al. (2019) consider a crop indigenised when it exceeds 100 years of extensive cultivation in a society, which maize has been for well over three decades.

Participant MaKheswa's statement implies the older women's concern with children somehow needing foods associated with what are seen as traditional values and those linked to modernity. In the participant's comment, "tradition" conveys continuity between generations; while modernity represents progress and status. The participants recognise both as necessary measures of success in this and future generations. For the participants, young children's ability to eat traditional foods and have access to new foods like cereals, provides an overall sense of balance, progress and wellbeing. Participant MaKheswa stated *'you must teach her to have porridge. It's important'. 'I also teach my [grand]children to eat traditional food, even though they don't like some of it. But whatever we have out of the garden generally they will eat it'* (Participant MaGcwensa, 61). Both women highlight the importance of socialising children into indigenous knowledge by teaching them to eat traditional foods.

Older rural women's indigenous knowledge

Whilst the women encourage a balance in children's knowledge of traditional and modern foods, their overall belief is that traditional foods have superior health value.

> *'I'm sickly now because of these new things like garden vegetables that last only a day in the sun and start to wilt. That's why we are also wilting. We're buying lamthuthu [non-organic chickens] that grow in a day! I believe we are wilting now because we didn't use to eat all this.'* (Participant MaMbambo)

Figure 8.2: Garden vegetables wilt after a day and cause "wilting" [illness]

In the above statement, participant MaMbambo associates abundant health with locally grown vegetables whose cultivation has been consistent in rural communities over generations; which vegetables are considered natural and healthy. For example, participants consider wild herbs and

pumpkin leaves more nutritious than commercial spinach or carrots. These are herbs and vegetables that the elderly women used to eat from childhood or that they have eaten for a long time which they consider nutritionally healthier than the "new" crops, such as garden vegetables that have become popular in recent times. A discourse analysis here reveals the participant's incisive view that commercial vegetables are inherently fragile and "wilt"; even though according to modern western standards they are deemed healthy because they are vegetables. Their wilting quality affects the consumer, whose body responds negatively to lifeless food.

On the other hand, the participants view traditional food as having the opposite effect to "wilting" in their bodies, and consider their childhood diets as responsible for the strong bodies they enjoyed in their youth and early adulthood:

> *'I grew up healthy and strong. I only started having health problems in my elderly life … I had a good upbringing. Maybe if I was sickly, I would have felt abused by my diet. But I never suffered. I didn't have any food sensitivities … I learned to do as they* [parents] *had done to my own children. I raised my children on the same diet I grew up on. And they grew strong. The most I appreciate about my childhood diet is that when it was time for my pregnancies, I had very healthy pregnancies and I had all my children here at home naturally. Which confirmed that my diet was healthy even though it was simple.'* (Participant MaMbambo)

182

For participant MaMbambo, the proof of traditional foods being superior is that firstly, she did not suffer any allergies or sensitivities when she was young. Secondly, when she became a young adult having children, her strong body enabled her to enjoy healthy pregnancies, she was able to deliver naturally at home without the need for hospitalisation or operations. Thirdly, participant MaMbambo raised her own children on a similar traditional diet, which resulted in them growing up healthy and strong as she had.

Therefore, traditional food is considered more "authentic" and seen to endow positive benefits. This also conveys the women's resistance to the powerful messaging of modern and western nutritional, public health and mass media discourses. These are insistent with linking commercial, sanitised and "safe" foods to good health, especially among middle-class urban-dwellers. Therefore, older women like participant MaMbambo—even as they acknowledge negative childhood food experiences linked to poverty and sometimes repression—retain a stronger belief about traditional

diets as being healthy food that served their bodies well. It is these traditional diets that they want their grandchildren to remain familiar with and benefit from.

Therefore, for the women, traditional foods symbolise "hard foods" that produce strong, healthy and resilient bodies, whereas "soft" foods might represent modernity and financial success, however, have insufficient nutrition that produces sickly and "wilting" bodies in their old age. While there is much public health and medical information teaching older women about health and nutrition, they often rely on indigenous knowledge to inform them of what is good for the body, and this is the knowledge they strive to preserve and transmit to young children.

Grandmothers as custodians of alternative food knowledges and practice

Children's access to breakfast enables them to participate in modern cultural and economic life. By attending school, they prepare for participation in the modern job and financial economy at a later stage; which are benchmarks of successful developmental outcomes in the neoliberal sense. This path to success seems to be strongly evidenced in the following collage made by participant MaMbambo.

183

Figure 8.3: School-going children surrounded by modern foods including cereals, bread and banana

Whilst grandmothers consider access to education and good nutrition as important and complementary aspects to children's development; they displayed an understanding of development outcomes much broader than nutrition, education and the possibilities of class advancement. The ability to participate in the modern economy which is enabled by access to education, together with knowledge of indigenous ways of sustenance makes for a well and fully developed person. That is why the grandmothers encouraged their grandchildren to learn to eat traditional foods and to learn about subsistence farming and crop production as seen in participant MaKheswa's collage below.

184

Figure 8.4: MaKheswa's collage – notice traditional values reflected in women harvesting cabbages and children learning about gardening

The top left image of the collage shows *'women coming from a healthy harvest of cabbages from their own garden'*. The middle picture shows *'an adult and child teaching and learning on the lawn'* and the top right image and the image below the harvesting women are both of *'children learning to garden'* presumably under the guidance of a nearby adult. These images succinctly capture the consistent argument in discussions, that modern education, depicted in the middle image of participant Makheswa's collage, must happen in tandem with learning indigenous knowledge, especially about subsistence farming, depicted in the first and third images. In other words, they consider a person who can cultivate their livelihood through both modern and traditional means as reflective of an optimally developed individual. Conversely, they consider someone who relies only on employment to earn a living as potentially coaxing poverty by relying on an unpredictable source of livelihood. For instance, when participants say, *'they know they will rely on their education; staying wherever they will be staying [urban settings]"* (participant MaBlose). '*It's fine for those who have an education, but some of them don't have an education. How are they going to live? ... A hoe in the garden will make sure you don't lack everything. You will lack other things, but you will also have something.'* (participant MaKheswa)

For these women, urban living and the pursuit of employment, represent a precarious future for youth who insist on this singular approach to survival. The elderly women often lambasted their children moving to urban areas where there is limited access to land and no culture of practicing crop cultivation. For them, this represented a loss of traditional lifeways and inherent means of subsisting that cushion against abject poverty. It is significant that the women associated real poverty with urban spaces, rather than with rural areas. The latter are constantly seen as spaces offering the opportunity to feed oneself independently, whereas urban spaces are seen to make one vulnerable and one's life precarious.

To demonstrate, one of the participants selected an image of a man sitting on what looks like a makeshift bench, flanked by young children, one leaning on crutches in what seems to be a peri-urban setting.
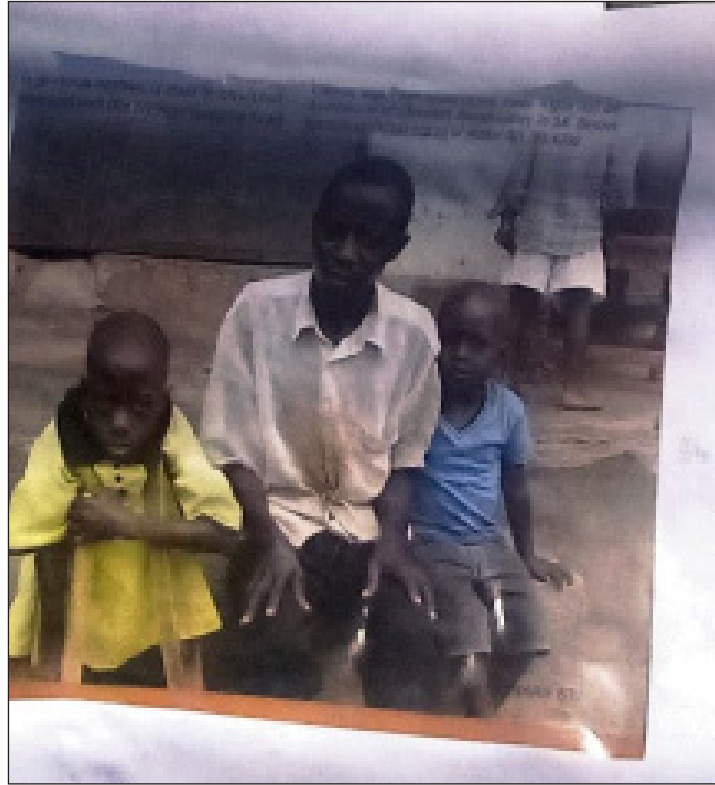
Figure 8.5: Poor man and children in an urban setting

According to the participants, the above picture represented abject poverty experienced by people in urban areas who are unsuccessful in the job market. There was often a strong sense of distress conveyed in the discussion of the participants' impression of urban poverty—ironically among rural women who are often identified as especially marginalised. The participants commented:

MaGcwensa: '*I also wanted to put another picture of a poor man with his children ... they are sitting there on the road and he* [the boy] *leans on a walking stick. It broke my heart because it* [poverty] *means their bodies don't get some nutrition ... they also need to eat fruit and vegetables to get good nutrition.*'

MaGcwensa: '*Here's the poor man I was talking about.*'

MaMbambo: '*Oh, my lord!*'

MaGumede:	*'Oh shame!'*
Researcher: '	*Yes, it looks very sad.'*
MaBlose:	*'Where is his woman* [the mother of his children]*?'*
MaGumede:	*'Maybe she's deceased.'*
MaGcwensa:	*'I think she's deceased. That's what I think, I don't know … he's really in the hard times.'*

In this exchange, the women express sympathy for the poor man sitting by the side of the road with one of his children leaning on crutches, which indicates poor health and the father's inability to provide adequately for his children. The women's misgivings about urbanisation focussed on the sole reliance of urban people on employment due to the lack of land to cultivate food gardens. The problem of access to productive land in urban and peri-urban areas and its contribution to high levels of food insecurity in townships and peri-urban areas, is well documented. Frayne et al. (2010) found a positive relationship between a lack of subsistence farming and food insecurity in poor urban areas. This finding is consistent with the participant's apprehension towards urbanisation which clearly overturns popular ideas of modern, urban spaces being settings for health and wealth or "limitless opportunity". The participants are cognizant of the fact that to secure a livelihood in these spaces, one often does so without the dependable cushion offered by crop cultivation which fosters self-reliance, regardless of employment status. Participant MaKheswa is aware of the advantage held by having access to productive land in rural areas compared to urban areas, if employment prospects are low.

Older women's critical engagement with gendered and classed food knowledges

The discussion above has sought to highlight how knowledgeable and powerful grandmothers are in the context of rural food provision, especially for children. It is significant that this results not only from grandmothers having time to spend with children or having resources which other adults and children do not have (such as government pensions or grants). It is because of the knowledge acquired through their experiences; they are, therefore, obviously not only oppressed or silenced in gendered, ageist and classed systems. Grandmothers have also critically confronted these systems and sought to produce subversive meanings. Moreover, they often refuse to accept what is now a modern norm of connecting good eating to being efficient and economically productive.

The above subversive meanings can be seen as a response to dominant medical, nutritional and health discourses in South Africa which are often very prescriptive, especially for rural children and older women. For example, in biomedical research, elderly black women are often reported as placing the heaviest burden on the healthcare system, as most affected by diabetes and hypertension as well as being at risk of heart disease and stroke. Despite this, they have the least access to healthcare because of the long distances they must travel; they are the most under-researched group and their pain and symptoms are often undermined by health practitioners (Jacob Arriola, Borba and Thompson 2007; McKoy 2023). Whilst research shows that incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes increase in this population, their eating shifts from traditional (high carb, high fibre) to western (high fat) diets (Bourne, Lambert and Steyn 2002), the women in this study have shown an understanding of the healthfulness of their traditional diets and continuously explore strategies to preserve traditional diets in the face of westernisation.

This research uncovered ways in which women navigate dominant food knowledge in practice. This is crucial, since it shows that marginalised groups' critical engagement is not necessarily explicit or immediate; it may often be a gradual, collective, negotiated process in which marginalisation, based on age, race and class, prompts subjects to "chip away" at extremely dominant and resilient knowledge systems. As indicated, foremost among these systems for rural women are gendered food taboos.

Early on in this research process, the grandmothers who were the study's participants did not believe children, especially adolescent girls, should be given eggs, chicken, milk and dairy products, since these foods make girls *'hot for boys'*, meaning these foods stimulate sexual desires prematurely in girls and promote promiscuity. The participants generally agreed that when they were young girls, their own grandmothers and mothers would say these foods would make them *'hyperactive'*, or sexually aroused which in traditional societies is shunned in adolescent girls and young women. Similar restrictions have been observed in other African countries and in India. In rural Kandhamal district, India, girls are creatively pushing back on the taboo of eating eggs and chicken (Mahapatra 2020). In Zimbabwe's rural districts, women and children are discouraged from consuming cow's milk (Cosminsky, Mhloyi and Ewbank 1993). Notably, no restrictions for boys were mentioned in the reviewed literature, and none were practiced in the community of the research. Foods thought to be "bad" take on this label only in relation to girls, who are affected by the foods' "hotness". Therefore, the perceived adverse effects of "hot foods" were seen to only affect adolescent girls,

whilst the effects of "hot foods" on boys is not discussed, implying that boys are either immune to the effects of "hot foods", or that such sexual activity is encouraged in boys.

In the context of limited resources, dominant groups popularise ideas through value systems and cultural beliefs that naturalise their unfair access to more resources and advantages over subordinate groups. In a patriarchal society such as a rural South African community, it is no surprise that food taboos disadvantage adolescent girls and young women, and are used to socialised them to value sexual restraint, submissiveness and to idealise marriage (Oyowe and Yurkivska 2014). As women age beyond their reproductive years, they become arbiters of norms and traditions responsible for (re)producing the same discriminatory values such as food taboos on younger women and adolescent girls, thus inadvertently co-opting into the patriarchal project of restricting the freedom of adolescent girls and young women and preparing them for domination by men (Ngidi, Moletsane and Essack 2021; Oyowe and Yurkivska 2014).

During both the collage-making and discussions, the participants reflected quite thoughtfully on the way that certain traditional food habits seemed unfair from a girl's point of view. Consequently, although the women consistently praised their traditional food socialisation, questioning some food beliefs started to emerge by the second session, especially pertaining to "hot foods" and their presumed impacts according to gender and age. For example, the participants expressed doubt about the efficacy of food restrictions on the younger generation, '(...) we grew up not eating eggs. Eggs were reserved for adults ... They said it also makes your private parts weak. But I don't know if it's true, but that's what my grandmother raised us to believe' (participant MaGumede, 52). Whilst participant MaGumede expresses doubt that eggs made girls' genitals "weak", participant MaMbambo is more certain that food restrictions are ineffective in instilling sexual restraint since she implemented them, however, her girls still displayed poor sexual discipline; 'I never bought them cheese and all these other things ... it's all the same because even though I didn't feed them all that [cheese, eggs, chicken, and milk] they still like boys' (participant MaMbambo, 62). Considering food and the changes in food practices in the participants' homes over time, the grandmothers constantly vacillate between positive and negative associations relating to traditional foods and practices, such as food restrictions on girls. Their belief in the efficacy of food restrictions wavered when they critically engaged with the topic, although they held on to the belief that remaining sexually conservative was important for girls and young women, especially in aiding them to attain the highly prized status of marriage.

Conclusion

There are various instances where the elderly participants' long-held indigenous knowledge reflected insights that are of late gaining momentum in work that holistically addresses rural peoples nutritional and social needs. On one hand, the older participant's views often registered explicit or indirect suspicion towards prescriptive medical, nutritional or public health messages. On the other hand, they expressed firm views about desirable views that are in synch with public health and medical knowledge and practice that takes health eating in consumerist society seriously. For example, the participants insistence on the superior nutritional value of one-ingredient foods such as *mielies* (corn) porridge over cereals is fully in accord with current research. South Africa is currently mooting warning labels on cereals for containing high levels of sugar and salt (Mahomedy 2023), which confirms their lower health status compared to a single-grain food, like traditional porridge. Similarly, their preference for locally grown vegetables and indigenous herbs over commercial vegetables precedes recent debate by agriculturalists advocating for the use of 'neglected and underutilised indigenous crop species' (NUCS) (Chivenge et al. 2015: 5685) to counter the negative effects of agri-industrial crops on the environment, health and economic wellbeing of local communities and domestic farmers. It is noteworthy that emergent academic knowledge seems to be confirming indigenous and intuitive knowledge that the women and their communities have known for generations (Chivenge et al. 2015; Mabhaudhi et al. 2019).

We also learn that for these women, development outcomes can be understood as much broader than nutrition, education and the possibilities of class advancement. Whilst these are widely espoused by international organisations such as the UN's WHO and Sustainable Development Goals, the women's indigenous knowledge goes further to incorporate the ability to self-sustain through traditional means which do not rely on access to the cash economy. In other words, their worldview accommodates possibilities for livelihoods independent of modern capitalist systems, and in people's own hands. Consequently, for the participants, urban living and the pursuit of employment represent less glamour and success and more of a precarious future for youth who insist on this singular and uncertain approach to survival. It is significant that the women associated real poverty with urban spaces, rather than with rural areas. The latter are constantly seen as spaces offering the opportunity to feed oneself independently, whereas urban spaces are seen to make one vulnerable and one's life precarious. The participants insights on urbanity clearly overturn popular ideas of these spaces being settings for health and wealth or "limitless opportunity". They

are cognizant of the fact that to secure a livelihood, one often does so without the dependable cushion offered by crop cultivation which fosters self-reliance, regardless of employment status.

Through engaging in critical reflection during the workshops, participants started to consider traditional food practices from girls' perspectives and questioning assumed effects of "hot foods". This questioning, as critical theorists argue, is the first step to developing a clear vision of what just and equitable socialisation might be for the adolescent girls and young women under their guidance.

The older women's agencies and knowledge explored in this chapter is in many ways typical of the knowledge and action of other historically marginalised groups. Rendered invisible through ageist, classist and racist hierarchies as "old" and "illiterate" women in rural areas, the grandmothers in this case study, evidently have much to contribute to the world of food distribution and food discourses. Having learned about, for example, recipes and cooking, or the nutritional and health benefits of certain foods from their own mothers, the participants are frequently important repositories of knowledge in the present day, as this chapter exploring methodological work has tried to show. However, it is important for scholars to engage effectively with marginalised subjects to truly listen to and understand the value of the older woman's voice and actual agency. Connecting visual and food literacy can, as suggested, greatly facilitate reflexive and sensitive research engagement and scholarship.

References

Bourne, L.T., Lambert, E.V. and Steyn, K. 2002. Where does the black population of South Africa stand on the nutrition transition? *Public Health Nutrition,* 5(1a): 157–162.

Chivenge, P., Mabhaudhi, T., Modi, T.A. and Mafongoya, P. 2015. The potential role of neglected and underutilised crop species as future crops under water scarce conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,* 12(6): 5685–5711. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph120605685

Cosminsky, S., Mhloyi, M. and Ewbank, D. 1993. Child feeding practices in a rural area of Zimbabwe. *Social Science & Medicine,* 36(7): 937–947.

Devereux, S. and Waidler, J. 2017. Why does malnutrition persist in South Africa despite social grants? In: *Food Security SA Working Paper Series No. 001.*

Frayne, B., Pendleton, W., Crush, J. and Acquah, B., Battersby-Lennard, J., Bras, E., ... and Zanamwe, L. 2010. The state of urban food insecurity in South Africa. *Urban Food Security Series,* No.2. Available at: http://pubs.sciepub.com/jfs/5/2/3

Fleming, M. 1997. Critical theory between modernity and postmodernity. *Philosophy Today,* 41(1): 31–39.

Fraser, N. 1985. What's critical about critical theory? The case of Habermas and gender. *New German Critique,* 35: 97–131.

Haffejee, S., Banda, T. and Theron, L. 2018. Methodological reflections on a visual participatory study on resilience process of African girls with a history of child sexual abuse. In: Mitchell, C. &

Moletsane, R. (eds.). *Disrupting shameful legacies*, pp. 289–312. Leiden: Brill Sense.

Jacob Arriola, K.R., Borba, C.P.C. and Thompson W.W. 2007. The health status of black women: Breaking through the glass ceiling. *Black Women, Gender and Families,* 1(2): 1–23. [Online]. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/blacwomegendfami.1.2.0001 [Accessed on 23 February 2024].

Jarrott, S.E., Cao, Q., Dabelko-Schoeny, H.I. and Kaiser, M.L. 2021. Developing intergenerational interventions to address food insecurity among pre-school children: A community-based participatory approach. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition,* 16(2): 196–212.

Koetaan, D., Smith, A., Lienbenberg, A., Brits, M., Halkas, C., Van Lill, M. and Joubert, G. 2018. The prevalence of underweight in children aged 5 years and younger attending primary health care clinics in the Mangaung area, Free State. *African Journal of Primary Health Care and Family Medicine,* 10(1): e1–e5. https://doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.vol.10i1.1476

Mabhaudhi, T., Chibarabada, T.P., Chimonyo, V.G.R., Murugani, V.G., Pereira, L.M., Sobratee, N., Govender, L., Slotow, R. and Modi, A. 2019. Mainstreaming underutilized indigenous and traditional crops into food systems: A South African perspective. *Sustainability*, 11(1): 172. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11010172

Madzorera, I. and Fawzi, W. 2020. Women empowerment is central to addressing the double burden of malnutrition. *EClinical Medicine,* 20: 100286. https://doi.org/10.1016/eclinm.2020.100286

Mahapatra, B. 2020, April 6. *Poultry taboo is one more social barrier for women and girls in parts of India.* The Poultry Site. Available at: https//www.thepoultrysite.com/articles/poultry-taboo-is-one-more-barrier-for-women-and-girls-in-parts-of-india [Accessed 20 August 2021].

Mahomedy, S. 2023, July 20. *Half of all South Africans are overweight or obese: Warning labels on unhealthy food help to change that.* The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/half-of-all-south-africans-are-overweight-or-obese-warning-labels-on-unhealthy-foods-help-change-that-209251 [Accessed on 11 August 2023].

May, J. 2016, June 2. *Why child malnutrition is still a problem 22 years into democracy*. The Conversation. 2 June 2016. Available at: http://theconversation.com/why-child-malnutrition-is-still-a-problem-in-south-africa-22-years-into-democracy-60224 [Accessed on 15 May 2020].

McKoy, J. 2023. *Racism, sexism and the crisis of black women's health*. The Brink Journal. [Online] Available at: https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/racism-sexism-and-the-crisis-of-black-womens-health/ [Accessed on 23 February 2024].

Ngidi, N.D. and Moletsane, R. 2018. Using drawings to explore sexual violence with orphaned youth in and around a township secondary school in South Africa. In: C. Mitchell, & R. Moletsane, (Eds.), *Disrupting shameful legacies: Girls and young women speak back through the arts to address sexual violence,* pp. 101–118. Lieden: Brill Sense.

Ngidi, N.D., Moletsane, M. and Essack, Z. 2021. "They abduct and rape us": Adolescents' participatory visual reflections of their vulnerability to sexual violence in South African townships. *Social Science and Medicine,* 287: 114401. [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114401 [Accessed on 19 August 2022].

Olderwage-Theron, W.H., Dicks, E.G. and Napier, C.E. 2006. Poverty, household food insecurity and nutrition: Coping strategies in an informal settlement in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa. *Public Health,* 120(9): 795–804. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2006.02.009

Oyowe, O.A. 2013. *Personhood and social power in African thought*. PhD thesis. Department of Philosophy, University of KwaZulu Natal. Durban.

Oyowe, O.A and Yurkivska, O. 2014. Can a communitarian concept of African personhood be both relational and gender-neutral? *South African Journal of Philosophy,* 33(1): 85–99.

Sihlobo, W. 2022. *Agricultural input costs remain elevated, squeezing farmers' profits*. Mail & Guardian. 08 February 2022. Available at: https://mg.co.za/opinion/2022-02-08-agricultural-input-costs-remain-elevatedsqueezing-farmers-profits/ [Accessed 18 August 2023].

Statistics South Africa. 2011. *Census 2011*. https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=4286&id=10357 [Accessed on 2 April 2022].

Treffry-Goatley, A., Moletsane, R. and Wiebesiek, L. 2018. "Just don't change anything": Engaging girls in participatory visual research to address sexual violence in rural South Africa. In: C. Mitchell, & R. Moletsane, (eds.), *Disrupting shameful legacies: Girls and young women speak back through the arts to address sexual violence,* pp. 47–63. Lieden: Brill Sense.

Viljoen, A.T., Botha, P. and Boonzaaier, C.C. 2005. Factors contributing to changes in food practices of a black South African community. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences,* 33: 46–62.

Chapter 9

Recipes as Alternative Archives – A South African Perspective

By Rachel C. Botes

Food and history

Raphael Samuel (1985: 2) argues that social history in academia concerns itself with 'real life' and 'ordinary people'. Samuel (1985: 7) further posits that:

> The general effect of the new social history has been to enlarge the map of historical knowledge and legitimate major new areas of scholarly inquiry – as for example the study of house-holds and kinship; the history of popular culture, the fate of the outcast and the oppressed. It has given a new lease of life to extra-mural work in history, more especially with the recent advent of women's history to which social history has been more hospitable than others.

195

Thus, this enlargement of the historical landscape now provides an ideal opportunity to include food studies. At the start of the twenty-first century, food historian Ken Albala stated that due to the 'interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature' of food scholarship, there would eventually be a 'recognizable discipline known as food studies, of which food history will be an indispensable part' (Albala 2009: 6). The same author also suggests that the recent "intense" awareness of food studies might be deceiving, since it could lead one to consider food history as an emerging field. He argues that quite the opposite is true, in that the history of food as a division of history, is as old as history writing itself (Albala 2009). Consequently, Alan Taylor's view, quoted in Samuel (1985: 16), that 'social history is not a particular kind of history; it is a dimension which should be present in every kind of history' and can extend to the history of food and the people who prepare it.

Aligned to this take on food history is the view of Raymond Grew, a social historian, who maintains that human migrations have, for the longest time, been partly motivated by a search for food. This

means that food habits and recipes accompanied travellers wherever they went, and Grew (1999: 18) therefore argues that: 'Food, the object of considerable record keeping, makes an invaluable historical indicator.'

In '*Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication*', Nevana Stajcic (2013) indicates that, through the influence of the media, food has gained prominence in recent years. Questions relating to cultural context, including aspects such as origin, taste and history, easily follow from conversations about food. Stajcic (2013: 13) argues that:

> The main reason we should view food as a form of communication is because it is directly linked to both ritual and culture, where ritual is defined as 'the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behaviour to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life'. Nowhere can this serious life be viewed more closely than in rituals involving food. It is at the centre of every important event in our lives, such as birthdays, weddings, holidays and funerals. Within ritual contexts, food often 'stands in' for expressions of life, love, happiness or grief.

196

In Stajcic's view, the importance of food communication lies in the fact that it relates to everyday experiences in ordinary lives, an aspect that lies at the heart of social history. Stajcic also states that this may be the reason that food communication research has been neglected or even ignored: it is so integral to everyday life. The point is clearly made that the relationship between food and culture and the understanding of culture through food, means that questions must be asked that relate to ingredients, method, name, origin and serving. The answers to these questions serve to educate individuals about a culture's attitude towards life (Stajcic 2013:14).

This line of reasoning is also highlighted by prominent academics, including the anthropologist David Sutton, who refers to an article in the '*Chronicle of Higher Education*' that acknowledges food studies as 'a hot new field' (Sutton 2002: 3), but also that it initiated a debate over the academic legitimacy of food studies, which was easily labelled as 'scholarship lite' (Sutton 2002: 3). The social psychologist Leon Rappoport (2003) refers to this specific article by stating that, despite the growing popularity of studies in the historical, social and cultural meaning of food, it is still regarded as an 'inconsequential form of scholarship' (134). In addition, Arjun Appadurai (1988) wrote about post-colonial India, questioning the reasons why the culinary history of India was

neglected and not properly documented, and probes the role of colonial powers. Claflin and Scholliers (2012) incorporated contributions from a variety of historians, including those who stand outside academia, in '*Writing Food History, A Global Perspective*'. These authors found that studies in food and food history benefit from meaningful contributions, regardless of whether they originated within the academy or not. This normative approach contradicts those of a previous generation of food historians who exclusively considered so-called academic sources. This principle is also relevant to the South African context as there is a lack of academic documentation of South African cuisines. In addition, it is increasingly difficult to speak of a national dish or cuisine in South Africa due to the country's fragmented and colonial past as well as the richness of ethnic diversities and cultural nuances found in South Africa. The controversial study on '*Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*' (The History of Afrikaaner Food 1652-1806) serves as an example of research based solely on a selection of "formal" sources (Claassens 2005).

These perspectives serve as motivation and justification to explore the relationship between food and culture as one of the themes of this chapter. Through the study of food products as cultural artefacts, a better understanding of food is sought to confirm identity (belonging), food and communication, food and memory and food and the senses. The aim is to unearth some of the silent voices in women's history; those who have never been heard, however, played an important role, not only in the kitchen, but also influenced South African food culture.

The absence of a conventional archive

Leong-Salobir (2015) argues that cultural artefacts of the domestic realm are now being considered as valuable contributions to historical research. The author points out that household manuals and cookbooks are 'one genre that have become an important source as historical documents' (Leong-Salobir 2015: 154). In this chapter, recipe books and recipes consulted date as far back as the early nineteenth century. In most cases there are no introductory notes to the recipes or an explanatory indication of where the recipes come from. In some cases, there are not even proper instructions of how to make the dish, except for a cryptic list of ingredients. These books were mostly written by women and it can be assumed that the authors believed that most of their "sisters" would know what to do.

Like their servants, the women who penned recipes in manuscripts by hand and later published

household guides and recipe books, will not be found in the conventional archive. Overall, the history of women, especially in the domestic domain and their role as caregivers, has not been considered important enough to be documented. Hetherington (1993: 242) explains that women's history was ignored in the documentation of national history at least until 1960, '… so that before that time women were almost invisible in the historical record …' All women's history was neglected— white women, black women, servants, slaves and the indentured. Jansen (2019: 5) states that 'The textual silence surrounding the lives of servants is additional proof of the silence and violence of *all* archives.' Another South African voice is that of Baderoon (2014: 50), who describes the colonial kitchen as an '… unrelenting, perilous and transformative arena in which an uneven contest between slave-owner and enslaved was fought. Ultimately enslaved people came to shape South African cuisine in unexpectedly potent ways'. It is therefore argued, that these voices are intrinsic to the pages of the recipe books in whatever format.

The absence of a traditional, formal archive on the history of women and the fact that only a handful of these women, regardless of race or class, are included in the meagre collection of primary sources available locally, poses a challenge, especially when wanting to discover hidden or lost voices in the South African food culture. Therefore, one must turn one's attention elsewhere. This approach validates secondary and oral histories as instruments to transmit lived experiences, even when doing so indirectly. Consequently, it is possible to consult other sources and alternative methods to create the memory of women which, in turn, will (re)create or supplement the archive of women's lives. It must, however, also be kept in mind that culture is not bound to the restrictions of documented formal or official primary sources (Fisher, Lange and Nkambule 2017).

Jon Holtzman is of the view that gender takes centre stage when studying food and memory, especially female forms thereof. He writes:

> …a wide body of literature emphasizes memory, structured through what is construed as women's special relationship to food, providing access to histories and memories not found in other types of accounts. (Holtzman 2006: 73)

Hence, food is flexible and symbolic in the understanding of self-identity because of the solicitation of a series of inflexible cultural stereotypes that link a specific food to a specific identity. The fact that people express a longing for their mother's or grandmother's favourite family dish, such as milk

tart or that ex-patriots yearn for home dishes, serves as a strong indicator of food's ability to evoke emotion and nostalgia. It is not just the physical object that rekindles this memory, but also cultural (or even national?) identity, tradition and a need for (be)longing. The preparation of food is integral to both culture and heritage, however, the role of women in this act is often overlooked in accounts of cultural studies (Vahed and Waetjen 2010).

Because it was seldom recorded, women's history has, with notable exceptions, been ignored for so long that it is referred to as the 'silence of sources' (Le Dantec-Lowry 2008: 100). Helen Bradford (1996) argues that, should these forgotten gender and feminist experiences be included in a broader reading of history, it will transform the interpretation and understanding thereof. Gerda Lerner (1975: 5) takes this further by stating that traditionally trained historians will be partial when writing women's history, as it will be the history of 'women's worthies' or 'compensatory history'. Alternatively, women's history could also be read as a contribution to society where women were judged according to male standards and on their contribution to a specific movement (Lerner 1975). Lerner asserts that the real history of women is the documentation of their day-to-day existence, on their own terms, in a male dominated world. The oppression suffered unfortunately does not provoke the story of women's history and is therefore, of limited use to the historian. Consequently, traditional historical questions have been applied to women to fit their narratives into male defined vacuums where it is thought they should have been. Lerner (1975: 6) declares that:

> The decisive historical fact about women is that the areas of their functioning, not only their status within those areas, have been determined by men. The effect on the consciousness of women has been pervasive. It is one of the decisive aspects of their history, and any analysis which does not take this complexity into consideration must be inadequate.

The distortion extends to different social classes of women and their respective histories and corresponds with archival historian Antoinette Burton's view that the definitive example of the part of history that is forever lost is epitomised by the lives of slaves that were not recorded (Burton 2003). Similarly, Jansen (2019) draws a parallel to the South African phenomenon where the role of servants and domestic workers has been largely ignored and overlooked.

The patriarchal system under the Dutch dictated that women were not allowed to hold public

199

office, however, once married, they shared the status of their husbands under Roman-Dutch law (Giliomee 2010: 34). Evidence of the silencing influence of the patriarchal construct is also found in the negating of a married women's identity by defining her as an extension of her husband's status and name. Examples abound and include the handwritten cover of a personal recipe collection from 1819 of a lady who identified herself as de weduwe (the widow) Blanckenberg (née Zeeman) (1819). The researcher's own maternal grandmother, Rachel Cornelia Coetzee (née Pretorius) (1915–1976) identified herself as *Mevr.* (Mrs) M. Coetzee, referring to her husband whose first name was Max, on the cover of her handwritten manuscript of recipes (personal notes: M. Coetzee). The cover and title page of '*South African Cookery Made Easy*', published in 1912, lists the author as Mrs P. W. de Klerk, however, she signed the preface as M. de Klerk using her husband's initials (De Klerk 1912). Similarly, the South African cookbook author Jeanette C. van Duyn first published under her maiden name (Van Duyn 1920), yet was credited as Mrs H. M. Slade in her later work (Slade 1939). Likewise, a contribution for a milk tart filling recipe in '*The Paarl Cookery Book in Aid of War Funds*' from 1918 is attributed to "Mrs. Septimus de Villiers" from the Paarl.

A further silencing is that biographical information on women food writers, including those mentioned above, is scarce and intermittent, if anything is available at all. This trend is not limited to authors of the early twentieth century, it also applies to women like Sannie Smit (1940–1991), who was well-known as the chief home economist of the then South African Meat Board and food writer who co-authored '*The South African Encyclopaedia of Food and Cookery*' (Smit and Fulton 1986).

Against this background it is argued that it is impossible to fully understand the history of gender, women and their identity in South Africa today without including the silent voices when historians try to fill the gaps between romance and reality. What is certain is that both free and enslaved women influenced family life, the households they were running and the psychology of the society at the Cape under colonised rule (Shell 1994: 285). This correlates with the views of Victorian-era English writer Isabella Beeton (1836–1865), who advocated that the role of an ordinary housewife was to cook a good meal and create a well-organised home (Beeton 2006). This paradigm of patriarchy and class systems that silenced the voices of women continued into the following centuries.

Baderoon (2014: 65) believes that 'it is in the art and the daily, unremarked practices of cooking that some of the most radical possibilities of food as history can be seen'. In this context, Jessamyn Neuhaus (cited by Lobel 2005: 264) reminds us that the gendering of home cookery was something

created in the twentieth century, while nineteenth century middle class women were assigned the term "household managers" as they were managing the household staff instead of doing the work themselves.

> Women, it was assumed, learned how to cook from their mothers (or more accurately, learned how to run a household, for most readers of early nineteenth- century cookbooks were elite and middle class women, who oversaw servants who did the cooking) (Lobel 2005: 264).

This is a critical observation since it points to a layering of the silencing in the hierarchy of the gendered kitchen. For example, the memoirs of Petrus Borchardus Borcherds (1786–1871) (Borcherds 1861: 196–197) describe the domestic affairs of a Stellenbosch household under the control of the lady of the house. the lady had servants who were taught the art of needlework and who fulfilled the necessary tasks of making sure bedrooms, nurseries, the pantry and the kitchen were run smoothly. While this could be construed as a romanticised view of women working side by side in harmony, the truth is that, from slavery to apartheid, the kitchen has been a place of traumatic and stressful intimacy with power struggles that had serious cultural consequences that, according to Baderoon (2002: 50), 'denies the brutality of slavery'.

As indicated, the expectation created by the early colonial system was that settler women were assumed to manage the household and by implication also the kitchen space, where they were, more often than not, assisted by enslaved, indentured or servile people. As in other colonised places, the colonists' dependence on local labour, ingredients and methods necessitated compromise and cooperation between the classes (Leong-Salobir 2011). This, according to Chris Eason, undoubtedly produced a:

> … cuisine of acculturation: British colonists adopting ingredients and cooking techniques from the indigenous population as well as from earlier generations of European settlers and the Malay and Indian slaves they imported. (Barnes 2006: 5)

An early source that gives insight into the running of a typical privileged farmstead is 'Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper', published in 1902, by Hildagonda Duckitt (1839–1905). This source chronicles the daily events and monthly work in a Cape household. Duckitt (1902) writes in her introduction that she:

> ... shall be glad indeed if what I have learnt by life long experience and experiment should lighten the labour of those beginning the responsibilities of housekeeping in our dear old Colony, under conditions new and strange to them. (6)

Duckitt (1902: 6) shares her romantic version of the relationships between mistress and servants under colonial rule. Many of the men and women were indentured to work on the farms and, according to Duckitt, they made 'excellent servants'. They had a man cook who was a 'rescued slave', and who was responsible for baking on Tuesdays and Fridays. The daughters of the house had to supervise the dairy and were assisted by a 'very capable coloured woman' (Duckitt 1902: 9). When they travelled for their annual Christmas holiday they were accompanied by a cook, the housemaid and servants who carried water and brought wood (Duckitt 1902: 13). It appears from Duckitt's (1902) diary that they trained young servants to help the others. They taught them how to read, write and work, so that 'life may go on' (24).

The references to kitchens—and more broadly, households—in the early colonial period resemble the real picture of the advancing authoritarian and ranked society that had emerged at the Cape and which would spread northwards and persist well into the twentieth century. The public sphere, in contrast to the household scenario, has been written about in traditional histories to the detriment of the domestic environment, erroneously sketching a romanticised version of reality. Robert C-H Shell (1949–2015) makes the case that research should shift from interclass relationships to the relationships on a personal level, being 'those in the household' (Shell 1994: 285). Moreover, too many studies of slave societies still present slavery as static, and much of the literature focusses on the introduction and termination of the slave system. Yet, very little is written on the changes within slave societies. Shell (1994) declares that changes during the seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries need to be incorporated for history to be meaningful and not 'frozen in time' (285).

The link between food, memory, identity and culture is therefore evident and it has also been shown that in the South African context like elsewhere and for a considerable time, women have acted as the primary person responsible for the household, but customarily, did so silently. They did this from privileged positions as mistresses and housewives or as unacknowledged domestic workers and slaves. Regardless of women's social status or the lack thereof, their reality remained one that has been dominated by an overtly patriarchal system that relegated them to the kitchen,

202

where aspects of their everyday existence remained muted outside of their private domain and therefore, absent from the archive and silent in the sanctioned records of their communities.

To address this shortcoming, it has been suggested that women's histories may be discovered through interdisciplinarity in places other than the obvious record (Springer 2004). This would allow women to enhance the reading of official histories by the addition of their personal experiences through oral accounts, autobiographies and ethnographies (Burton 2003). Proponents of this more inclusive method of archiving suggest alternative means of record-keeping that facilitate histories that are cognisant of a multi-cultural and boundaryless world. Bastian (2006) therefore advocates for the reinterpretation of the structure and substance of the archive to include a complex variety of human activities, including writing diaries, sending memos, cooking a local dish or celebrating a public holiday. The role of cookbooks, women in the kitchen and their relationship with the rest of the community is therefore starting to be examined in research (Le Dantec-Lowry 2008). Based on this approach, the contribution of context is paramount to frame the reading of such sources to include all voices and records (Bastian 2006). In light of this, Burton (2003) questions the nature of an archive and proposes that, beyond its conventional application of producing documents to be read for its disciplinary meaning, it should also be understood:

> ... to indicate that a text like the 'Family History' is itself an enduring site of historical evidence and historiographical opportunity in and for the present... in addition to serving as evidence of individual lives, the memories of home that each woman enshrined in narrative act – for us – as an archive from which a variety of counter histories of colonial modernity can be discerned. (5)

If this alternative archive, proposed by Burton (2003), reflects the various roles of women, it should also explicate their roles as, amongst others, carers and cooks and by definition, embrace the documents that represent aspects of routine domesticity in whatever format they exist. These will include family manuscripts and collections of recipes that were handed down from mothers to daughters. This transmission within the home, where generations of women have taught and demonstrated their family recipes and kitchen lore to the next generation, has been frequently documented. Besides, women have, for the longest time, exchanged recipes in various formats and these exchanges form the essential process that underlies the production of cookbooks (Appadurai 1988). Ray (2009: 111) reminds us that: 'The innumerable recipes that women produced cannot be

explained away as being engendered by the hand of patriarchy.'

Historians only recently began to pay attention to women's history through the lens of the connections between women in the kitchen and their community (Le Dantec-Lowry 2008). As Leong-Salobir (2011: 155) states: '... food carried the flavour of memory, forging material continuities between past and present and connecting the personal to the collective'. It is also a reality that the archive is changing and that many women no longer have family recipe manuscripts since the Internet of Things and search engines make it possible to source and collect recipes online. It is, therefore, now more than ever, important to document women's pasts and to connect the dots when it comes to the history of their everyday lives. Informal and non-academic sources (writings by chefs, restauranteurs, cookbook writers and even hostesses) (Robins 1992) are therefore important informants for those who study food history and culture.

Recipes as the archive

Sarah Noble, quoted in Snell (2017), asserts that recipes represent more than a set of ingredients and instructions:

> Collectively, recipes give us insight into different parts of history. How people lived, what they had available, what their homes and families were like, how society functioned, among many more things. Recipes often times have deeper meanings and connections within our lives than we realize. History is certainly reflected in the cookbooks, diaries, and other examples of culinary literature. By studying recipe books throughout time, we are able to better understand how we came to be where we are with food today.

Therefore, Albala (2012) encourages food historians to use cookbooks as sources to reconstruct the past, however, he also warns against the possible pitfalls of taking translated texts or those adapted for the modern kitchen, at face value. Hence, he proposes five questions that historians, who intend using recipe books as historical documents, should answer. These questions essentially align with those of internal and external criticism proposed by John Tosh, quoted in Schafer (1980), and may, therefore, not be novel. These questions probe the following aspects:

1. Who wrote the book?
2. What was the intended audience?
3. Where was it produced?
4. When was it produced?
5. Why was it written? (Albala 2012: 228)

While these questions may not always prove easy to answer, researchers are obliged to consider the context of their sources with care. The possible contextual informants that cookbooks offer can range from changes in food preferences over time and rules for serving food to formal or informal settings (including those of tables), table manners and etiquette and mealtimes. Other important pointers may include stains on pages, marginalia or other side notes that could indicate that there was a thoughtful interaction between reader and recipe. These blemishes and scribbles are significant as they may attest to the recipe being cooked and not just read.

In '*A hunger for Freedom – The Story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*', anthropologist Anna Trapido (2008) asserts that food allows for the examination of the past in a manner that bypasses standard responses. She describes the act of eating as universal, yet also visceral, when she writes how familiar tastes may invoke memories, 'complete with associated emotions' (xii). For this reason, Trapido (2008) argues that food may act as a means through which a reader may access historical events in context to experience what it was like to be there. the author uses recipes as '... archaeological evidence to capture the mood of the moment. They are an era as reflected in the bowl of a soup spoon' (Trapido 2008: xii).

205

Appadurai (1988) believes that the mere existence of cookbooks represents an attempt to standardise the management of the kitchen and the traditions of the journey from kitchen to table. He also explains that: 'Language and literacy, cities and ethnicity, women and domesticity, all are examples of issues that lie behind these cookbooks.' (3). It can, therefore, be argued that cookbooks may provide information on gender roles, class, ethnicity and race (Albala 2009). Moreover, particular consideration should be given to the cookbooks written for immigrant communities since they might reflect on an effort to preserve identity in a "strange" land. Albala (2009) points out that:

> The early twentieth century produced scores of cookbooks that taught second or third generation descendants of immigrants the traditional recipes and skills that were in danger of being lost. (235)

While cookbooks may lack fictional elements, the structured sequence and descriptions found in recipes could be interpreted as a form of narrative. According to the food writer Carody Culver (2013), 'Cookbook authors use memories, anecdotes and imagery to conjure scenes to which readers can aspire or relate, perhaps prompting responses similar to those experienced when reading fiction.' These stand as a critical source to reflect on the transference of culture, while on the other hand, it can show traces of an acculturation process.

Cape author and poet, C. Louis Leipoldt (1880–1947), explains that, as was the case elsewhere, the earliest cookery books in South Africa were in manuscript form that consisted of domestic recipes, traditional methods of cooking, directions of how to run a household, home remedies and health advice. Such manuscripts were brought to local shores as family treasures and were '... carefully preserved and judiciously expanded by their owners' (Leipoldt 2004: 15). The tradition lived on and historian Celestine Pretorius points out that recipes were handed down orally over generations from mothers to daughters up to, and including, the eighteenth century before printed recipe books were commonly available (Pretorius 1977: 76).

By the early nineteenth century, a great variety of baked goods, including confections, were available at the Cape (Gerber n.d.), where housewives had to make do with compiling their own recipe collections. The earliest local milk tart recipe found for this research was in a handwritten manuscript identified as '*De Keuke Boek van Mijn de Weduwe Blanckenberg Gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*' (Kitchen book of mine, the widow Blanckenberg born Zeeman The 15th October 1819)—see Figure 9.1.

206
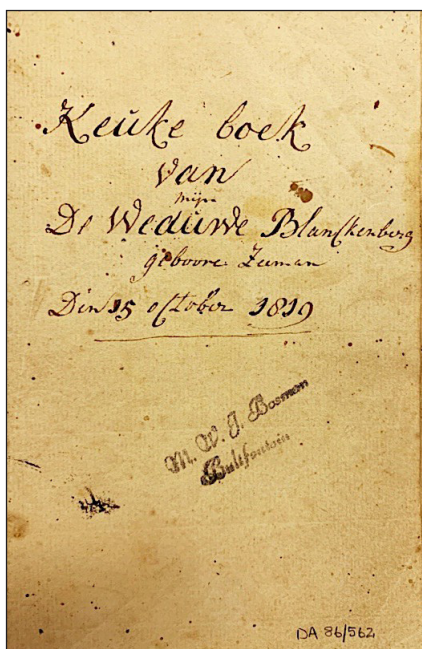
Figure 9.1: The cover and unnumbered inner pages of *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Recipe 49 (centre) is for a *Room taart* (Cream tart) and Recipe 75 (right) for a *Melk taart* (Milk tart). (Renata Coetzee Collection, Library of the Stellenbosch Museum)

207
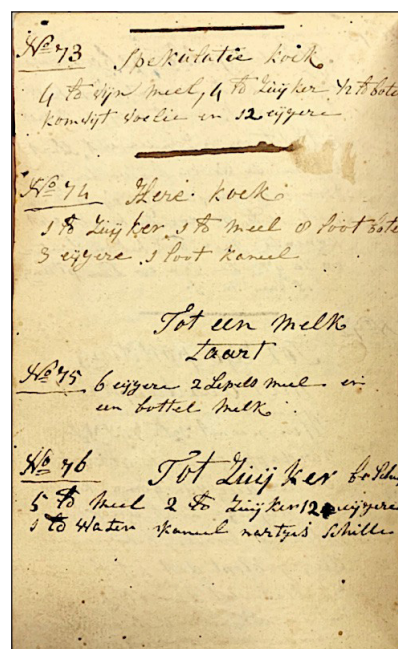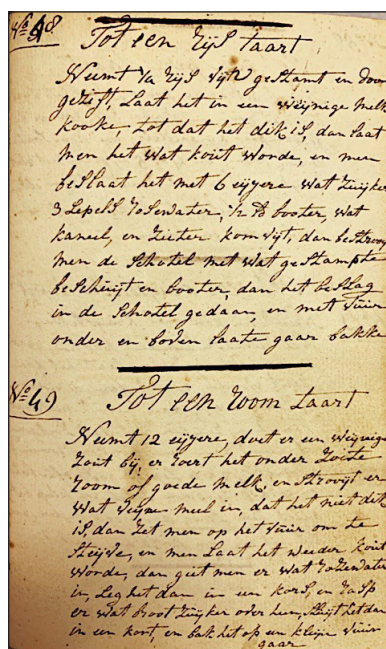
A handwritten recipe in Dutch for a *Melk Taart* (milk tart) forms part of a series of documents labelled as 'Cookery book Mrs S. J. Hofmeyer February 1884' (Hofmeyr 1884). It lists ingredients to be measured in a *kommetjie* (a cup, small bowl or similar vessel) and calls for combining milk, eggs, a little flour and cinnamon sugar. As in other cases, no reference is made as to what should be done with the filling once it is cooked. It can thus be argued that the tart could be similar to a crustless baked custard or that Mrs Hofmeyr knew the method by heart. One will also often find that manuscript recipes lack specific measurements and methods of cooking. One explanation for these omissions is the intergenerational oral transmission mentioned by Pretorius (1977).

Apart from a recipe for a milk tart filling, the notebooks in the recipe collection of Gwendoline Eunice Basson (née Bondesio) (1912–2005) also contains loose inserts, like an envelope and a note page, referring respectively to *Melktert* and the name *Lettie* and *Lettie se melktert* (Lettie's milk tart) with brief annotations for ingredients, which appears to be the same for both inserts (see Figure 9.2). Such additions are referred to as *incidentalia* as they supplement the content of manuscripts and speak to the universality of Appadurai's (1988) view that women exchange recipes in various formats. It appears that the envelope and note page were at hand when it was necessary to quickly jot down a recipe.
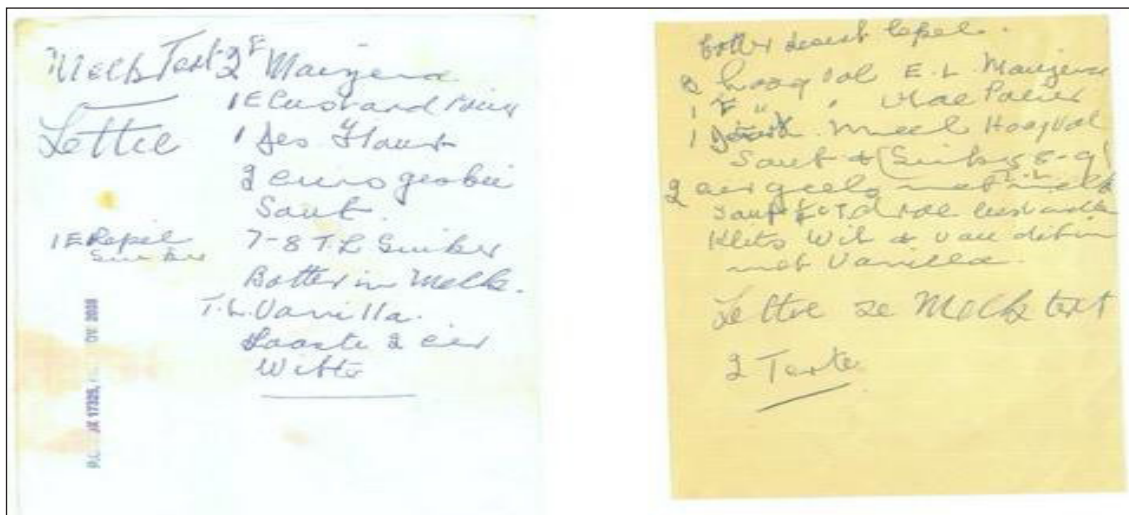
Figure 9.2: *Incidentalia* – an envelope and a note page as loose inserts with the ingredients for milk tart recipes as found in G.E. Basson, *Note book,* Handwritten manuscript, private collection of recipes

Leipoldt (2004: 15) suggests that Dutch, German and French books on cookery were found at the Cape by the eighteenth century. In Leipoldt's (2004: 22) opinion, the first locally published recipes were in a pamphlet printed around 1870 in Pietermaritzburg in the province of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), South Africa. The first substantial locally sourced and printed recipe book is '*The colonial household guide*' by Mrs A. R. Barnes, published in 1889 (Barnes 1889). The author tellingly refers to herself on the title page as "A Housewife of the Colony". While little is known about the author, it is apparent that she was from Kimberley, Free State province, South Africa—at the time a bustling mining town starting to thrive after the discovery of diamonds. Barnes (1889: iii) declares that: 'The chief object of this book is to assist in their duties the house wives and mothers of the colony' as women here could no longer rely on cookbooks written in England to prepare recipes with local ingredients. She also expressed the hope that her book would lend some support to women who have had little or no experience in cooking. The designation as "housewives and mothers" is indicative of the position and perception of women at the time.

Two of the earliest locally published recipe books were '*Cape Cookery: Simple Yet Distinctive*' by Hewitt (1890), and '*Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*' (The South African Cook, Cake and Recipe book) (Dijkman 1891) by Ms E. J. Dijkman (1840–1908), published in 1890 and 1891 respectively. The foreword to the latter explains that the book was a response to requests from friends and family to share the recipes she had collected over 25 years (Dijkman 1981). By 1956 this book had seen eighteen published editions, with facsimiles of the original reprinted in 1979 and 1982.

209

Hildagonda Duckitt's '*Hilda's* "W*here is it?*" *of Recipes*'—itself a telling tale—was published in 1891. Leipoldt considers this book as:

> ... an authoritative and comprehensive work on Cape cookery that for a long time remained the standard book on the subject and may even now be consulted with advantage as a thoroughly trustworthy and excellently written and annotated collection of Cape cookery recipes. (Leipoldt, 2004: 26)

While Barnes, Hewitt, Dijkman and Duckitt can rightly be considered the pioneers of early cookery writers in South Africa, several other formats would manifest over time as the role of women in society became more prominent. Magazines and periodicals became one of the most accessible sources

for recipes in the twentieth century. The Afrikaans magazine '*Huisgenoot*' (House Companion), also published in English as '*You*' from 1987, is the oldest commercial periodical that is still published in South Africa and remains a popular title (Froneman 2004). In the first edition in May 1916, it was announced that:

> '*Dit sal seker 'n blije tijding wees vir die vrouwens van ons land om te hoor, dat die Redaksie van 'De Huisgenoot' dit goed gedag het om elke maand 'n paar bladsije spesiaal aan die belange van die die vrouw te wij. Die tijd, dat koerante en tijdskrifte alleen vir mans gedruk word, is verbij.*' (It would be good news for the women of the country to hear that the editorial staff of 'De Huisgenoot' thought it appropriate to dedicate a few pages on issues concerning women every month. Gone are the days when newspapers and magazines were printed only for men.). (Gertruida 1916: 7,10)

The fact that only a few pages would be dedicated to women's issues is an indication of the overtly paternalistic societal values of the time. The article states that women play an important role in current society and that their actions were "starting" to influence society, which served as motivation to develop their ways of thoughts and work—albeit still seriously gendered. This column appeared monthly until '*Die Huisgenoot*' was published weekly in 1923 and addressed knitting and sewing patterns, party planning, advice on caring for babies and recipes.

In April 1935 '*Mrs Slades's South African Good Housekeeping Magazine*' was launched with Jeanette C. van Duyn (b.1884-), also known as Mrs Slade or Mrs H.M. Slade. According to the research of Amy F. Rommelspacher, '*The South African Women's Who's Who*' stated: '...Jeanette [van Duyn] hoped that the magazine would benefit women that lived in rural areas and could therefore not easily attend her various and numerous [food] demonstrations' (Rommelspacher 2017: 24). The magazine continued to inspire women until 1948, which is also the year that '*Mrs. Slade's South African Cookery Book*' (Slade 1948) was published.

The first community cookbooks appear to have been published during the American Civil War (1861–1865) to raise funds for field hospitals (Du Toit 2019). The concept spread to much of the English-speaking world, including colonial South Africa, where the earliest edition was found to be the '*Paarl Cookery Book*', published in 1918, in aid of the Red Cross. According to Du Toit (2019: 9):

> Being involved in a book empowered women and gave them the feeling of doing something meaningful for their community. It was all about working and building together. In contrast to commercial cookbooks, which usually carried the name of one author, these charity books involved entire communities working together as volunteers.

With reference to the cake sales undertaken by the Women's Cultural Group of Durban in the 1950s, Vahed and Waetjen (2010: 248) write: 'Baking was a women's skill, built upon a heritage of matrilineal knowledges, large family sizes and the alchemy of thrift and pleasure.' This point is reiterated by Crafford-Barnard (1990), who explains that women in this country have built many a church, old age home, school, parsonage and community hall through fundraising by organising cake sales. The storyline of women raising funds through cake sales in order to improve the lives of their communities is a universal one. Albala (2009) argues that historians use cookbooks as sources to reconstruct the past. By the same token, Du Toit (2019: 7) describes community cookbooks as 'treasure troves' of information as they give the reader an untainted look into the lives of ordinary people and what they eat. She adds: 'They have been described as cultural selfies that tell the story of who and what we were and are – both the good and the bad' (Du Toit 2019: 7).

A recent example of this genre is found in the '*District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*' (Smith 2016) that captures the bygone spirit of daily life in District Six, established in 1867 and so named as it was the Sixth District of the Municipality of Cape Town, South Africa. By the mid-twentieth century, it was home to a mixed-race, cosmopolitan community with richly layered food cultures. In 1966 the Apartheid regime declared District Six a "whites-only" area, which initiated a process of forced removals and demolitions between 1968 and 1981 (Smith 2016). The book is the outcome of memory methodology workshops involving former residents that collected and documented narratives '... about food that is deeply rooted in the cultural practices and heritage that exists in the fragile memories of those who were forcibly displaced' (District Six Museum n.d.). The curator of the museum and the author of the book, Tina Smith, accounts for the significance of the project as follows:

> The ... title, *Huis Kombuis* [Home Kitchen], was inspired by descriptions of kitchens in participants' homes as being the heart of the home, its central social space. Here

traditional recipes were brought to life in the rituals of cooking, eating and the sensory exchange at the *tafel* [table]. Culinary rituals and home-craft practices maintained and reinforced deep significances and connections with District Six as a place of home, family and community. The recipes in the book comprise facets of the collective memory of District Six that unlock complex narratives about family histories and cultural life in the district. For many, the story of food is inseparable from the spirit of the place and a sense of belonging. (Smith 2016: 15)

Subsequently, in the twenty-first century, popular media formats have been linked to reach a wider audience. What appears in printed media may also be broadcast on television as demonstrations or sponsored inserts that will also find their way to web pages, personal blogs, social media and even become a book. The order in which these links unfold depends on the specifics of the narrative, the preferences of the participants, their popularity and possibly the interests of patrons or sponsors. The public is not necessarily buying and paging through recipe books as frequently as they used to, resulting in cookbooks being replaced by digital formats and media. In this sense the Internet has broken what once seemed a natural tie between the recipe and the cookbook, just as it has broken the tie between the news story and the newspaper, with the result that one can now find any recipe you want online (Gopnik 2015).

It also means that personal collections of recipes are gathered differently from how they were a century ago. This may also affect the intergenerational exchange of treasured recipes over the long run, since individuals can now gather recipes of their preference by liking, pinning, sharing or tagging them on social media platforms. Amongst the plethora of such examples, one finds different categories, including occasional food bloggers, regular food writers who may, or may not, work across platforms and in different media as well as digital communities whose aim it is to share recipes and tips.

Conclusion

When Baderoon (2002: 14) states that 'traces of history' can be found in one's favourite dishes, the following questions arise: Where will we find the recipes for these favourite dishes? Where is this dish from? Who first prepared it? What will inform the ingredients and the methods of preparation they require? How should they be served? What nuances and narratives do these dishes represent

and what meaning do they embody to those who prepare and ultimately partake of them? A variety of sources, many of which fall outside the definition of the traditional formal archive, must be examined to address these and other questions regarding food products. This includes personal records, such as memoirs, handwritten manuscripts and correspondence, anecdotal and oral accounts, travelogues, printed material, like household guides, recipe books, community forums and publications as well as popular media such as magazines. This list would be incomplete if it did not take account of the evolving format of our day-to-day archives and should therefore, include various formats of social and electronic media, blogs and vlogs.

It becomes clear that the archive was not only silent about the women in history, but also about their day-to-day activities—whether it was baking a tart or recording a recipe for the family collection. These principles do not only apply to recipes for the humble milk tart, they unquestionably extend to an incalculable number of other dishes, documented or undocumented, that have been silently prepared by women and have seldomly been recorded as part of formal history. It is, therefore, fitting to accept Petrini's assertion that food history is as important as a landmark building, and then equally so, that the women who cooked and cared be acknowledged as builders of communities and countries.

References

Albala, K. 2009. History on the plate: The current state of food history. *Historically Speaking,* 10(5): 6–8 and 227–235.

———. 2012. Cookbooks as historical documents. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, edited by J. Pilcher. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 227–40.

Appadurai. A. 1988. How to make a national cuisine: Cookbooks in contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 30(1): 5–10.

Baderoon, G. 2002. Everybody's mother was a good cook: meanings of food in Muslim cooking. *Agenda,* 51: 14.

———. 2014. *Regarding Muslims from slavery to post- apartheid,* (p. 50–65). Wits University Press.

Barnes, A.R. 1889. *The colonial household guide.* Jeppestown Press.

— — —. [1889] 2006. *Where the lion roars. An African colonial cookery book,* (p. 5).

Basson, G.E. Note book. Handwritten manuscript, private collection of recipes. Unnumbered pages.

Bastian, J.A. 2006. Reading colonial records through an archival lens: The provenance of place, space and creation. *Archival Science*, 6: 278–281.

Beeton, I. 2006. *Mrs Beeton's household management.* Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire.

Borcherds, P.B. 1861. *An autobiographical memoir: Being a plain narrative of occurrences from early life to advanced age, chiefly intended for his children and descendants, countrymen and friends*, pp. 196–197. https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=JcQNAAAAQAAJ&hl=en_GB&pg=GBS.PA197 [Accessed on 14 September 2020].

Bradford, H. 1996. Women, gender and colonialism: Rethinking the history of the British Cape Colony and its frontier zones, *c.*1806–1870. *Journal of African History*, 37(3): 352.

Burton, A. 2003. *Dwelling in the archive. Women writing house, home and history in late colonial India*, (p. 21).

Claassens, H.W. 2005. *Die geskiedenis van boerekos 1652-1806 (The history of farmers' food 1652-1806).* Thesis (PhD), University of Pretoria.

Claflin, K.W. and Scholliers, P. 2012. Introduction. Surveying global food historiography. In: K.W. Claflin & P. Scholliers (eds.) *Writing food history, A global perspective,* p. 5.

Crafford-Barnard, M. 1990. *Kermiskos (Bazaar food).* Introduction.

Culver, C. 2013. My kitchen, myself: Constructing the feminine identity in contemporary cookbooks. *M/C Journal*, 16(3). http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/641 [Accessed September 2020].

De Klerk, P.W. 1912. *South African cookery made easy.* Cape Town.

De Weduwe Blanckenberg (née Zeeman). 15 October 1819. *De keuke boek (The cookery book).* Stellenbosch museum.

Dijkman, E.J. 1891. *Di Suid Afrikaanse kook-, koek- en resepte boek (The South African cookery-, cake- and recipe book).* Paarl.

— — —. [1890] 1982. *Di Suid Afrikaanse kook-, koek- en resepte boek (The South African cookery-, cake- and recipe book).* Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

District Six Museum. n.d. *Huiskombuis* (home kitchen) *food and memory cookbook launch.* Available at https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/district-six-huiskombuis-food-and-memory-cookbook-mini-exhibition-and-launch-2016/ [Accessed on 1 October 2020].

Duckitt, H.J. 1902. *Hilda's diary of a Cape housekeeper*, pp. 1–24. Chapman & Hall, London.

Du Toit, E. 2019. *Share, a century of South African community recipes,* p. 9. Penguin Random House, South Africa.

Fisher, R.C., Lange, M.E. and Nkambule, M.E.N. 2017. Cultural hybridity in the teaching of architecture within a decolonised society. *Paranoá,* 18: 5.

Froneman, J. 2004. Dominante motiewe in die transformasie van Huisgenoot, 1916-2003 (Dominant motives in the transformation of Huisgenoot, 19-16-2003). *Ecquid Novi*, 25(1): 61–79, DOI: 10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278 [Accessed October 2020].

Geertruida. 1916. *Die vrou en die huis (The woman and the house).* De Huisgenoot (You Magazine), Deel 1, Vol. 1, pp. 7–10.

Gerber, H. n.d. *History in the pantry: A study of food in South Africa from 1652-1820.* Unpublished manuscript with handwritten corrections and notes by the author, Chapter VII p. 37. Brenthurst Library Collection.

215

Giliomee, H. 2010. Allowed such a state of freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930. *New Contree*, 59: 34.

Gopnik, A. 2015. Our hunger for cookbooks.' In: Sandra. M. Gilbert & Roger. J. Porter (eds.) *Eating words, A Norton anthology of food writing,* p. 459. (Kindle edition).

Grew, R. 1999. Food and global history. In: R. Grew (ed.), *Food in global history*, p. 13.

Hetherington, P. 1993. Women in South Africa: The historiography in English. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 26(2): 242.

Hewitt, A.G. 1890. *Cape cookery: Simple yet distinctive.*

Hofmeyr, S.J. 1884. Cookery book Mrs S. J. Hofmeyer February 1884. No page numbers. National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.

Holtzman, J.D. 2006. Food and memory. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35: 370.

Huiskombuis. No date. *Food and memory cookbook launch*. https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/district-six-huiskombuis-food-and-memory-cookbook-mini-exhibition-and-launch-2016/ [Accessed on 12 October 2020].

Jansen, E. 2019. *Like family. Domestic workers in South African history and literature,* p. 5.

Le Dantec-Lowry, H. 2008. Reading women's lives in cookbooks and other culinary writings: A critical essay. *Revue Française D'études Américaines (The French Review of American Studies),* 116(2): 100.

Leipoldt, C.L. 2004. *Leipoldt's food and wine,* p. 14–26.

Leong-Salobir, C.Y. 2011. *Food culture in colonial Asia: A taste of empire*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon.

— — —. 2015. Spreading the word: Using cookbooks and colonial memoirs to examine the foodways of the British Colonials in Asia, 1850-1900. In: C. Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge history of food,* p. 154–155.

Lerner, G. 1975. Placing women in history: Definitions and challenges. *Feminist Studies*, 3: 5–6.

Lobel, C.R. 2005. Reviewed works: Manly meals and mom's home cooking: Cookbooks and gender in modern America by Jessamyn Neuhaus. *Reviews in American History*, 33(2): 264.

Mevr. M. Coetzee – *Resepte boek (Recipe book)*. Manuscript in private collection.

Pretorius, J.C. 1977. *Die Afrikanervrou as kultuurdraer en kultuurskepper tot 1806 (The Afrikaaner woman as culture bearer and culture creator to 1806).* PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, p. 76.

Rappoport, L. 2003. *How we eat - Appetite, culture, and the psychology of food*, p. 134.

Ray, U. 2009. *Culture of food in colonial Bengal*. PhD thesis, The Pennsylvania State University

Robins, M. 1992. *The Cape cookbook.* Preface.

Rommelspacher, A.F. 2017. *The everyday lives of white South African housewives 1918–1945*. Master's dissertation, Arts (History), Stellenbosch University, p. 24.

Samuel, R. 1985. What is Social History? *History Today,* 35(3): 2–16.

Shafer, R.J. 1980. *A guide to historical method*, pp. 127–170.

Shell, R.C-.H. 1994. *Children of bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 285.

Slade, H.M. 1939. (Jeanette C. van Duyn). *Mev. Slade se Afrikaanse kookboek (Mrs Slade's African cookery book).*

— — —. 1948. *Mrs. Slade's South African cookery book*. 10th edition. Introduction.

Smit, S. and Fulton, M. 1986. *The South African encyclopaedia of food and cookery*.

Smith, T. 2016. *District Six huis kombuis (home kitchen) food and memory cookbook,* pp. 15–29.

Snell, R.A. 2017. *Recipes as sources for women's lives: Student reflections on food, feminism, and femininity*. Available at https://recipes.hypotheses.org/9724 [Accessed on 24 September 2020].

Springer, K. 2004. Unexpected: Women sources, and histories. *Journal of Women's History*, 16(4): 28–33.

Stajcic, N. 2013. Understanding culture: Food as a means of communication. *Hemispheres,* 28: 5–14.

Sutton, D.E. 2002. Remembrance of repasts: An anthropology of food and memory. *Journal of Anthropology Research,* 58(4): 582–584.

Trapido, A. 2008. *A hunger for freedom: The story of food in the life of Nelson Mandela,* p. xii.

Vahed, G. and Waetjen, T. 2010. *Gender, modernity and Indian delights: The women's cultural group of Durban, 1954-2010*, (p. vii).

Van Duyn, J.C. 1920. *The household science cookery book.*

Chapter 10

Pakkies aan Boetie: Christian Afrikaner Women Remembering Conscription in South Africa between 1980 and 1990

By Dominique Wnuczek-Lobaczewski

'*Hy het altyd vriendelik gelyk jy weet hy het nooit gekla oor iets wat gebeur het nie. Ek kan maar net dink want ons het baie vir hulle gebid. Ek weet ek het vir hom spesiale koekies gemaak en gestuur, troepe koekies.*' Rina Niemand, 2018
(He always looked friendly you know, he never complained about something that happened. I can only imagine, we prayed for them a lot. I know I made him special cookies and sent it to him, troop cookies.) Rina Niemand, 2018

Introduction   219

On the 4th of August 1967, The Defence Amendment act of 1967 declared that every white male was required to complete military service. My family had become intertwined in the narrative of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and apartheid. In 1984 my father, Reinier Christiaan Niemand was conscripted into the SADF. This chapter will discuss using a narrative inquiry how the seemingly normal practices of cooking had become a witness to the experiences of conscripts and the mothers, sisters, and daughters of conscripts. I argue that the stories and recipes shared by my mother and grandmother could be considered as practices of memory which firmly situates itself in the narrative of South Africa. I consider how the practices of the kitchen are seen as a performance which maintains the role of women in the apartheid society. I continue to consider how the archive, in its ontological sense, provides another insight into the experiences of white Afrikaner women in an apartheid society. Additionally, I will provide a deeper understanding of the roles of Afrikaner women within the apartheid society by looking into the archive of the DRC and providing texts which relate to the time of conscription between 1980 and 1990.

The narrative, memory and food

Narrative inquiry can be considered as a method of inquiry through which the researcher effectively takes the object of inquiry as to the story itself (Riessman 1993). The researcher takes care when examining the story of the informant by piecing together the stories presented in interviews and personal artifacts, such as photographs or documents presented to the researcher. Professor of Sociology, Catherine Kohler Riessman argues that these personal narratives and the act of telling them can be considered as a 'universal human activity' (Reissman 1993: 2). The term collective memory in this chapter will be essential to the understanding of the experience of white Christian Afrikaner males and females. This understanding will be primarily derived from Connerton's (1989) book '*How Societies Remember*'. Connerton (1989) argues that one's experience of the present largely depends on their knowledge of the past which is how this study will primarily define the term memory. Additionally, Connerton argues that the past and the knowledge of the past are somehow sustained through performances, which is primarily discussed as two different social practices, namely commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. The social practice of commemorative ceremonies as defined by Connerton, implies the ritual in which specific events resonate with a social group. There are various examples from which the Afrikaners collectively commemorate, some of which have changed meaning after 1994, and some of which are still practised in contemporary South Africa. This chapter looks at the practices in the kitchen through which these commemorations still take place (Connerton 1989). The social practice in which bodily practices are evident is described by Connerton as a form in which a social group adapt to and conduct themselves bodily. Applying Connerton's definition to this study prompts me to consider the ways in which white Christian Afrikaner males and females conduct themselves in public. This chapter will apply Connerton's understanding of social practice to the photographs and to the descriptions of the various experiences that were recorded during the research (Connerton 1989).

Food has emerged as an alternative lens through which one can consider how memory and commemoration take place. What becomes central to the telling of the experiences of the mothers, daughters and wives through food, is the understanding that South African food lies entrenched in the legacy of imperialism and colonialism (Highfield 2017). The arrival of the Dutch in Cape Town in 1652 had a tremendous impact on the ways food production in South Africa and its record persists in the dishes enjoyed in South Africa today. Jithoo (2005: 3) recounts in her book titled: '*From the Table of my Memory: Food, Friends, Travel: A Memoir with Recipes*', 'Meals are

a time to conjure up memories of sights, sounds, tastes and smells and sometimes, to summon the spirits of the past.'. Food and recipes, should not only be considered carriers of memory, they should also be considered as 'a unique piece of discourse' (Cognard-Black 2017: 32). Recipes and cooking practices are necessary to understand how the role of the Christian Afrikaner women was understood and applied over time in South African households, specifically for the Afrikaner mother and wife, who would continue this practice throughout the course of the border war. The cookbook remains important to Afrikaner families, since it is something that is usually bequeathed from grandmother to mother to daughter (Niemand 2019: 10). Unique recipes and recipe books catered for the mothers who had hungry sons on the border and my (the author) grandmother ensured the regular delivery of edible packages to my father. The title of this chapter, '*Pakkies aan Boetie'* refers to packages that were sent by my grandmother to my father on the border. The sending of packages was a common practice among Afrikaner mothers and sisters to ensure that their troop was looked after. The concept of the *"pakkie"* (package) became a large part of the experiences of Afrikaner females, since it was the troop's connection to home, in addition to wanting to bolster their food intake. In addition to these packages sent to the border, mothers would also cater for the troops who would come home to visit.

221

After the Second World War, South Africa mainly relied on the volunteer system maintained by citizens. However, on the 4th of August 1967, The Defence Amendment act of 1967 declared that every white male (between the ages of 17 and 65 years) was required to complete military service. The amendment states that any white male who is medically fit for duty and who is not yet active in the permanent force such as the South African Police, the railway services or the prison services, should complete their compulsory military service (Kalley, Schoeman and Andor 1999). The first initial compulsory service period was required over a period of nine months, which was followed by a three-week camp every year for five years. In 1973 the required period was changed to one year. In 1977, due to the lack of men, the period was changed to two years. The two-year service would be followed by a further ten years in which they could be called up for service. As Williams (2008) states, white males could be called up to serve on the border every two years for a maximum of 90 days, however, they were expected to complete a minimum of 30 days of service every year for ten years.

The 'border war' for many white males became synonymous with the institution of conscription. However, its contestation starts with the name, as Baines (2014) contends, that was used to invoke

a sense of purpose that the SADF troops are defending South Africa against an imminent threat often termed as *rooi/swart gevaar* (red/ black danger). Thus, the war itself is often considered as a 'silent war' which had a different meaning for different families. What should be underscored is that this war was considered a war of liberation for some. For my family at least, it was something that we knew about from photographs and secret letters, but not really a topic that you address due to the taboo of breaking its silence. What becomes essential in the telling of this narrative, is the experiences of the wives, mothers and sisters that would send their husbands, sons and brothers off to war without knowing what would transpire. Mothers, wives and sisters rarely knew about the specifics of the war due to the silencing of the war, as well as the censorship by the SAUK (*Suid Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie*, now known as the South African Broadcasting Commission [SABC]) and the media (Niemand 2019). The only experiences mothers really had control over was their ability to send packages to their sons. It is described as a piece of home that they could send to their sons. Food and recipes became a vital medium in the way in which they remember, as these women could only connect with their conscripted troops through the sending of letters and food packages.

Recipes, cookbooks and pieces from home

Pieces of necessity are requested throughout my father's letters to my grandmother, ranging from cigarettes to shoe polish and more importantly, cookies. My grandmother's recipe book provides an interesting perspective from which she crafted the custom packages she would send to my father. The black spiral notebook consisted of foxed pages with collaged recipes. These recipes were all sourced from magazines and newspapers, with some been handwritten, copied from other recipes, perhaps from those of other women she knew. This collage contains some insight into the type of cooking that was enjoyed in my grandmother's kitchen between 1980 and 1990. Under the section of *"Lekkers"* (sweets) a recipe boasts:

> '*By enige kerkbasaar of skoolfunksie is die tafel waar tuisgemaakte lekkers verkoop word, een van die gewildste.*' (Rooi Rose 1968)
> (At any church bazaar or school function is the table with the homemade sweets one of the favourites.)

The recipe book provides insight into the various choices of recipes published in magazines mainly

aimed at stay-at-home women. Some recipes date back to 1955 which originate out of publications for women such as '*Rooi Rose*', '*Die Huisvrou*', '*Finesse*' and '*Vrouekeur*'. All these publications were aimed at the Afrikaner women who would provide for their families at the home front and would specifically focus on advice for keeping a well-organised home and shared recipes (*Rooi Rose* 1968). In the same way, recipes were often shared by housewives for their troops. The troop cookies recipe which my grandmother baked and sent to my father, was shared from a favourite South African magazine '*Die Huisgenoot*' (Giliomee 2003). This recipe was created out of a need to supplement a troop's nutritional intake. The design of the recipe has considered that the cookies would be able to endure the journey to the troop on the border. The cookie is also seen as an energising snack which will help the troop with the required energy to engage in combat. The recipe usually provides for a bulk of these cookies to supplement the troop with a long-lasting quantity that will keep for a long period before the next package arrives. In this handwritten recipe, my grandmother added to her personalised recipe book clearly stated that the recipe would cater for eleven or twelve dozen cookies. This recipe contains layered meanings that speak to history within South Africa and echo the experiences of mothers who slaved away in the kitchens to provide for their hungry troops at the border.

223

In a recent attempt to dig through old boxes of family belongings, I came across a recipe book that was handed down from my grandmother titled '*Peuselparade*' (snack parade) dated 1988. The book was published by the South African food company Bokomo for the mothers who were sending their sons to the border (Bokomo 1988). The introductory message is provided by Patricia Kerr also known as "Pat Kerr" who was a well-known host of a radio programme called *Forces Favourites*. She writes:

> Aan alle troepies, hul moeders, stiefmoeders en vriendinne: mag hierdie resepte vele
> ure van eetgenot verskaf, sowel as waardering vir die ure se swoeg in die kombuis.
> (To all the troops, their mothers, stepmothers and girlfriends: May these recipes provide
> hours of enjoyment as well as appreciation for the hours of toil in the kitchen.)

Furthermore, the recipe book offered a seemingly humorous handbook on recipes and how to pack the packages sent to the troops. It describes the following:

> *Gebruik 'n stewige doos as houer – sowat 20 cm x 20 cm x 10 cm; die volledige pakkie moet*

minder as 3kilogram weeg. Draai die pakkie toe in 2 velle bruinpapier en versterk dit met kleefband, veral by die hoeke. Verpak alles stewig en vul enige oop spasies met lekkergoed, ens. Skryf sy naam en adres duidelik in blokletters. Standaardgrootte pakkethouers is by alle Poskantore beskikbaar. (Bokomo 1988)

(Use a steady box as a container – more or less 20 cm x 20 cm x 10 cm; the complete package should weigh no more than 3 kilograms. Wrap the package in 2 sheets of brown paper and strengthen it with tape, especially at the corners. Pack everything and fill any open spaces with sweets etc. Write his name and address clearly in block letters. Standard size pack containers are available at all Post Offices.)

Packages to the troops were detailed in the book which gave instructions for successful delivery, such as badge number, rank and name, sub-unit, unit, city and postal code (when in South Africa) and as number, rank and name, sub-unit, unit, city and postal code, unit where supplied, sector, Field post office 1, Pretoria, postal code (when they were in an operational area). Furthermore, the book provided an opportunity for mothers all over the country to provide tips and tricks to help with posting of the packages to the troop. For example, a mother, J.E. Heyns writes out of Welkom:

224

Sprinkel springmielies tussen die inhoud van die pakkie. Dit absorbeer skok tydens die hantering en vervoer van die pakkie. Terselfdertyd het die troepie nog iets om aan te peusel. (Bokomo 1988: 10)

(Sprinkle popcorn in between the contents of the package. It absorbs the shock during the handling and transport of the package. At the same time the troop has something extra to snack on.)

The instructions provide an understanding that mothers took great care in preparing the packages which were sent off to the border. My grandmother would take great care in the packages that she sent to us as children, she made sure that everything was wrapped carefully in wax paper and gently tucked into an ice cream container. I can only imagine that my grandmother followed similar steps to put together a package that would have made its way to the border, filled with food that was handmade specifically for my father. The reception of a basket with sugary and salty treats seems insignificant in comparison to the troops' experiences, however, it seems to have played a significant role in how it affected the mood of the individual troops who would wait in anticipation for any correspondence.

In a church publication, Malan, Geldenjuys and Malan (1981) note in their book '*Ek het iemand op die grens*' (I've got someone on the border) that:

> *Die pakkie wat met liefde en sorg stewig verpak die dienspligtige op die grens bereik, is 'n stukkie van die huis self.*
> (The package that is packed with love and care, tightly packed that reaches the troop on the border, is a piece of home.)

Understandably popular phrases used were "*Pos in die bos is kos*" (post in the bush is food) which is understood as when a troop receives any form of post it most likely consisted of a neatly packed package filled with home-baked goods and other pieces of necessity (Bokomo 1988). The framing of food in this context contrasts with excerpts from publications detailing either the death of a troop or how to compile a package for your son. This bizarre juxta positioning draws attention to a war that was senseless and the day-to-day realities of pretending everything was normal and justified. The text that drew attention to this could be seen selected from many publications found in the DRC archive which largely revealed the position of the DRC on the war, conscription and women.

The women of the DRC and the SADF

The role of the DRC became heavily layered within the experiences of Christian Afrikaner women during the period of conscription. The DRC was involved with the war, albeit at a convenient arm's length. In many ways, women were involved in the war effort through the church. There are many references to the "*Dankie Tannies*" (Thank you Aunties) who would work hard at compiling packages for troops. These packages would contain stationery, razors, soap and other goods in order to thank them for their service in protecting the country. In other ways, women who formed part of the DRC, like my grandmother, would often form support groups that allowed them to share experiences with others. The DRC allowed for the various formations of women's organisations, some of which could be considered as opposed to conscription and apartheid, and some which proved to have strong support towards the SADF. In his chapter titled '*Afrikaner women and the creation of ethnicity in a small South African town, 1902-1950*', Butler (1989) maintains that women were crucial in the creation of Afrikaner ethnic consciousness through the creation of organisations maintained by mainly middleclass Afrikaner women. Most notably, before the rise of Apartheid, women were often seen actively raising money in the interest of the "*Helpmekaar-fondsinsameling*"

(solidarity fundraisers) and other attempts to aid poor Afrikaners. Women would contribute through the connection of the church by hosting bazaars and support groups and organisations. It is important to consider how various organisations would form part of the experience of white Christian Afrikaner females during the conscription of white Christian Afrikaner males. It is also important to consider how the roles of these organisations inspired a way of conduct of women organisations during the time of conscription between 1980 and 1990. My grandmother maintains that even being a working mother, Afrikaner women would still contribute to the church by baking goods for bazaars.

The Southern Cross Fund (SCF) is seen as one of the supporters of the war as it was enforced throughout apartheid society. The SCF can be viewed as an organisation made up of the support from citizens to the troops and should be viewed as the solidarity of the white community who backed the SADF and its occupation (Van Heerden 2015). The SCF was founded in 1968 to raise money for the welfare of Portuguese and South African troops. Although the fund was managed by women and men, it was mostly white women who volunteered and would predominantly remain at the front of the fund that was associated with females. The Mozambique Soldier Fund was considered the frontrunner for the SCF, since it was originally headed by Elizabeth Albrecht and changed its name in 1968. The fund aimed to collect money for the recreation of SADF and SAP troops, 'this included sports equipment, televisions, ice and cold-water machines, snooker tables, film projectors, swimming pools, books, musical instruments and bibles' (Van Heerden 2015: 32). It was the experience of receiving the gifts from the fund that led to its nickname "*Dankie Tannies*" (Thank you Aunties), which was a result of the troops thanking the women when they received the presents. Thus, the presents were called "*Dankie Tannie pakkies*" (Thank you Aunty packages). The presence and representation of the SCF by women were essential to the image of the women that the apartheid Government encouraged. It is understood that the SCF had close ties with the DRC as former pastor Charles Cassel recalls:

> ... *in die NG Kerk was daar 'n aksie wat hulle genoem het, die Suiderkruis Fonds waar die vrouens gewerk het en geld ingesamel het om die behoeftes onder die jong soldate te vervul, soos toilet geriewe, boeke, bybels en daai soort van ding. Die Suiderkruis fonds het baie sterk gefunksioneer in daai tyd in die NG Kerk.* (Niemand 2019: 98)
>
> (... in the DRC there was an action that they called the Southern Cross Fund where women worked and collected money for the needs of the young soldiers, such as

toiletries, books, bibles and those types of things. The Southern Cross fund functioned strongly in the DRC in those times).

The archives revealed the discourse of the DRC within Afrikaner households, in particular the response of the church towards mothers, sisters and girlfriends who had someone on the border. The DRC provided a platform for mothers to share their experiences of conscription of their sons for mothers of troops to communicate and pray about the conscription and the war. In one example, the DRC provided the opportunity for a group of women who called themselves *Moeders van Dienspligtiges* (Mothers of members of the armed forces) to reach out to other congregations through *Die Kerkbode* (The Church publication), which is the official mouthpiece of the DRC and reports on church policy and activities. These groups of women started to gather on a regular basis within congregations of the DRC to discuss aspects of their experiences surrounding conscription. These groups would distribute prayer lists which would be filled with names of conscripts and furthermore discuss issues like "*pos is belangriker as kos*" (post rather than food).[1]

The DRC, furthermore, provided a platform of support and guidance for mothers and girlfriends who were sending a troop to the border. One example I focused on, is a book published under the DRC. Malan et al. (1981) provide detailed guidelines for mothers and women who have someone they know either serving on the border or will be required to serve their military service soon. The role of the female is outlined and stated by Malan et al. (1981) as follows:

227

> The woman should be an anchor for the family during stormy times such as these. She has to be convinced of the fairness of the defence battle so that no sacrifice may be too much for her. She has to be willing to give herself in the interest of her country and all of its people. (19)

Similar sentiments were encouraged in the manner through which mothers and women would communicate with the troops. In a detailed description, Malan et al. (1981) provide a list of do's and don'ts on ways in which to engage with the troops through letters. For the most part, Malan et al. (1981) caution writers to ensure that their letters to the troops must be taken seriously. The role that every woman should play regarding the military service should be as follows:

---

1   This saying translated into English means post is more important than food, this refers to the prioritisation of writing letters to the troop on the border rather than sending food.

(D)aar is reeds genoeg gesê om elke meisie te laat besef dat die volgende woorde háár besondere bydrae tot grensdiens insluit:

> *Ons sal antwoord op jou roepstem*
> *Ons sal offer wat jy vra*
> *Ons sal lewe*
> *Ons sal sterwe*
> *ONS VIR JOU SUID-AFRIKA* (Malan et al. 1981 : 5)

(There is already enough said that the following words include her contribution to military service:

> At thy call we shall not falter,
> firm and steadfast we shall stand,
> At thy will to live or perish,
> O South Africa, dear land.)

Once all the contents of the packages have been prepared, Malan et al. (1981) provide a set of instructions on how one should compile the package:

Pak liewer twee kleiner pakkies as een groot pak. Die inhoud moet styf gepak word sodat dit nie rondbeweeg nie. Koekies en beskuit kom so maklik in krummels by die bestemming aan. Moet liewer nie vars vrugte probeer stuur nie. Drie weke per trein sal meer as 'n vrugte slaai lewer. Die gemiddelde tyd wat 'n pakkie neem om sy bestemming te bereik is 12 – 16 dae. Pak die inhoud eers in kleiner houers, bv. plastiese roomysbakke en pak lae papiersakdoeke tussenin. Pak die pakkie stewig en draai eers toe in goiingsak wat met naald en gare toegewerk word. Merk duidelik met 'n kokipen. Die adres moet volledig wees met die ontvanger se nommer, kompanie en peleton. Moenie pakkies registreer nie. Dit veroorsaak 'n vertraging van 5 – 6 dae.(59)

(Rather pack two smaller packages than one big package. The contents have to be packaged tightly so that it does not move around. Cookies and rusks could easily arrive at its destination as crumbs. Do not send any fresh fruit. Three weeks per train could easily offer up more than just a fruit salad. The average time that the package takes to reach its destination is 12 – 16 days. Firstly, pack the content in smaller containers, i.e. plastic ice cream containers and pack layers of tissues in between. Pack the package

228

sturdy and cover it with hessian which is sewed shut with needle and thread afterwards. Mark it clearly with a permanent marker. The address has to be complete with the receiver's number, company and platoon. Do not register your package. It results in a delay of 5 – 6 days.)

Malan et al. (1981) cover the requirements of women who had a loved one in the army. It does not refer to the realities of death of their loved ones or those considered "the enemy". They outline instructions to mothers as they were encouraged to write letters to their sons in the following way:

U briewe aan u Seun moet
> *Opgewek wees*
> *Bemoedigend wees*
> *Vol interessante nuus en baie besonderhede wees*
> *Dank betoon vir wat hy doen om sy land te beskerm*
> *Vermaninge, Skrifgedeeltes en bemoediging inhou*
> *Liewer nie slegte nuus bevat nie* (59)

(Your letters to your son should-
> Be exciting
> Be encouraging
> Be full of interesting news and a lot of detail
> Must be thankful for what he is doing to protect his country
> Contain exhortations, scriptures and encouragement
> Rather not contain any bad news.)

Although the church was responsible for sending packages to the troops, my grandmother never participated in the process through the church. She always made up her own packages, however, the discourse of the DRC is deeply inscribed within my family. Women in the DRC held no official positions within the church and were mostly encouraged to keep up their roles at the home front as a display of devotion to their country. In the publications discussed in this chapter; it becomes evident that the church, as an apartheid institution, encouraged the ways in which women would conduct themselves within an apartheid society.

229

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that food and recipes become carriers of memory and offer a unique lens through which ordinary practices could speak to silenced histories. The silencing of the war played a significant role in how women experienced conscription. However, it is through the recipes, that the mothers, sisters and wives could channel a connection to a past that has found its way into old boxes hidden away in the form of letters, photographs and cookbooks. There is also a notable discomfort that comes to the surface when one considers the role of food within this local history, the discomfort of war which is echoed through the comfort that the food packages offered to the troops. As demonstrated in this chapter, food speaks more broadly to the roles and the social and bodily practices of Afrikaner women during conscription between 1980 and 1990. More importantly, this study provides an example of how food and recipes can bring to light unknown local histories that become entrenched within the South African narrative.

The troops' connection to home is seen throughout the inquiry as being the mother or sister who writes and sends packages. In most of the guidelines I unearthed in the archives and letters my father sent, it becomes a point of noting that the regular writing of letters and receiving of food was a heartfelt connection to home. It is thus understood, that any form of negativity in the communication was not advised. I understand now that my grandmother›s narration of the meanderings of home life was a sense of banality in which my father might have found comfort. It is evident that my father cherished the letters, since he had kept them for so long. I had probably read through these letters over a dozen times since I had started my inquiry, looking for anything that might be of interest, and I have finally come to understand that it is the ordinary that is of importance, since it speaks to the lived experiences of my father that he had cherished, however, it also speaks to the longevity of memory. It is this sense of the ordinary that becomes even more important, since it exists and persists even after the death of my father.

References

Baines, G. 2014. *South Africa›s ‹Border War›: Contested narratives and conflicting memories*: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bokomo. 1988. *Peuselparade: smaaklike, maklike resepte om vir u geliefde in die weermag voor te berei, asook talle nuttige wenke (Snack Parade: Tasty, easy recipes to prepare for your loved one in the military, plus tons of helpful tips).* Malmesbury: Bokomo. p. 8.

Butler, J. 1989. Afrikaner women and the creation of ethnicity in a small South African town, 1902-1950. *Creation of tribalism in Southern Africa,* p. 62.

Cognard-Black, J. 2017. The embodied rhetoric of recipes. *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics,* pp. 30–47.

Connerton, P. 1989. *How societies remember*: Cambridge University Press.

Giliomee, H.B. 2003. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers.

Highfield, J. 2017. *Food and foodways in African narratives: Community, culture, and heritage*. Place of publication not identified: Routledge.

Jithoo, U. 2005. *From the table of my memory: Food, friends, travel: A memoir with recipes*. Lansdowne: Double Storey.

Kalley, J.A., Schoeman, E. and Andor, L.E. 1999. *Southern African political history: A chronology of key political events from independence to mid-1997.* Greenwood Press.

Malan, G., Geldenhuys, N. and Malan, G.l. 1981. *Ek het iemand op die grens (I have someone on the border).* Kaapstad: Verenigde Protestantse Uitg.

Niemand, D. 2019. *'Bid vir my ma': A narrative inquiry into the experiences of white Christian Afrikaner females during SADF conscription from 1980 until 1990*. Master's dissertation, University of Pretoria.

Niemand, R. 2018. [Personal Interview]. 26 October, Pretoria.

Riessman, C.K. 1993. *Narrative analysis*, London: Sage Publications.

Rooi Rose. 1968. Lekkers (Sweets).

Van Heerden, A. 2015. Die Suiderkruisfonds as moreelbouer in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing tydens die Grensoorlog (The Southern Cross Fund as moral builder in the South African society during the Border War), 1968-1990: Geesteswetenskappe. *Litnet Akademies: ‹n Joernaal vir die Geesteswetenskappe, Natuurwetenskappe, Regte en Godsdienswetenskappe,* 12: 1–32.

Williams, D. 2008. *Op die grens: Wit mans se militêre ervaring, 1965-1990.* Kaapstad: Tafelberg Uitgewers.

Chapter 11

Goeie Grond: A Visual Journal on the Elandskloof Garden Project

By Nina du Preez and Christi Bleeker

Introduction

This is a visual journal on the development of the Elandskloof garden project. The garden project emerged through collaborative efforts between the Elandskloof community and the CRITICAL Project Team. The success of the garden proves that intervention through collective effort can redeem and restore the autonomy of indigenous communities that have been marginalised and all but forgotten by national leadership. The aim of this journal is to illustrate the journey of the Elandskloof garden project. Elandskloof's indigenous knowledge systems as well as food heritage inspired the garden's cultivation and thus, features throughout this chapter. Through it all, climate change remains a critical issue not only impacting the physical environment in Elandskloof, but also altering the way that residents interact with their own heritage. The chapter features central figures in Elandskloof that have shown immense resilience, leadership and creativity in their approach to community challenges in the valley.

233

History of the valley

Despite its proximity to popular citrus farms in the *Koue Bokkeveldt* (cold buck shrubland) Mountains and its status as the first successful land restitution case in South Africa, it is a place completely hidden from the rest of the world. To reach the Elandskloof, one must travel seventeen kilometres south-east of Citrusdal in the Western Cape province of South Africa, on a gravel road that crawls through the Cederberg Wilderness. Citrus trees and *fynbos* (natural shrubland) will brush past you. When reaching a fork in the road, head down to the bridge laid with stone from the mountains and a sign that reads *Elandskloof.*

Before the arrival of white farmers—in fact, before the arrival of anyone else—Khoi tribes moved

across the Cederberg. Where food and water were plenty, they gathered. Where shelter was found, their stories were painted on cave walls (Cederberg Conservancy 2024) and through their presence in the landscape, systems of knowledge emerged.

> The early inhabitants of the Cedarberg, the San, relied on hunting and gathering for their subsistence. The *veldkos* and game which supported them were natural and seasonal resources and as such, enforced a constant mobility on the population. The predominant economic activity of the Khoi who later moved into this region, was subsistence based on pastoralism, rather than cultivation. The Khoi, like their San neighbours, were nomadic people, moving seasonally in search of new grazing grounds and more mild weather. (Anderson 1993: 4)

Passed down from generation to generation, the heritage of indigenous tribes was preserved by actively practising what was known and taught of the landscape. When activity at the foot of Table Mountain forced an influx of white settlers into the Cape interior in the eighteenth century, the children of nomadic and freed peoples abided by Cape Colony law and purchased farmland in one of the Cederberg Mountain valleys. Elandskloof, as it became known, was a self-sustaining agrarian community for more than a century before the betrayal of the Dutch Reformed Church.

234

In 1962 the Dutch Reformed Church, which had established a mission station in the valley in 1861, cast 76 families from their homes and re-allocated the farms in Elandskloof to white farmers (CRITICAL Project Team 2022; O'Connell 2018b). The strategic removal of these families fell in conjunction with the South African Group Areas Act of 1950. Under the Act, the government assigned geographic territories to citizens according to race; favouring the placement of white people in areas with opportune real estate.

In 1996 the original residents of Elandskloof were reconciled with their families' property, in what is recognised as the first successful instance of land restitution in South Africa. In a grand display with national media coverage, government officials of the newly-elected democratic government led by the African National Congress (ANC), awarded ownership of Elandskloof back to its former inhabitants (O'Connell 2018b).

> Many Elandsklowers had moved onto nearby farms as temporary tenants and seasonal

labourers and were beholden to white landlords who dominated the lucrative regional and international fruit markets in the Citrusdal region. Some members of families who had moved to Cape Town were able to attain higher levels of education and work skills and became qualified professionals and successful business people. Their return to Elandskloof accentuated social class differences with poor seasonal labourers (Everingham and Jannecke 2006: 551).

Shortly after Elandskloof's reconciliation, the ANC launched the Cederberg Conservancy (Cederberg Conservancy 2024). While the aim of the Conservancy was to maintain the biodiversity of the mountains to limit the damage that had been done by farming in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Conservancy also restricted access to indigenous knowledge practitioners and communities practising indigenous food heritage.

Cederberg heritage site

The Cederberg Wilderness was declared a World Heritage Site in 2004 as part of the Cape Floristic Region (Cederberg Conservancy 2024). This stagnated indigenous knowledge systems in the region and halted the transition of these heritage practices from elders to local youth. The implementation of conservation laws in the Cederberg Wilderness not only harmed indigenous knowledge systems, it also stunted agrarian activity in Elandskloof. Centuries of foraging and farming practices in the Cederberg derived from the Khoi and San ancestors, had to be abandoned when the Cederberg Wilderness was sanctioned. As a result, Elandskloof's cultural heritage has been disregarded.

With the mountains now protected, farming on the mountains is prohibited. Cattle farmers must make do with what the valley provides in terms of grazing—which is scarce in the sandy and rocky landscape. Though fertile, cultivating soil at the foot of the mountain proves a challenge for the small farmers of Elandskloof, especially with limited access to mechanised farming equipment (O'Connell 2018b).

Food heritage is especially vulnerable, not only in this settlement, but in many other marginalised areas where indigenous communities are forsaken by the very governments that had promised to protect them. The Cederberg is home to thousands of endemic plant species including *buchu* (*Rutaceae*), rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*), wild olive trees (*Olea europaea subsp. africana*), wild

235

almond trees (*Brabejum stellatifolium)* and red disas (*Disa uniflora*). The flora in the Cederberg has many uses for the Elandsklowers (residents of Elandskloof) (Cederberg Conservancy 2024). Not only is *buchu* used to cure chest ailments in the absence of a local pharmacy or hospital, it also generates a small income for the settlement.

In 2005, shortly after the Cederberg Mountains achieved World Heritage status, Elandskloof was placed under government administration, further incapacitating its independent development. What little amenities have been brought on, like electricity, quickly fell away/became meaningless with the introduction of a failing national power grid (Du Preez and Strydom 2023). Rudimentary infrastructure continues to develop—homes and outdoor amenities constructed from repurposed building materials; corrugated roads latched together with low-water bridges that flood violently during rainy seasons. Today, Elandskloof is a rural, impoverished community that has not yet shaken the collective memory or systemic social issues brought and imposed on the valley by the forced removals (O'Connell 2018b).

The preservation of Elandskloof's cultural heritage—and other indigenous communities outside of this valley—is placed under threat when natural conservation in diverse ecosystems is prioritised over cultural heritage that develops in tandem with the natural environment. In the case-study of Elandskloof, the issue of food heritage has been especially dire due to several internal and external issues. Within the valley, the abuse of natural resources drains the energy and funds of local governance (O'Connell 2023a). Despite their annexation of the settlement's autonomy, the government has done little in the way of improving the settlement. No plans for paved roads, no permanent infrastructure and no municipal services have been implemented. This has led to some residents taking the yoke of providing basic services to Elandskloof upon themselves.

CRITICAL project

Origin

In 2019, Dr Siona O'Connell and Dr Dominique Wnuczek-Lobaczewski from the Department of Interdisciplinary and Museum Studies at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, joined forces with Dr Kate Crowley and Dr Yough-Hwa Cha from the School of Geosciences at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, to establish the CRITICAL Project Team. The team launched an investigation

into Elandskloof as a case-study of vulnerable and forgotten communities in South Africa. Particular attention was paid to the community's attitude towards climate change and its preservation of food heritage using indigenous knowledge systems. According to the CRITICAL Project Team, the Elandskloof restitution process was deeply flawed, '[a] land without the capital to develop it, and a group of claimants many decades removed from a meaningful relationship with the business of rural livelihoods, carrying the scars of the struggle for survival under apartheid' (CRITICAL Project Team 2022). Elandskloof was identified as a site particularly at risk because of its history of forced removals and the inter-generational knowledge gap that has been intensified by anthropogenic climate change (Crowley, Wilson and O'Connell 2022).

O'Connell and Wnuczek-Lobaczewski have been working closely with the Elandskloof residents since 2016 on issues of land restitution, food heritage, inequality and generational trauma. With this project titled '*Critical food heritage as a tool for adaptation: Climate change resilience through hybrid indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa*', a collaborative community garden project, known as CRITICAL Food was developed. The project was developed in response to the flawed restitution process. The aim of the project was to plant seeds that would bear good fruit—not only physical fruits from the local garden to feed the Elandskloof's community, but to also facilitate a space of "learning by doing" for growing and nurturing the settlement's heritage and processing of past trauma (CRITICAL Project Team 2022; Crowley et al.; Daniels 2023).

Development

In 2022, the CRITICAL Project Team approached Elandskloof with the aim of creating the opportunities that were lacking, in hopes of bringing tangible, lasting change. The initial plan was to get the young people of Elandskloof involved in the establishment of a vegetable garden that would provide vegetables to the residents of Elandskloof (O'Connell 2018a). The aim was to give the residents a springboard from which to learn farming and hopefully become self-sustainable. It was also hoped that through this process of working with the residents that relationships would be rebuilt and a space for dialogue surrounding heritage, history, land and climate change would be created.

The vegetable garden was to be a way of claiming back and taking ownership of the land that was stripped away from them in the past. The CRITICAL Project Team made it clear that they, the

residents of Elandskloof, would have to take ownership and responsibility for the project as a community (Daniels 2023). It was up to the residents as to how they would manage the garden and what they would plant there and nobody from outside the community was to dictate how they were to do it. As such, the garden project created a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport, the CRITICAL Project answered Elandskloof's call for help to create opportunities and grow their small-scale farming with the garden project. The garden project was developed for the residents of Elandskloof to promote climate change resilience using food heritage with the aim of empowering the residents as a community (Daniels 2023).

Six young adults—four young men and two young women—were temporarily employed by the CRITICAL Project Team to clear the area where the tunnel was to be erected in 2023. They, like most of the young people in Elandskloof, are employed on the surrounding citrus farms as seasonal workers. They work as pickers and sorters of citrus during the season of March to October. In the off-season, they are either unemployed or work on stone fruit farms located in an area known as the *Koue Bokkeveldt*. Ironically, there are planted orange trees on Elandskloof, however, they have been neglected and left to be disused. According to reports, after the young adults were paid for their work on the tunnel construction site, they abandoned the project, leaving it to the older residents of Elandskloof to maintain. This has left older residents, like Nicholas Andreas Dirks (*Oom* [Uncle] Klaas), to doubt if the youth are interested in Elandskloof, since they have left the garden to the devices of the older residents, who distribute the vegetables amongst themselves—free of charge.

However, over the last four years, with hard work from the Elandskloof Residents Committee headed by the chair Johannes Phillip (JP) George, the residents have made progress in rebuilding relationships and identifying leaders among the youth (Daniels 2023).

In 2023, with the help from CRITICAL Project Team, under the charge of *Oom* Klaas, the residents started to successfully plant vegetables (O'Connell 2023a). Vegetable gardens are not unfamiliar to the Elandskloof residents, many of whom have their own gardens in which they traditionally planted potatoes, sweet potatoes, watermelons and beans. According to George, '*They plant, and things grow.'* (as quoted by Cole and Maharaj 2023). In the past four years, the residents have added a wider variety of vegetables; since the start of the garden, they have successfully planted spinach, corn, peppadews, sweet peppers, cauliflowers, parsley, tomatoes, onions, beetroot, carrots,

238

lettuce and very popular, green peas in the greenhouse tunnel (Daniels 2023). The hope is that the greenhouse tunnel is the first step in making progress and building relationships in the community, despite the historical division.

Chairman George and the community attest to the fact that the soil is *goeie grond* (good soil). Some fertilisers had to be worked in to the soil to help start the planting process, however, soil is not the issue in Elandskloof; vegetables mainly do not grow well in Elandskloof because of the cold weather. Residents say that there is not much of a summer season; that the soil remains damp and plants get damaged by frost. The tunnel is an innovation that helps to protect the plants from the cold, unpredictable weather, wind and even destructive livestock, creating a year-round growing season. Many of the plants that grow in the tunnel were bought from the stores, but if successful, the plants will provide year-round vegetables and the residents would no longer have to buy at the stores (Cole 2023).

It is economically more feasible for the older residents of the community to get their vegetables from the garden than to travel seventeen kilometres to the nearest shopping centre in Citrusdal. Fresh produce is expensive and can at times be inaccessible for those on the poverty line, unless they grow it themselves or buy it by informal means. The extra income and the money residents save, is a starting point to revitalising Elandskloof's almost non-existent economy.

239

Even though Elandskloof is a dry area, the residents have access to an abundance of natural water sources: a river; a natural fountain and two dams (Bleeker 2023b). These water sources supply the garden with irrigation that is stored in a JoJo (water storage) tank. Vandalism, however, is an occurring problem for the settlement. In May 2023, George reported that a group of juveniles blocked the irrigation system of the greenhouse when they threw rocks into one of the dams, blocking the pipeline (Cole and Maharaj 2023). The abundant water sources can just as easily turn hostile of their own accord, as was the case in June 2023 when heavy rains in the valley caused the river to breach its banks. Roads, bridges and several farms in the valley were submerged by the water torrent. Day labourers and school children from Elandskloof were stranded in Citrusdal for several days (Western Cape Government 2023).

Current status

The challenge of Elandskloof and the CRITICAL Project Team was not necessarily the establishment of a vegetable garden, but the multi-layered complexities of the history and trauma endured by the community and how the effects of the forced removal remain tangibly present in their daily lives. Added to this struggle is the unexpected effect of climate change that has hit Southern Africa—particularly the Western Cape region—with droughts and unpredictable weather (Crowley et al. 2022). According to O'Connell (2023a), the residents 'had to adjust their expectations and take joy in really small accomplishments'. Meetings hosted by the Elandskloof residents committee have revealed a very low turnout of youth, which has worried the committee who were trying to get the youth interested in Elandskloof development projects such as the garden. George attributes this lack of interest to the long history of conflict within the community, stating, *'[p]eople don't want us to talk about it but it is a fact'* (Cole and Maharaj 2023). He maintains that the youth fear getting involved because meetings tend to turn into arguments, going nowhere. George, as quoted by O'Connell (2023a), believes the garden tunnel is a '*wake-up call'*; something that can rekindle their self-confidence.

240
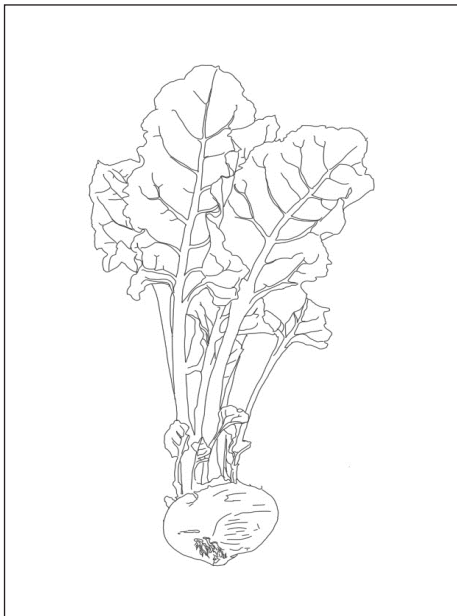
Elandskloof residents made progress over the last four years rebuilding relationships by coming into some form of agreement with each other (Daniels 2023). According to George, the community is no longer managed like a democracy as such. It is their responsibility as the committee to develop Elandskloof, to make partnerships like the CRITICAL Project. The residents do not feel the need for approval to go ahead with plans and projects that might benefit the "community". George states: '*They were too scared to take risks. Too scared to take responsibility for what they were given, to live it out. If they do not do anything, nothing will happen*' (as quoted by Cole and Maharaj 2023). However, under the leadership of George, the residents try to make decisions to go forward with projects, because if it works, then they know they

can do it; and if it does not work, then they are not worse off than before. Under administration, the community grew tired of waiting for the Department of Rural Development to do something, however, now with the garden project continuing to move forward, they can start healing because people like the CRITICAL Project Team are supporting them.

With possible future funding, the community plan to build more tunnels for vegetables which they can later, in addition to distributing to the residents, sell for a profit (Daniels 2023). George goes further to say they can transform the entire piece of open land adjacent to the tunnel into more tunnels (George as quoted by O'Connell 2023a). For the short-term, *Oom* Klaas suggests that even one more tunnel will be useful, one as a nursery and the other for growing the vegetables. Future long-term projects with CRITICAL Food, considering the national power grid crisis, might also include the installation of solar panels in Elandskloof (Daniels 2023). However, what is needed most at present for the project, is the recruitment of youth with the agricultural skills they have already acquired and empowering them with the resources they need to work.

The young people are not making much money picking and sorting oranges, however, if developments start expanding in Elandskloof, they can start working in Elandskloof on a full-time basis having a more stable future (O'Connell 2018a). The youth already do the work for the surrounding farms; therefore, it will be more beneficial if they can do the work for themselves. To start recruiting the youth, the committee is trying to identify promising individuals, young leaders that can affect change. For George, the idea behind the tunnel is to inspire the community of Elandskloof. He believes that this will be the first of more tunnels (Cole and Maharaj 2023). The real value of this project, however, is the time spent with the community, having those long-term conversations and showing that hope can grow in Elandskloof. If change can be achieved in Elandskloof, then it can be achieved in the rest of South Africa, maybe even the world.

241

> It is simple. The fact that something is happening is a success. It is physical proof that something is possible. It is not something we have to wonder about. We can see it is a great success. And that changes things. We can enter the future with courage and certainty saying, 'this was a pilot and did not cost us a cent. So, if it works here, we can work here'. JP George, Chair of the Elandskloof Residents Association (O'Connell 2023a).

242

Figure 11. 1 Community members of Elandskloof at the construction of the tunnel

Elandskloof community

Before they were cast out in 1962, Elandskloof as a landscape, was all the community knew. As Margie Januarie, daughter-in-law of Jan Januarie, the much-respected former leader and chairman of the community, put it, '*We loved this place. It was our everything*.' (O'Connell 2018b). The residents used to farm everything from livestock (donkeys, cows, chickens) to fruit orchids that they planted themselves. If they ever needed anything, they traded amongst themselves. They did not need much nor suffered hunger, in-fact they had everything they needed. If they did not have money to tithe to the church, they would harvest *buchu* for "sixpence a pound" and contribute to the church's finances in that way (O'Connell 2018b).

Elandskloof was a farming community until the residents' forceful removal in 1962, when the church sold the land without their knowledge. Prior to that, Elandskloof residents had the right to raise cattle in the surrounding *veldt* (open country) and the small plot of land that each family lived on sustained them through gardens and subsistence farming (O'Connell 2023a). On their return in 1996, with no capital, resources and training to develop Elandskloof as a commercial farm, its residents reverted to subsistence farming and became small-scale farmers or seasonal labourers on the surrounding farms (Everingham and Jannecke 2006).

Figure 11. 2 Typical houses in Elandskloof

Despite the residents return to the valley nearly 30 years ago, developing public and private infrastructure remains a challenge due to the administrative and financial holds on the settlement.

Administration was meant to redistribute resources and allow the residents to make decisions regarding Elandskloof as a community. Instead, resulting from poor planning and representation, it became a point of conflict, where opinions were voiced, yet no decisions were made (O'Connell

2018a). Consultants, one being a white farmer, were brought in to help the residents, however, insufficient time was spent with the residents to understand their needs, and their proposed business plans were unapplicable to the residents' needs. Therefore, with little useful help from the outside, two opposing sides developed in Elandskloof, namely the older generation, who remembered most of the trauma of 1962, and the younger generation, who mostly know what was told to them.
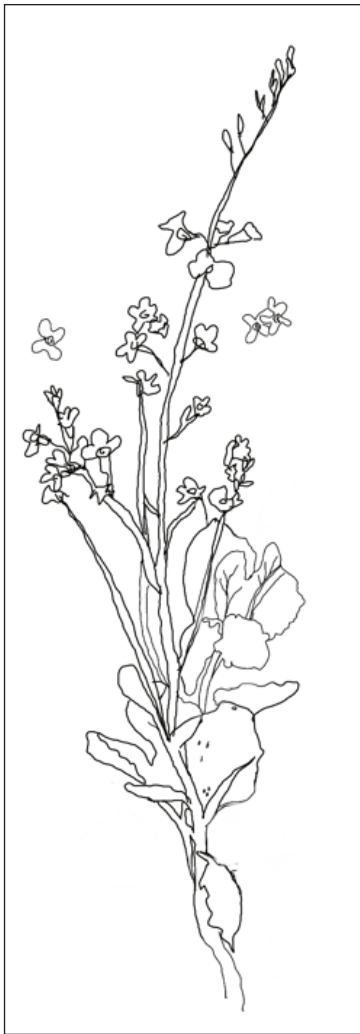
244

The older generation has made it difficult for the few young professional people to bring their knowledge to Elandskloof, making working the land nearly impossible. Despite this distrust, young adults continue to seek out academic and career paths that enable them to aid the Elandskloof's development through their respective fields (such as agriculture and construction) in the hopes of restoring the 3138 hectares of farmland on Elandskloof (Williams and Kepe 2008). Resources and opportunities, however, are scarce, as is the faith of the older generation in the younger generation. These issues have made Elandskloof a "community" divided by its past and unable to develop its future.

Intergenerational knowledge gap

As with any garden in its infancy, the labour is great and the weeds are many. In Elandskloof, the weeds presented strife between community members about what the town was and what it must become, and a growing uncertainty about the valley's future in the face of climate change.

In the time that the CRITICAL Project Team has been engaging with the community, a variety of narratives regarding who is responsible for Elandskloof's development emerged. Many of the elders believe that they can restore the town to its former glory with the help of external resources. Several of the elders

expressed a cynicism towards both outsiders (like the CRITICAL Project Team) and the younger generation's skill and capacity to contribute to these developments (Cole and Maharaj 2023). The youth have sensed this distrust to the point where they choose to distance themselves from the elders, the community projects and the community development meetings.

It has resulted in an intergenerational knowledge gap, which continues to expand as time passes. This not only makes it more difficult to execute physical improvement projects (like the greenhouse), but because there is an emotional disconnect, there is a risk of losing intangible heritage to intergenerational conflict (Du Preez 2023).

Climate change

Another challenge in the valley is the world-wide phenomenon of climate change. While residents acknowledged changes in the weather and the unpredictable intensity of dry and rainy seasons, their knowledge on the reason for these changes are limited. They understand, however, whatever the reason for it is, it is rapidly changing the valley and the mountains that had served them for generations. Fondly recalling snow on the mountains as a child, *Oom* Klaas says that he seldom sees snow in the area.

Elandskloof residents know the value of their hands and the landscape. In the years since the town was placed under administration, residents have grasped a small piece of paradise by simply

working *with* nature. Gardens are in bloom—even in the throes of winter—and whatever abundance is brought forth by familial gardens, is processed and traded amongst neighbours.

Recipes from "*Die Magie*" (the small stomach)

The residents of Elandskloof know Elandskloof by another name, "*Die Magie*" (the small stomach). They gave Elandskloof this name because of its remote and contained nature, however, it also aptly describes Elandskloof as a place rich in food heritage and biodiversity (O'Connell 2023a). Elandskloof has an abundance of naturally occurring resources such as *fynbos*, *buchu*, oak trees and wildflowers (Bleeker 2023b). The older residents are extremely resourceful and they have an intimate knowledge of the soil and the plants that flourish here (Bleeker 2023b; Daniels 2023). Many residents have their own personal vegetable gardens, rose gardens, herb gardens, succulent gardens and fruit trees, such as apricot, citrus and guava (Bleeker 2023b).

The rich food heritage of Elandskloof is known by its community members, however, it was not written down to be preserved. It is part of this visual journal's aim to write down this heritage, since it was part of the CRITICAL Project Team's objective to collect and store Elandskloof's food heritage (CRITICAL Project Team 2022). This has become vital to the community's survival as Elandskloof's past and conflict have created an intergenerational knowledge gap, disrupting the process of cultural food heritage being preserved and passed down to younger generations (Du Preez 2023).

Harvesting *buchu*

Every second year, the residents of Elandskloof climb the mountain with their knapsacks, scythes and canvas sheets. It is a day that the elders especially look forward to because the *buchu* harvest creates a special opportunity for them to share their know-how with the community. '*All you need to pick buchu is yourself, a bag or two and a sickle*', says Maureen Visagie, one of the elders in Elandskloof (as quoted by Du Preez and Strydom 2023).

The bi-annual buchu harvest is done with great care and intention, Maureen explains. *Buchu* only produces seed in a very short time frame between September and November. Harvesting *buchu* too frequently denies the plant an opportunity to restore itself and to germinate seeds. Combined with poor harvesting practices, the chances are good the plant will go extinct (Williams and Kepe 2008).

In 2004, the Western Cape Nature Conservation launched a *buchu* alleviation project in Elandskloof, enlisting the help of locals to combat the threat of extinction (Williams and Kepe 2008). The pilot project aimed to collect *buchu* seed and cultivate the plant on the lower slopes of the mountain, where it was easier for the older people to reach. The residents, however, fought over where the cultivation was to take place and feared that some parties would benefit more than the others (Williams and Kepe 2008). This prevented Elandskloof from planting the seedlings the residents cultivated. The project was a failure; however, it illustrated the multi-layered complexities of the community dynamic.

Still, the residents are united in the way they use *buchu*. *Buchu* harvesting takes place in the summer months between December and February. The *buchu* is cut from the shrub and heaped onto the canvas sheets, then rolled into tight bundles and strapped to the harvesters' backs. The hike down from the mountain can be treacherous, but Maureen recalls, with a glint in her eyes, how children slid down the mountain slope to see who reached the bottom first. The *buchu* is carried down the mountain and distributed to local and national buyers whom they rely on for additional income.

Impoverishment in Elandskloof has forced older residents to rely increasingly on Elandskloof's rich biodiversity. For an extra income, they would collect acorns, *buchu*, wildflowers and proteas, something they never had to do before they were forcefully removed (O'Connell 2018b). The wildflowers (*Myrsine Africana*) they collect are usually dried and then sold as arrangements (O'Connell 2018b; Williams and Kepe 2008). This provides a meagre income, however, wild indigenous *buchu* (*Agathosma betulina*), a naturally growing plant in the Cederberg mountains of the Western Cape, South Africa, used for a variety of medicinal, food and cosmetic purposes, is the more lucrative resource (Williams and Kepe 2008).

In recent years, the plant has fallen under the protection of Cape Nature Conservation, restricting movement of the old residents from the places where their parents, grandparents and them as children, used to walk in the mountains to collect *buchu*. The residents require a permit, for which they must pay up to R250 to harvest *buchu* and instead of selling it themselves, they must get a seller to sell it for them (Williams and Kepe 2008). The residents do not have the specialised equipment to distil *buchu* oil themselves, therefore, their plea is for support and training in commercialising their natural resources so they can market it themselves without having to depend on a middleman. Until then, the residents are dependent on a price set by the seller.

Natural remedies

Known commercially as *buchu* water, the condensate recovered during the distillation of *buchu* oil is often used by Elandsklowers (Elandskloof residents) to treat colds and flu and, interestingly, they also used it to treat the flu-like symptoms of Covid-19 when the virus reached their settlement (Brendler and Abdel-Tawab 2022).

Another medicinal plant that is often used is *snotbossie*, literally meaning "booger plant", because of the mucus-like substance that the plant exudes when broken. They use the gel-like substance for sores, scratches and rashes. The endemic plant is more commonly named *Balsem-Kopiva* (*Bulpine sp. Iridaceae)* and found in the wild *veldt* (natural shrub land) and in many South African gardens due to its lovely small yellow and orange flowers. It is a non-edible plant, yet it is used in many South African dermatological treatments such as a balm for skin ailments, wounds and inflammation (Du Toit 1998; Philander 2011).

Food is also used to treat certain ailments. Lamb stew with seasonal vegetables from the garden is prepared for postpartum patients to revive their strength and promote internal healing. Beetroot is used in its various forms as a medicine to treat the bowls and intestinal problems.

Preservatives

Beetroot, along with other fruits and vegetables harvested in Elandskloof, are preserved through canning, a skill that is still frequently practised in Elandskloof. An abundance of fresh produce is harvested in the valley year-round, however, since electricity is a new and scarce luxury, many families stick to family recipes to process and preserve the abundance of fresh and leftover produce.

Oom Klaas explains how it is done: '*You cut the watermelon into slices. Take the pits out and cut the rind off. Boil the watermelon in sugar with a pinch of salt. Then you mash and can it.*'

An Elandskloof resident knows what foods should and should not be processed: an oblong variety of watermelon is perfect for jam, however, its cousin—another variety known as the "bitter melon"—is only good enough to feed to pigs. This collective food knowledge is something that is passed down from parent to child, as Maureen Visagie says: '*You watch what your mother does.*' That is how Maureen's daughters learned, they watched her bake cake and eventually learned how to do it themselves (as quoted by Bleeker and Du Preez 2023).

Tannie (Aunty) Maureen's mother used to work at the Citrusdal hospital, and she used to love making fruit salad for hospital patients and her family. She used seasonal fruit and served the salad with cream or ice-cream. Maureen also has a variety of fruit trees that grow in her garden, such as apricot, citrus and guava, that is used in her fruit salads and for apricot jam.

One of the first things Deidre George remembers about her family returning to Elandskloof in 1996, was seeing the fig tree that they used to eat from still standing near the old Dutch Reformed Church.

Sweet treats

Margie Januarie is a resident that keeps bees with at least six active hives in a Eucalyptus grove in the valley. Margie and fourteen other Elandskloof residents decided to only farm with crops, *buchu* and bees. These small-scale farmers started with one or two hives which has multiplied sevenfold since. For a while, these residents also kept livestock, however, the roaming livestock caused considerable damage to the beehives by knocking over the hives, and vandalism from the youth convinced the farmers collectively to prioritise sharecropping and beekeeping. With help from the community and fencing, Margie can protect her beehives from vandals and roaming destructive livestock.

Margie's bees make honey in one of the upper shelves of the beehive called a super. Margie has enlisted the help of her son to help her extract the honey which is then put into containers. When the honey has been safely extracted, Margie takes the containers home and processes it.

The equipment Margie uses for beekeeping in the grove was supplied by local governance. Those interested in beekeeping were given two hives and two supers to get them started. Margie and her husband accepted the challenge of the craft, and together, they increased the beehives on their plot from two to sixteen. Though it is difficult to manage the intensive labour by herself, limiting the number of hives she can keep, Margie says that it is possible to practise beekeeping in Elandskloof.

While finding once-off ways to support the independence of residents, as with beekeeping, the Administration hindered social and economic growth in terms of small-scale businesses and farming, because these businesses required the Administration's approval to develop and expand real-estate in the settlement, which they did not get.

Margie still remembers the cups of yellow, green and red jelly with custard that were sold at Elandskloof church markets when she was a little girl. Funds generated by local vendors at these events were donated to the church. Looking at the building now, one cannot imagine that it used to be the well-spring of life in the community. '*It is sad to think that it was that same church that sold us out*', Margie muses.

250
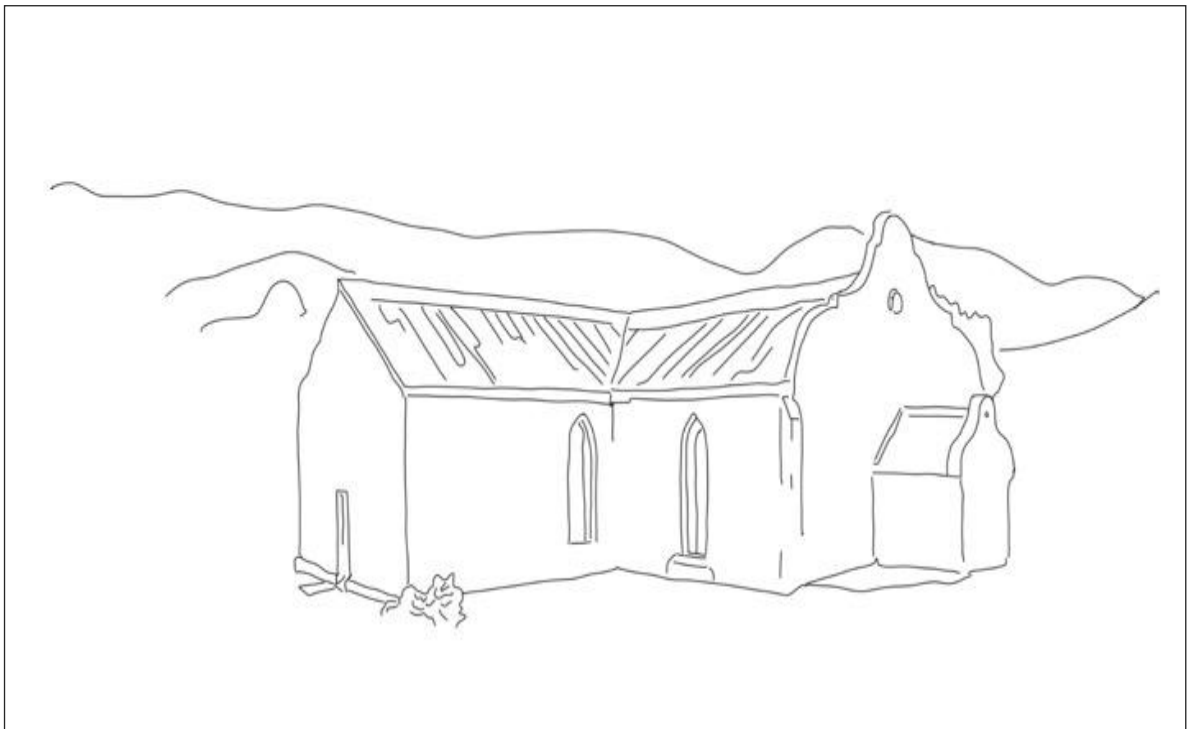
Food for thought

Even though its past has been rocky, Elandskloof is a place where things grow. More so, its future and that of its people is as fruitful as the soil. Time and time again, the community has proven its resilience in the face of life altering circumstances. Over time, the residents have lost their oral traditions. Elders like *Tannie* Maureen lament the disinterest of youth in the traditional practices of the community, however, as long as they, the elders, are alive and sow into the lives of their children, Elandskloof will grow. Over time, seeds planted for the love of gardening, cooking, making preservatives and baking something sweet will bloom into a vibrant community. The Elandskloof garden project is a miniature of what Elandskloof is becoming.

From the residents' gardens

An all-round favourite dish in Elandskloof is mixed greens or seasonal vegetables, such as green beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and squash. These are usually grown by the residents themselves in their home gardens, since vegetables can be expensive to buy in supermarkets.

251

Margie Januarie's Sago pudding:
- Take half a packet of sago.
- Soak it overnight in water. It is soaked in water because milk is a bit expensive.
- The next day, before you start cooking for the day, the water is thrown out.
- Then the sago is put into milk to become softer.
- Then the mixture is put into a pan to boil (I mix my custard while the sago is boiling).
- I take 3 large eggs and then separate the yolk from the white.
- The yokes are whisked together. Then it gets mixed into the sago to boil together a bit, making a custard. I then add my cinnamon sticks to the sago.
- I then take my oven dish and grease it. I then add the cooked sago mixture to the dish.
- Then I add little bits of [Elandskloof] apricot jam all over the mixture.
- I then whisk the whites of the eggs till they become stiff. Then I mix the egg white mixture into the sago spoon by spoon.
- I then put it into the oven. An electric stove works as good as a coal stove.

References

Anderson, M. 1993. *Elandskloof: Land, labour and Dutch Reformed mission activity in the Southern Cedarberg, 1860-1963*. Honours dissertation. Department of History, University of Cape Town: Cape Town.

Asmal, A. 2021. Elandskloof. [photograph series].

Bleeker, C. 2023a. Biodiversity in Elandskloof. May 2023 [photograph series].

— — —. 2023b. Elandskloof: rich in biodiversity, critical in 'community'. In: *Towards a climate of change: Symposium*. University of Pretoria, Humanities Faculty. Available at: https://www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities/news/post_3166961-towards-a-climate-of-change-symposium

Bleeker, C. and Du Preez. 2023. *Interview with Maureen Visagie in her garden*. 21 May 2023. [Accessed 10 February 2024].

Brendler, T. and Abdel-Tawab. M. 2022. Buchu (*Agathosma betulina* and *A. crenulata*): Rightfully forgotten or underutilized? *Frontiers in Pharmacology,* 13(1): 1–20.

Cederberg Conservancy. 2024. *Flora*. Available at: https://www.cederberg.co.za/environment/flora

Cole, T. 2023. Settlement structures in Elandskloof, May 2023 [photograph series].

Cole, T. and Maharaj, A. 2023. Interview with Chairman George. 21 May 2023.

CRITICAL Project Team. 2022. *Elandskloof: a chronology of loss.* Available at: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/aa83c390a22e44598222b7b3515719cf

Crowley, K., Wilson, M. and O'Connell, S. 2022. *Critical food heritage as a tool for adaptation: Climate change resilience through hybrid indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa*. Arts and Humanities Research Council. United Kingdom, pp. 1–4.

Daniels, N. 2023. *Peppers bring sweetness to Elandskloof restitution site*. Cape Times 7 July 2023. Available: https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/peppers-bring-sweetness-to-elandskloof-restitution-site-2e03919f-d60b-4ea3-b0d4-bd51663ce83e

Du Preez, N. 2023. Intergenerational knowledge gaps in Elandskloof: A CRITICAL perspective. In: *Towards a climate of change: Symposium*. University of Pretoria, Humanities Faculty. https://www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities/news/post_3166961-towards-a-climate-of-change-symposium

Du Preez, N. and Strydom, A. 2023. *Interview with Maureen Visagie*. 21 May 2023. [Accessed 10 February 2024].

Du Toit, B. 1998. Modern folk medicine in South Africa. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif van Etnologie,* 21(4): 145–152.

Everingham, M. and Jannecke, C. 2006. Land restitution and democratic citizenship in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 32(3): 545–562. DOI: 10.1080/03057070600830508

Jordaan, C. 2023. Elandskloof, May 2023 [photograph series].

O'Connell, S. 2018a. *Heritage: Finding your way back home after being 'uitgesmyt'*. Research Matters. Available: https://www.up.ac.za/research-matters/news/multimedia-3011547-heritage-finding-your-way-back-home-after-being-uitgesmyt

———. 2018b. *Uitgesmyt* (Kicked out). YouTube video, University of Pretoria. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXZdQ87qv28

———. 2023a. *Towards a Climate of Change*. YouTube video, University of Pretoria. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UV4nZxIKoM

———. 2023b. Elandskloof garden, August 2023 [photograph series].

Philander, L.A. 2011. An ethnobotany of Western Cape Rasta bush medicine. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology,* 138(1): 578–594.

Western Cape Government. 2023. *Roads during adverse weather conditions*. 25 June 2023. Available: https://www.westerncape.gov.za/tpw/department-of-infrastructure/roads-during-adverse-weather-conditions [Accessed 10 February 2024].

Williams, S. and Kepe, T. 2008. Discordant harvest: Debating the harvesting and commercialization of wild buchu (Agathosma betulina) in Elandskloof, South Africa. *Mountain Research and Development,* 28(1): 58–64.

Wnuczek-Lobaczewski, D. 2018. Elandskloof 2018 [photograph series].

— — —. 2023. Elandskloof 2023 – present [photograph series].

————————————————————————

Chapter 12

On Kitchens and Cookbooks

By Rory Bester and Karen Dudley

K^{aren Dudley is a noted South African chef, restauranteur, cookbook author and food entrepreneur. Her restaurant, "The Kitchen", in Woodstock, Cape Town, was patronised by everyone who had ever heard about it, including former US First Lady, Michelle Obama. Dudley's first cookbook,} A Week in the Kitchen (2012), *has become a bestseller in the South African market and has been followed by more cookbooks, including* Another Week in the Kitchen (2013), Set a Table (2018) *and* Onwards (2023). *Rory Bester teaches a graduate course called "Kitchen Histories" in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape. The course is an exploration of the kitchen as a complex archive of often competing microhistories, with the cookbook as not only a curation out of this archive, but also as a rendering of multiple kitchens in public. In this conversation Rory Bester and Dudley bring together their interests in kitchens and cookbooks to think about food, memory, identity and roast chicken 101.*

255

RB: In '*Kitchen Histories*', we try to understand cookbooks in more complex ways. A common reaction to cookbooks is that they're not serious, and looking through a cookbook library is just for "fun". It doesn't contain anything serious, either in terms of reading cookbooks or in terms of making them. Do you think there's a place for nuance and complexity in making and reading cookbooks? And if you do, what is that nuance and complexity for you?

KD: If I see yet another cookbook with a roast chicken recipe I'm going to glaze right over (no pun intended). But, if the roast chicken has something to do with somebody's life story or personal journey, or the recipe has some special little hack or family secret, then I'm interested. We want to hear an expression of an author's story in the roast chicken, rather than getting "Roast Chicken 101". We can get that on YouTube. So, yes, there's definitely a place for nuance and complexity in cookbooks. Food is about so many different layers and textures, and these don't come from simple, neat answers. They come from exploring complexity. They come from digging deep into the nuances that are relatable and that connect us.

RB: Food is all over YouTube, and especially on social media platforms like Instagram. So much so that in the first year of '*Kitchen Histories*', we presented the cookbook projects on Instagram. It has a certain alure—it's instant, it's interactive, it's free, and it can be a powerful form of knowledge activism. These were all things we wanted the cookbooks to be. But somehow it was really difficult to manipulate the Instagram platform enough to make the projects look and feel and read like cookbooks, and ultimately became an exercise in understanding the value of a physical cookbook. At a time when especially social media is so instant and bite-size, how do physical cookbooks remain relevant and compete with our desires for instant gratification?

KD: YouTube and Instagram ... incredibly helpful! Incredibly useful! Because of them, there's really no excuse for people not to learn how to cook something...

RB: ... like roast chicken ...

KD: ... like roast chicken! Or to know something about an ingredient. What an amazing resource! But, having and holding a cookbook in your hands, as opposed to seeing something on screen, is a whole different story. There's a different way that people connect to recipes and have a relationship with the food they make when it comes out of a cookbook that's in your hands. What YouTube does well is stimulate curiosity about food. What good cookbooks do is sustain growth and curiosity about food.

RB: Cookbooks don't only tell stories through words. They do it through a design sensibility, which something like Instagram struggles to replicate, especially in the design and layout of the text that sits below the image. This is something that was awkward in the Instagram cookbooks and frustrated even more so by the mechanism of the "... more" in Instagram posts. Is there a design sensibility that is particular to cookbooks, as opposed to other kinds of books?

KD: A cookbook tells a story, and that story needs a multi-layered design sensibility. Which is what Instagram can only do in the photography. There is a way to make a story flow through design. The paper, the colours, the font, the layout all help the story to unfold and flow. It's critical for cookbook writers and designers to collaborate on bringing a deep consciousness about the unfolding flow of the story in a cookbook.

RB: But, as much as a cookbook needs to flow in this way, it's also not the kind of book that is typically read from cover to cover. It is often flicked through and dipped into when a picture or ingredient catches the reader's eye. And in that moment, in that slice of reading a recipe, it still has to give something that is part of the bigger story of the cookbook. It should read in the moment, but also feel like it is part of something bigger.

KD: This is why a good cookbook is a collaborative project. Oftentimes, cooks aren't designers. So, you bring in partners who can help interpret your story. That's where it becomes a collaborative project. A cookbook needn't be a lonely thing. We need to be open to people who know other kinds of stuff. People who know how to put books together. People who can style and photograph a dish or meal. People who understand what the market needs. Because, ultimately, we want to offer something that's meaningful to the world and enable anyone to take what is on the pages in the cookbook and realise it on their own table.

RB: What are the elements of a good cookbook? Tell me about your understanding of the importance of curiosity, inspiration, friendships and stories ...

KD: The first is curiosity. When you're putting out a cookbook, you have to produce something that's distinctive and unique, but that people can also relate to. In a way, it's like you articulating curiosity for other people. My own curiosity and other people's curiosity is joined by that little bridge of relatability. You've got to be able to reach for it. But you've also got to be able to do it. The second is inspiration. A while ago social media went mad for baked feta. It was a mad internet crushing over feta and tomatoes with a bit of olive oil baked in the oven. People were going crazy and feeling inspired about it. People want to be inspired out of their humdrum, even if the ingredients are already there, and then just employed in a different way. People get really inspired by possibility.

RB: Do people ever send you photographs of the food they've been inspired to make from your cookbooks?

KD: Quite often. It's so lovely, and I love it when people take a recipe and make their own. There's something wonderful about a cookbook becoming part of culture. That's also the contribution of a cookbook when the pickled cauliflower has become part of somebody's weekly ritual or part of a family's story. Some people feel close to me because I've been in their kitchen. I've been on their

dinner table. Their book is a bit messy and dog eared because they keep going back to the eggplant with teriyaki. I love that messiness. I love that the book is falling apart because it means I've made a fast friend ...

RB: Which, going back to the elements of a good cookbook, is important because friendship is the third element ...

KD: Food has the power to seduce and bring comfort. Especially when we are reaching for the people around us. You can look at someone and feel like they need a little sandwich or a boiled egg. In this looking for the person's need, as opposed to just foisting something on them, the love comes in. Sometimes it might be unexpected, like I just want a slice of cucumber. Other times I want more. It's about listening to ourselves and what we need, and then reaching for others in that opportunity. Which leads to the last element of a good cookbook, which is the stories. If you want to know how to make a thing, you can go to YouTube. It's going to give you great technical knowledge. But stories, especially ones that are relatable and carried throughout the cookbook, touch people in deeper ways than just technical knowledge. When I did my first book, I wrote what I thought was a really nice introduction. But when I showed it to a friend, she said I must tell *my* story, the deeper story about how I come to my home and how I came to my food. She wanted me to connect with my food identity, show how I came to express myself through food, show that I'm still learning and bringing my friends along with me.

RB: How would you characterise the evolution of your cookbook journey, from your first book, '*A Week in the Kitchen*', to your current book, '*Onwards*'? How do you understand the journey in terms of an evolution of your practice?

KD: The first cookbook happened so suddenly. A photographer friend and a designer friend said let's do a cookbook. We've got all these things right here in the restaurant. So, every day I made twenty different salads. My chefs put a little bit of salad on a plate. I'd style it, we'd shoot it, and we'd give it to somebody to eat. We literally shot a week in the kitchen. Nobody was doing anything like that. And people related to the book so profoundly that it became a bestseller. I realised I can really make a contribution here, and people were hungry for more. So, pretty quickly we did '*Another Week in the Kitchen*'. And then, '*Set a Table*', which was my third book. At this point I needed people to know that I can do more than make lovely salads and sandwiches, that I can actually cook, that

I'm actually a chef. '*Set a Table*' is a more entertainment focussed cookbook. It's very close to my heart in its beauty and marked a little period of my life where I had a restaurant called '*The Dining Room*'. And then I did '*Onwards*', which is a story about me and where I am now. Still looking, still learning, still searching, still experimenting. It's been such a wonderful journey, and the books have articulated my growth. And I can build on this for my next cookbook, which I think will be called '*Upwards*', and which will probably involve more of the conversation that I'm now having about food systems, about the work that other people are doing, especially young chefs, and about collaborations and conversations. It's about a new imagination for the way we think about food, and letting go of the old ideas that aren't serving us. I love making cookbooks and have been so lucky to make them.

RB: How much is a cookbook about trust between you and your reader?

KD: People have to trust my creative style. This is not only about liking what I like, but also knowing that what I like is true to who I am. I love walking past a plate at a market, looking at its decorative green fringe, and thinking I see something on you with your little green fringe. I can see a piece of yellowtail with a kimchi dressing drizzled over. I can see you on that green fringed plate. People need to trust that I actually know my stuff, and that it'll work. People are in my world, in my home. They're seeing my children and my sweetheart. They're seeing me make stuff there. There's a trust. It's not some kind of studio. It's real life. And, practically, it means all the recipes have to be tested. They have to work in different baking tins, different ovens. They have to work whether you're in Joburg or Cape Town or Kimberley.

RB: I want to ask you about kitchens, because cookbooks often emerge out of all the kitchens that make up your life. At any given time, you, especially you, are holding multiple kitchens. There's your mother's kitchen, your home kitchen, your two restaurant kitchens, and even the kitchens of the people who make food out of your cookbooks and then send you pictures. These different kitchens have overlaps and similarities, but they also show up differences and contradictions. How do you understand your life's collation of kitchens?

KD: My home kitchen and my restaurant kitchen are both really working kitchens. At home it drives my family bananas. They're always asking why there are so many bottles of sauce everywhere. My children call them squatters. They're just sitting there and not paying any rent. But I need all these

resources around me. My mother's kitchen is here with me, but in memories rather than physical things, in her generosity, her belief in doing things properly and always reaching for something that is properly good and delicious. Like a scone or a muffin. I also have memories of her Hong Kong Chicken. It looked sticky and black and had the flavour of soy sauce. And garlic and ginger and sugar. It was pure *umami*. I've tried to make it, but haven't reached the flavours of her Hong Kong Chicken. It probably came from one of those 1970s cookbooks that fancied itself for making "Oriental" food. Or maybe it was a cutting out of a newspaper. Some auntie introduced Hong Kong chicken and it was novel and interesting and amazing and now I sit with this legacy, with this intrigue. Now I have this problem of trying to make my mother's Hong Kong Chicken.

RB: Does Hong Kong Chicken remind you of anything else?

KD: When I think of Hong Kong chicken, I also think of the red and cream damask curtains in the lounge in my parents' home in Fairways in Cape Town.

RB: The kitchen is full of emotions. The archive that the kitchen holds is full of emotions, and

a cookbook must navigate these emotions. Some of these emotions, like sentimentality and nostalgia, are often easily presented in cookbooks, especially when remembering the simplicity and comfort of a childhood kitchen, or in writing an inspirational cookbook about the love and kindness that oozes out of a grandmother's kitchen. Others, like a sense of sadness and loss, are more difficult and not surprisingly less common in cookbooks. Then there are difficult emotions, like betrayal, jealousy, anger and hate, which are common in novels and films about kitchens and food, but are rarely represented in cookbooks and their stories. Have you ever considered any of these more difficult emotions when thinking about your cookbook practice?

KD: It's a very interesting thing to explore, because we can't really understand our progress or our little joys if we don't understand a little bit about pathos. So, I have one story, which is in '*Another Week in the Kitchen*' (2013), it's called Layne's Hummus (Dudley 2013: 163). When I lived in the US, I went out with someone called Layne. He was a lovely man, but we were just never getting it together. He's basically a priest, but was experimenting with a relationship with a woman. In a last-ditch effort to make it work, we went on a road trip from Washington D.C. to Florida in a huge panel van that belonged to an old lady. And he packed hummus. It's a little bit different to a regular hummus. It has cayenne pepper in it. Layne ate like a ramp model, but made amazing hummus.

We arrived in Florida, which was smelling of jasmine blossoms, and it's hot and humid. And we're navigating this relationship that's fraught and difficult. And the hummus is all the sadness of this unfulfilled relationship that's just not happening. So, the hummus is basically the best thing that came out of this failed, sad relationship. It carries some of that kind of sadness of unrequited love. Every time I have the hummus there's a little touch on that sad time, that difficult journey, but in dipping carrots in the dip, it is something that becomes so amazing. So, I have this sad memory, but also one of the best things he gave me.

RB: Holding the emotion isn't only about the stories that are inside a cookbook, but also the stories that are outside a cookbook, right?

KD: Recipes can help us through things. People have written to me and told me how powerful my recipes and stories are. They bought my book, and it helped them through the death of their father, or they just cooked like mad from one of my cookbooks to process an emotion. Some people even keep my cookbooks on their bedside tables. There's something in where people are in their lives, and a connection with food that is healing.

261

RB: Why do you cook?

KD: I cook because I can't help myself really. Sometimes it's because people need to be fed. Sometimes it's because I want to do something new and be the person to take somebody to that new place. There's a joy in being able to take somebody along with you. I cook because there's great pleasure, and I suppose I'm still always looking for affirmation. I'll make something for my family and go, is that working for you? Do you like that? It's good, hey? Do you think it could be in a new cookbook? What do you think of that? Did you get the little crust on there? Did you see how I cooked it a little bit less, so it's a little bit more tender? Did you taste the curry leaf in that sauce? It's about saying come with me because deliciousness always wins! So, sometimes I have people in my head that I'm cooking with or for, and others that I want to seduce. But, for the most part, I'm cooking to my own desire and looking to making something that's really exceptional and interesting and curious and something that's kind of pushing the boat out a little bit.

RB: You have a mantra when it comes to food—"Adopt, Adapt, Develop". You find something that sounds amazing or you eat something that is equally amazing and you adopt it. Then there's a

process of adaptation and experimentation, substituting one ingredient for another, cutting or shaping something differently in ways that speak to you. And lastly you develop it, trying it again and again until you know you love it, your family loves it and your friends love it. Then you put it out into the world. It's a beautiful account of a creative process that is about curiosity, questions, research and actually making a gustatory argument for something. I'm especially interested in the "Adapt" part of your mantra, which is not only an opportunity to localise something that is from elsewhere, but also tap into the possibilities of future indigenous food systems.

KD: When I started writing cookbooks, pomegranate syrup, which is a classic Mediterranean ingredient, wasn't readily available in South Africa. But *moskonfyt* has the same tart, sweet profile as pomegranate syrup. *Moskonfyt* is not only local, but also peculiar to us here in the Western Cape where grapes are grown for winemaking. And then, if we think about carbon footprints, there is even more impetus to find sustainable local equivalents. If we aren't already making it ourselves, we have to reach out to producers who can make it. Right now, I'm wanting to make lots of taramasalata. To get the salted and cured fish roe that is tarama paste, especially not the dyed one, is very difficult. So, I'm speaking to Greek chefs and asking them if we can't make it using *snoek* (pike) roe. *Snoek* is everywhere in Cape Town fish shops. It's part of the cultural landscape of the city. We smoke the fish, so why can't we smoke the roe and do something that's particularly indigenous to here? Then there's bulgur wheat. Instead of using bulgur wheat, we can use red sorghum. Love red sorghum! It has better flavour, a marvellous texture, and it's indigenous. It just feels right. As a cookbook writer, it's kind of a responsibility to put it out there and to say, look at this good thing, let's use this good thing that's from here. It might taste slightly different, but it belongs here. It's something unique to us.

RB: For the last two years you've judged the '*Eat Out Woolworths Restaurant Awards*'. What's it like for you to eat food prepared by other chefs and more specifically, judge their food?

KD: Because I'm so curious and so hungry for new experiences and new flavours, I'm always curious about what people are making, and how they're expressing themselves. I love when there's a humility in the delivery. I love when there's beautiful technique. Sometimes a thing is so delicious you just want to put your face in it. I get very excited when there's a feeling of generosity—not a generosity of portion, but a generosity of spirit. I recently ate at La Petite Colombe in Franschhoek outside Cape Town. Oh, my hat, it was phenomenal. The chef, Peter Duncan, comes from the small town of Saron, which is just north of Tulbagh in the *Grootwinterhoek* Winderness Area. He made a

linefish "*viskop*" (fish head) chowder that reached back to the way his family made fish head soup when he was a child. Two very beautiful pieces of yellowtail were poached in oil tableside. So, you see it being poached, then it goes off to the kitchen, comes back again in little bowls, along with all the other ingredients for the chowder. There are bits of onion and bits of spice and bits of other interesting things and cream. And the chowder gets poured over this fish. It's so powerfully the chef's family's story. You can see it in all the ingredients coming into play right there on the table. You can see the tenderness of heart, and it was such a beautiful experience.

RB: Grannies are so often the inspiration for food journeys. And recently, grannies have become the focus of many good cookbooks, from '*Pasta Grannies: The Secrets of Italy's Best Home Cooks'* (Bennison 2019) to '*In Bibi's Kitchen: The Recipes and Stories of Grandmothers from the Eight Countries that Touch the Indian Ocean'* (2020). Why are grannies so ubiquitous in stories about food?

KD: Because nostalgia is so evocative. And food is so evocative. For people, for memory, and it touches us so deeply. But sometimes nostalgia is a little bit of a lazy thing because what is true for you might not be true for me. If you're articulating your nostalgia in an interesting way, that can be a good thing. But you have to be careful. Some people's mothers and grandmothers were just not good at cooking. They were good at other things, like sewing you a whole wardrobe. And for those that do have interesting cooking stories, we need to be able to make new stories out of the memories. We don't want to get stuck in the past. We want to have something that has meaning in the present.

RB: A last question about what holds all of this together ... how do you understand what you do as a creative practice? We know the creative practices of visual artists, composers and musicians, novelists, and poets, but what about the creative practices that sit around food, around being a chef and cookbook writer?

KD: My creative practice is curiosity. In other words, looking for things. And then, boldness, with a little bit of boldness and bravery and audacity. So, being creative and audacious is my practice. And then my practice is also putting on my apron and getting in there and testing new things that will work in different contexts, that will work for different people. This kind of development is part of my creative practice. But my happiest time is sitting here amongst my books and creating new things and looking for new things and making things beautiful on a plate and making and finding recipes that are going to connect profoundly with people.

References

Bennison, V. 2019. *Pasta grannies: The secrets of Italy's best home cooks.* London: Hardie Grant.

Dudley, Karen. 2012. *A week in the kitchen*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

— — —. 2013. *Another week in the kitchen*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

— — —. 2018. *Set a table*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

— — —. 2023. *Onwards*. Johannesburg: Penguin.

264

Chapter 13

Kitchens, Archives and Cookbooks

Rory Bester, Shireen Abrahams, Limpho Makapela and Amber Poggenpoel

This is a conversation about cookbooks, and more specifically, the three cookbooks produced for the 2023 'Kitchen Histories' module in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC): 'Cooking Curiously' *by Shireen Abrahams;* 'Ous Beauty's Kitchen' *and the* 'Kitchen of the Trade Unionist and "Pseudo" Vegan' *by Limpho Makapela; and* 'Poggenpoel Cookbook' *by Amber Poggenpoel. The cookbooks emerged out of the module's History Maker Lab, a methodology for thinking history through making history that understands the kitchen as a complex site of memory and archive, and the cookbook as an opportunity to engage and curate out of this archive. Over an intensely creative period of four months, the cookbooks emerge out of a series of seminars on creolisation, migration and diaspora, accompanied by meals lovingly prepared and openly shared with anyone who wants to sit at our table; sometimes conflicted and oftentimes contradictory conversations with family, friends and strangers; and the rigour, insights and enabling feedback of expert cookbook makers.*

265

RB: Let's start with what your cookbooks are about. Each of you has stayed quite close to home in configuring cookbooks that differently speak to three generations—grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, siblings and cousins—of memory, making, preference and ritual. They include recipes that are carefully recorded and passed down from one generation to the next, recipes that exist only as distant or painful memories, recipes that are absent because of family feuds or because they are family secrets and new recipes that are re-making old identities. These recipes exist in rich conversations with a trove of family photographs, anecdotes about when something was first tried or how it's adapted to particular tastes and wider family histories written with and against apartheid. They feel like they belong together as a compendium, but it's their differences that we should explore first.

Shireen: My cookbook is a Cape Malay cookbook, but it's also an Islamic cookbook. And it's my family cookbook. It depends on who I'm talking about. When I talk about my grandparents, I need to say that my grandmother was not ethnically Cape Malay. She was Indian, and she became a Cape Malay wife by marrying my grandfather.

RB: So, you're working with a fluid sense of Cape Malay in your cookbook, right? The Cape Malay identity that was shaped before and after World War II by figures such as I.D. du Plessis is controversial. One of the earliest extensions of this essentialist view was Hilda Gerber's '*Traditional Cookery of the Cape Malays*' (Gerber 1954). It took nearly 40 years for the, the real complexities of Cape Malay cuisine to be expressed in published cookbooks, starting with Faldela Williams' '*The Cape Malay Cookbook*' and Cass Abrahams' '*The Culture & Cuisine of the Cape Malays*', and then really growing in a range of cookbooks from 2008 onwards (Abrahams 1995; Williams 1993). Your cookbook takes the notion of "Cape Malay" even further.

Shireen: When I talk about the Cape Malay in Cape Town, I'm acknowledging many differences and contradictions. For example, the difference between growing up Cape Malay in the north of Cape Town and the south of Cape Town. In my research for my cookbook, I found that families who moved from the south to the north lost the older traditions of the south and became detached from that identity. Not in the sense that they are not Cape Malay, but rather in the sense that they are finding new and different ways to be Cape Malay in the suburbs.

266

RB: How do you understand "north" and "south" in the way you're using it?

Shireen: It's what's on either side of the "*Boerewors* (South African beef sausage) Curtain" (*laughs*)! Anything just above the city is north, and everything below the city is south. Kensington is technically north, but people still call it south because of forced removals. Kensington used to be a largely Black, but also mixed area. People were moved out of Kensington to Langa and Nyanga, and a lot of the, especially Muslim community, were moved from District Six to Kensington. So, for me, the north doesn't include Kensington, and the "curtain" actually starts next door at Canal Walk. The part of my family who moved to Kensington are very traditionally Cape Malay. They follow those traditions that are practiced in the south of Cape Town. My own family moved to the north of Cape Town and have a very different way of being Cape Malay.

RB: This is further complicated by who does and doesn't grow up Cape Malay, and who over time, becomes Cape Malay, which is part of how you're arguing for a more complex understanding of Cape Malay.

Shireen: My dad and his sister didn't grow up with Cape Malay parents. Only their father was Cape Malay. And my dad and his sister then also married people who weren't Cape Malay. So, we see

Cape Malay a little differently. Producing the cookbook helped me think through where I belong in this community that we call "Cape Malay", and also challenge popular notions of the "curtain" that divides north and south.

RB: Producing a cookbook is complex, especially when they are bound up in the political histories of racism and forced removals that intersect with the personal histories of generational and intergenerational memory and archive.

Shireen: This cookbook has been a very emotional journey, especially for my dad. He's had to face things he'd been pushing away since his mother passed away. The other day, when I was sitting with my scarf in a turban and wearing an apron because I had just made *Akhni*, he said I reminded him of his mother. It's a big step for him even to be eating the food that I make and at the same time reminisce about his mother.

Limpho: Shireen's cookbook has a deep sense of identity—her grandmother's identity, her family's identity, her Muslim identity—and not only how these affect her ways of being in the kitchen, but also how she cooks food today for her family. Her cooking must be powerful, because it resonates so strongly with her father, and reminds him of his mother, your grandmother. You have your grandmother's spirit hands when you are cooking.

Shireen: I've said it already, but my grandmother was not Cape Malay. She became a Cape Malay wife. My stepmother, who is white and grew up in Durban as an Anglican, was also not Cape Malay, but she has become a Cape Malay wife. A sense of shared community is so much more important than ethnicity. My stepmother became Muslim in Cape Town, started participating in traditions and cultures that exist within these communities and took on the identity of being Cape Malay. This is why Cape Malay is more about being Muslim and being in a community than it is about having a particular ethnic background. If it's only about ethnicity, then it's going to be complicated, because the ethnicities that constitute Cape Malay are so many.

Amber: Shireen's cookbook is about trying to navigate and understand her religious identity through food. I'm not religious, but I'm close to religion. The most religious part of my cookbook is the Easter weekend. It's the only time we're super strict. We only eat fish on Good Friday. And if you don't eat fish, you eat hot cross buns and cheese!

RB: So, if it's not about religion, what is your cookbook about?

Amber: My cookbook turned out to be nothing that I thought it would be. It turned into an ode to my grandparents. For the longest time, my grandparents would not talk about forced removals. My grandfather only spoke to me about forced removals towards the end of his life. My cookbook is about piecing together this knowledge about my family.

RB: You don't address this directly in the cookbook. But, it's everywhere in how your family holds onto a sense of connection and sharing despite a trauma that sent different parts of the family in different directions. It's one of a number of subtle political layers in your cookbook.

Amber: There are politics on many different levels in my cookbook. My great-grandfather was a coloured man living in Lansdowne, which was declared a white area. When he died in 1972, the family wasn't allowed to inherit the three homes he owned. Everyone moved to a different area—Grassy Park, Pinati Estate, Southfield and Kensington. Forced removals broke up the family. And then there are the family dynamics that are the result of anti-apartheid politics. My dad was part of MK, but the family still doesn't talk about that. They will acknowledge it, but nothing more.

Shireen: The common theme between Amber's and my cookbook is the family politics—the trauma, the disagreements, the arguments. There is family we don't speak to anymore, and family we've both decided to leave out of the cookbook for different reasons, but which all stem from a place of trauma. Amber's cookbook is more of an archival journey. None of her siblings or cousins want to learn how to cook, and the family recipes are going to disappear if they are not recorded. But in being this archive and trying to curate a cookbook out of this archive, her project is full of the politics she spoke about—not only the politics of her dad's involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle, but also the politics of being coloured in Cape Town, and their own immediate family politics.

Limpho: Amber's cookbook is a tribute to her family and the ways in which they have continued to be together. So even though her cookbook is about many days in the year, her Christmas lunch is the centre of the cookbook. There is a sense of the detail and preparation that goes into Christmas, starting with the first family meeting in September! Each person makes the same dish in very particular ways, making the selection of recipes complicated, especially when the recipes themselves are so

much a part of family histories and politics. It wasn't so complicated with my cookbook, which is about the recipes that come from the kitchens that are close to me. It's a reflection on the dishes that have been prepared in my grandmother's kitchen, and then thinking about how different my mom's kitchen is from my grandmother's kitchen. Where my grandmother's kitchen was centred around hospitality, my mom's was about survival. In my own kitchen, I'm trying to hold these two kitchens, but also find a home for the vegan food that comes out of my kitchen. But as much as it's about my own veganism, it's also about me grappling with my own memory of the kitchen as a gendered and contested space.

Shireen: There are strong women in Limpho's cookbook, which makes me think about the many ways in which kitchens are woman-only and woman-run spaces. In Limpho's memory, her grandmother's kitchen was a lot stricter than her mother's kitchen. You followed instructions. You sat at the table. You cut the vegetables. But in her mother's house, you sat in front of the TV instead of at the kitchen table. And then Limpho's kitchen has exploded all of this by trying to figure out a new vegan kitchen for herself, but still also going back to these kitchens of her past. She's holding onto tradition, even though she is exploring new ideas.

269

Amber: Limpho's kitchen is about experimenting, about taking what she remembers from these other kitchens and shaping these memories into her vegan kitchen. Because these prior kitchens were so contested, Limpho's cookbook is also about trying to reconnect with food.

RB: If we think about all the kitchens that make up the cookbooks, there are the kitchens of grandmothers, mothers, stepmothers, fathers, aunts and uncles. They are the kitchens of homemakers, traditionalists, trade unionists, freedom fighters and eccentrics. To hold all these kitchens, you've chosen to organise your cookbooks in different ways—by days, by people, by culture. Can you talk about how and why you've chosen to organise the cookbooks in these ways?

Amber: I chose different days because my cookbook is about the rhythm of how we affirm each other as a family. There are five kinds of days that are family-centric and affirm who we are as a family—ordinary Sunday lunches, Easter lunches, Christmas day, birthdays and *braai* (BBQ) days.

RB: And for each of these days, it's also about the people who make the food on those days, which in turn, also says something about their own histories. This was really evident in your section on *braai* days.

Amber: *Braai* days are about three things—meat, fish and *potjie* (food cooked in a cast iron pot over an open fire). My dad flame grills meat like he's at a *shisa nyama* (burnt meat) because that's how the MK operatives cooked meat in Langa, and even though my mother thinks he burns the meat. My great-grandfather and his father before him were fishermen, so cooking fish on the fire is part of our history. In my family, there is always fish available and my two uncles do the fish *braai*. Everyone in the family has their favourite fish. I don't like *snoek* (pike) because it can easily go *pap* (soft). But a *snoek* head is my favourite kind of fish head only in a *lang sous* (long sauce). And then *braai* days are also about *potjie*, which my other uncle does, from when he started going on camping trips to racially segregated campsites like *Soetwater* outside *Kommetjie* (campsite in Cape Town).

Limpho: For my structure, I chose three homes, the three kitchens within those homes and the three people who prepared food in those kitchens. I was raised in two of these homes, both of which were in Kimberley. I was raised in both these kitchens and many of my culinary skills, which I resisted at the time, are rooted in those two kitchens.

RB: If your cookbook is structured around people, does this suggest that you associate particular foods with particular people?

Limpho: Some dishes, yes, but also other memories, like cutting vegetables in my grandmother's kitchen. I concentrated less on what she was making and more on what she was saying. Which is also why I remember so much about my grandmother, even more than my mom remembers about her own mother.

RB: In some ways you left those kitchens behind because you didn't absorb the recipes, but now that you're an adult you're wanting to go back to those kitchens, but as a vegan.

Limpho: I'm going back because those dishes were good and many of them are still my favourite dishes. I know I'm not going to find vegan pilchards anywhere, but I can still get something of that flavour in the simplicity of tomato, onion, chilli, salt and pepper. So, it's a going back, entering the space and thinking about my mom, thinking about my grandmother, remembering dishes and replicating a vegan version of these memories.

Shireen: I started with Cape Malay culture, because I needed to establish who I am in relation to this identity. From there I moved to religion because it influences everything Cape Malay culture. All our traditions celebrate some aspect of Islam. And then the cookbook moves to geography, because this allowed me the freedom to move out of Cape Town and consider other foods that I have introduced into my kitchen—especially cuisines that are similarly creole or are marked by colonialism, like Mexican food, and then the Arab food that my grandmother brought back to her kitchen through travel. There are also some foods that I eat that are not part of my kitchen and not in my cookbook. I eat biryani, but it's not my biryani, it's not in my cookbook. Not because it's Indian rather than a Cape Malay dish, but because there are two people in my family who makes the best biryani. And I leave it to them.

RB: How do you understand the differences between Indian and Cape Malay food?

Shireen: Indian curries are stronger, spicier curries, while Cape Malay curries are softer and sweeter. Cape Malay food in general is sweeter. *Bobotie* (spiced minced meat baked with a custard topping), which I also didn't include in my cookbook, is a good example of this sweeter style.

271

RB: Everybody makes a version of *bobotie*. Is it one of South Africa's national dishes?

Amber: Nobody else in the world makes *bobotie*. But Cape Malay people will say you must make it this way, and Coloured people will say you must make it that way. And Afrikaners will say another way. It's a debate between these different ways of making *bobotie*, which is also what makes it even more South African. But *bobotie* is very bland. The mince is barely spiced.

Shireen: *Akhni* would be a better option. It's also only made here, but there are so many different versions of it.

Amber: A full-house steak masala Gatsby would be a better option!

Shireen: A Gatsby cannot be a South African national dish because the Gatsby is a Cape Town thing.

RB: Food is slippery, like Cheryl-Ann Michael suggests (Michael 2006), and it can become a emotional conversation very quickly, and we have to find more imaginative ways of thinking about food and telling stories that can still hold and navigate emotions.

Limpho: I didn't give myself the room to mourn my grandmother's death, at the time when she died and also afterwards. With the cookbook, I've had to remember a lot of things, but it has been difficult because family politics means I don't have access to my grandmother's house anymore. A part of me wanted to reach out to this part of the family, but I sit with not forgiving a lot of them for what they did before and after my grandmother's death. I can feel her presence, but I still wonder whether I'm remembering correctly, or whether I'm doing her justice. I returned to these childhood memories of my grandmother, knowing that it's a good space, but also crying about it while I'm making my cookbook. So, there were heavy emotions that I've had to navigate in this cookbook. But more importantly, it's given me the space to mourn.

Amber: It was difficult for me to confront the emotions directly. So even though my family is still around and I live with them in the same house, it's difficult to ask my parents directly about the past. I sent them questions by WhatsApp, even when they were upstairs and I was downstairs, just so that I didn't have to confront the emotions directly.

Shireen: I was very *voorbarig* (forward)! I made sure to stand right in front of them and say I needed to know this or that. I really wanted to hold space for my grandmother, who is someone I don't know, but whom I'm told I resemble. Oftentimes it can be frustrating, especially as a young woman, when you're told you resemble this person so much that you feel like you don't belong to yourself. And you're trying to live up to this person you have no knowledge of whatsoever. So, as much as I held a space for my grandmother in the cookbook, I was also able to clearly position myself. As much as I was forward about my questions, there were times when I also needed to step back, reflect and tell myself not to push too much because I'm dealing with something that is very traumatic. It was difficult for my dad to relive a trauma that happened thirty years ago. So, as much as I was direct, I did it in a very gentle way with my dad. When I was a teenager, we didn't have a great relationship, but we would still always get along very well in the kitchen. That is how we would re-connect and bond, through being in the kitchen and through food.

RB: There is emotion in the stories that form the basis of the cookbook. And there is emotion in the re-telling of these stories in the cookbooks themselves. But there are also secrets that are left out of the cookbook. And secrets in the not sharing of recipes themselves. How did you engage and reflect these secrets in your cookbooks?

Shireen: The milk tart that my stepmom makes is a secret that I didn't share in my cookbook. But I did write about why she preferred to keep it a secret. The recipe is from her grandmother, who raised her and with whom she was really close. It's also a family favourite, and she wanted to protect that shared memory and emotion by keeping it secret. My stepmother had a difficult childhood, and it was these secret things that helped keep them together. It's also her way of protecting her family now, and also preserving the memory of the grandmother who protected her.

Amber: My sister's spice mix is secret. She says it's her secret. When we bought fish and chips, she only ate the chips with what was called "Fisherman's Spice". We never knew what was in that spice, but Storm decided she wanted to make it herself. Whenever my dad went away, he'd bring back spices for my sister to try and mix with other spices, until eventually Storm came up with a mix that was exactly like the spice on the chips. And now we put it on everything—hot chips, fried fish, fried chicken and even eggs. So, the mix is her secret, and she doesn't want anyone to know.

Limpho: In terms of recipes, I don't have family secrets. Because food is based on what's available in the house. But if I had to think about there being a secret in my cookbook, then perhaps my grief is the secret, because I don't go into much detail in the cookbook about my grief about my grandmother's death. The way I present the recipes masks the grief, mostly because I'm still learning to navigate the emotion of that grief. My mom was shocked that I still have my grandmother's skirt and coat. She said I should learn to let them go. But I have my own process.

273

References

Abrahams, C. 1995. *The culture & cuisine of the Cape Malays*. Cape Town: Metz Press.

Gerber, H. 1954. *Traditional cookery of the Cape Malays*. Cape Town: AA Balkema.

Michael, C.-A. 2006. On the slipperiness of food. In: S. Nuttall (ed.). *Beautiful/Ugly: Diaspora aesthetics*. London: Duke University Press, 257–266.

Williams, F. 1993. *The Cape Malay cookbook*. Cape Town: Struik.

Part 3:

Representing and Imagining Food

Long before the surge of work in transdisciplinary food studies in the new millennium, scholarship by cultural studies scholar and philosopher, Roland Barthes, anthropologist Claude Lévi Strauss and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu explored the intricacies of food's semiotic and interpretive meanings—within particular societies, among certain groups and transnationally. Often drawing directly or indirectly on these scholars' insights, food studies scholars have recognised that food is never simply a material resource, but always redefined within certain symbolic and meaning-making systems. The very fact that what constitutes "food" is defined culturally, and that what is deemed edible or not, or special or mundane in certain contexts, makes it clear that food is never devoid of social and cultural signification. An obvious example is that for many French people, snails are a delicacy, whereas for those who are unfamiliar with the idea of a mollusc being edible, the eating of snails is abhorrent. In South Africa, many think with tremendous pleasure of the eating of tripe, trotters and "offal"[1] as pleasurable. Yet for some, the idea of eating meat from the head of a sheep is appalling, although these people may find raw fish (unimaginable as food for certain offal eaters of cooked meat) wonderful. One of the first rules in accepting that food is always socially constructed, represented and imagined, is to respect the relationality of the meanings accorded to specific food items or cuisines, and to accept how varied food tastes and food meanings are. One crucial way of ensuring this respect is by understanding the histories through which certain foods come to be valued under certain socio-political circumstances. Therefore, to take the example of offal in South Africa, we could speculate that many South Africans had limited access to all parts of butchered animals, or ate as much of what an animal could provide or ate what was discarded by those who had the buying and social power to choose. A similar explanation has been given for why the intestines of pigs (known as chitlins) have been important in black American cuisine.

However, some black food scholars have stressed that attributing food tastes only to what groups *have* to eat because of their limited options, distorts the agencies and culinary inventiveness of socially and historically marginalised groups. Consequently, how food is represented and valued

---

1 Offal can include inner organs as well as the heads of animals such as sheep and goats, and is relished by many Namaqualanders (Nama people from the Namaqualand region of Namibia and South Africa), for example.

cannot be explained based only on socioeconomic factors, but has much to do with the sensory, olfactory, visceral and aesthetic meanings that certain foods, food rituals and dishes hold for particular groups. In emphasising the contextualised cultural relevance of certain food practices, Limpho Makapela turns to animal slaughter and the cooking of meat in her grandmother's home. Incorporating striking images in her photo-essay, Makapela shows that animal slaughter and the eating of meat have very specific cultural meanings in certain contexts. She therefore, challenges the blanket denunciation of animal slaughter and meat-eating in much of the cosmopolitan environmentalism we see today. Makapela, herself a vegan, draws our attention to the fact that colonial legacies, the Big Food industry and factory farming are the broader ethical and political issues requiring progressive environmentalists' or animal rights activists' attention. Her contribution here, eclectically combining personal reflection, recipes and photographs, makes it clear that meat-eating in certain societies can coexist with peoples sensory and spiritual grounding in ontologies of the physical and psychic entanglement of all life forms.

In "Kitchen Confessions", another, co-authored photo-essay in this book, the authors evocatively represent a performative work drawing attention to memory and identity. This contribution is refreshingly provocative about how we can explore food in relation to memory and identity. Originating as a performative work, it can remind us of how adventurous and generically hybrid food writing can be.

The links between constructions of nation or national identity and the representation of food is always a pivotal issue. This is because food is one of the salient resources through which nations define their distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* others. We need only consider how restaurants are advertised as specialising in national, rather than in ethnic, racialised or classed terms to understand how insistently food is represented in relation to nationalism and national identity. And in the same way that nationalism often rests on othering, so does the representation of food feature in defining the nation and its others. In her fascinating study of how North Americans have imagined food from Africa and, therefore, also the food of black Americans, Ani Steele situates herself as a black North American with a strongly critical sense of the othering and stereotyping of black and African food. Based on her research and onsite analysis of Walt Disney's theme parks, Steele sheds tremendous light on the extent to which signifiers of African food are enlisted to function in the Euro-American imaginary. Through exoticizing (and often inventing) dishes and food items from various parts of Africa, Disney sediments myths about the primordialism, homogeneity, stasis and danger of Africa.

Although these myths might appear to be "positive", seeming to celebrate African cuisine for an audience unfamiliar with Africa, they ultimately reinforce colonial tropes and demonstrate 'eating the other' (Steele, quoting bell hooks). As her study clarifies, the process of representation is a complex and intricate one. While it may seem easy to identify the oppressive effects of stereotypes, it is often far less easy to disentangle their complex semiotic and linguistic functioning. Steele's chapter is, therefore, noteworthy in explaining how signifiers work to create "signifieds" around food, which codes are at play in linking signifiers to "signifieds", and what broader discursive and political contexts reinforce and shape food's meanings

Apart from representing national and regional identities, food and food items can represent complex meanings for groups—defined in terms of class, race, gender, caste and so on. As Pamella Gysman shows in her chapter on black middle-class South Africans' eating practices, food has become an important signifier in forms of communication about identity and identification. By drawing on Bourdieu, Gysman shows how eating certain foods, at certain restaurants and in certain ways, all work as symbolic capital. The high-end foods consumed by the middle-class participants in her study do not simply indicate black people aspiring to whiteness; their consumption is instead evidence of using symbolic capital to make claims to dignity, public visibility and social success—in a racist context where black South Africans continue to be subordinated in various ways. Gysman's detailed attention to food, eating and race in Cape Town also explains how racialised eating patterns should never be essentialised or seen as static. Hybridised foods and eating practices characterise most societies, and it is important for rigorous humanities research to examine how food items, cuisines or food habits constantly change, fuse and signal shifting meanings and values—for individuals, within communities, within nations and of course also globally. South Africa, with its long history of migration, slavery, settler colonialism and postcolonial migration, is especially rich in revealing centuries-long legacies of hybridised dishes, food practices and cuisines—and their cultural connotations.

277

Brian Sibeko's chapter resonates with Gysman's. In his study of black gay men's food consumption, Sibeko demonstrates that food can function as cultural capital, and shows how often it can be enlisted in the individual and day-to-day struggles for recognition of those within socially subordinate groups, especially when individuals are caught in multiple axes of subordination. In effect, he illustrates how food can be "made to speak for" an individual, when his research participant constantly turns to food items and ways of eating to communicate a sense of himself

to others. Both Gysman and Sibeko draw extensively on Pierre Bourdieu's formulations about symbolic capital. It is also significant that Bordieu, who himself did not often write about food, currently plays a pivotal role in guiding food studies scholars' analysis and conceptualisation for understanding the meanings we attach to food, the centrality of food as a cultural resource and the increasing importance of food's cultural meanings when it circulates as a commodity and in systems of value. Gysman sharply reminds us of this in identifying and explaining the role of social media messages and photographs of subjects eating or close to food items. Like Sibeko, Gysman shows how food is used to communicate a sense of subjects' embodied subjectivity to others.

Conceptually, work on what food means to certain groups is linked to representations of food in the media and advertising. There has been a glut of work on how food is represented in the media for obvious reasons, the main one being the extent to which food is a key object in circuits of commodity production, sales and consumption in global capitalism. It has been noted by some researchers that food corporations spend enormous amounts on advertising food items, often to children, since this ensures the maximising of profits. Some of the work on representing food in the media is strongly oriented towards guiding civil society activism and policy intervention. For

example, work on the advertising of fast food to children in South Africa has, in recent years, focussed extensively on trying to ensure that legal and policy provisions to protect children from harmful fast foods are put in place. Other work, especially at the global level, has been more exploratory and often very rich in its insights into, for example, gendered representation in food advertising, racial representations in the marketing of food, or how food adverts work as complex communicative texts. For example, in a recent article in the '*Journal of African Cultural Studies*', Ivan Lukanda deals with the fascinating ways in which a popular Ugandan street food known as the "rolex" has become iconic. Apart from revealing a great deal about the role of national foods in food tourism in the present, this is an intriguing insight into the range of ways in which national and local newspapers, tourist publications, social media and the public imagine food items in certain ways.

In her chapter on the branding of halaal food, Ammaarah Seboa shows how branding and marketing have dovetailed with the religious coding of food, specifically with Islam's distinction between foods that are haram (unlawful) and halaal (lawful). The chapter raises the extent to which small grocery stores and large supermarket franchises are extending their marketing strategies to address customers' religious beliefs. The chapter is, therefore, provocative in reflecting on how the current marketing of food is increasingly focussing on consumers' diverse lifestyles and food choices.

Another important thread in media representation centres around growing celebrity chef and food television programmes. Most watchers of cable television are aware that there are several channels devoted solely to food and food preparation. What is pivotal here, is the role of what has been known among food studies scholars as "food porn", images and stories in which alluring images of food titillate viewers and function as spectacles and objects of desire. This work, therefore, reveals a great deal about how food currently features in commodity culture and worlds in which all resources have become coveted objects of craving.

One of the liveliest research areas dealing with food and representation in South Africa deals with the role of food in various literary texts. Several South African literary studies scholars and scholars dealing with South African fiction (Baderoon 2014; Moolla 2016; Highfield 2017) have turned to how food amplifies certain themes, or functions metaphorically and generally amplifies descriptions in fiction. This may be one of the most striking indications of just how much food means; exploring food in literary texts does not only mean that it echoes or reinforces what critics are able to discover without any attention to food, but that it intensifies, expands and even transforms what we can read into literary texts. This prompts us to realise that food is, as Williams-Forson (2022) puts it, an unstable signifier, often leading one to many meanings, or the foundation of multiple and ambiguous meaning-making. We can, therefore, be reminded that not only is the representation of food of great interest intellectually and in humanities scholarship, it is also the source of joy and surprise because 'food is vulnerable to the manipulative whims and manoeuvrings of people. People use food to say "I am happy, I am sad, I am mad, I am tired" and so on' (Williams-Forson, 2022: 8).

References

Baderoon, G. 2014. *Regarding Muslims: From slavery to post-apartheid*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Highfield, J. 2017. *Food and foodways in African narratives: Community, culture and heritage.* London: Routledge.

Lukanda, I. 2024. Street Food Discourses and the Case of the Ugandan "Rolex". *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* 1–15.

Moolla, F. 2016. Zimbabwean foodways, feminisms and transforming nationalisms in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and NoViolent Bulawayo's "We need new names". *Matatu,* 48(1): 221–234.

Williams-Forson, P. 2022. *Eating while black: Food shaming and race in America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

———————————————————————————

Chapter 14

Halaal Food Positioning Practices in Haram Dominant Foodscapes in Cape Town

By Ammaarah Seboa

The Islamic religion is strict in terms of laws regarding food and defines food that is halaal as lawfully acceptable for consumption, and the food to avoid is termed haram. The term halaal comes from Arabic and refers to what is "lawful" in Islam, while the term "haram" refers to what is "unlawful" (Ali et al. 2018). The terms halaal and haram concern not only a Muslim's dietary habits, but also how they dress, their use of cosmetics, personal care and cleaning supplies, overall, it is how they carry themselves and live (Hyde et al. 2019). In terms of research, little has been written on understanding the concepts of halaal and haram. Whilst the food should be clearly marked halaal, what is unknown to the public is the way halaal foods are branded or positioned within foodscapes, this in turn, refers to the kinds of semiotics that are used. The term foodscape can be seen as a broad concept, since it refers to spaces where one would acquire food (MacKendrick 2014). Within foodscapes, different semiotics are used to position halaal foods. Most of the time the food product would be branded as halaal, however, in the case where the product is not labelled, Muslims must be literate to read the semiotics of food such as certifications, signage or labels. Today, the halaal certification can be found on food products outside of the meat industry (Regenstein, Chaudy and Regenstein 2003). Even though most foods in foodscapes are halaal-certified, it depends on the Islamic presence in the area which determines the type of food that would be available. In a heavily Muslim-populated area, one is more likely to find a fully-halaal foodscape as opposed to a smaller Muslim population residing in the area. What is unknown to the public is the kinds of semiotics used to identify and position halaal food in foodscapes. In cases where not all foods are labelled, Muslims must be literate to read the semiotics of food to determine whether it is halaal or haram.

281

South Africa is home to more than one halaal certification organisation and due to its richness in diversity, with 2.5 per cent of the country's total population being Muslims (Bashir et al. 2019). For Muslim consumers, the act of purchasing food in a foodscape becomes difficult especially when it comes to the branding semiotics of halaal foods. As there is not one type of semiotic that is used to deem food products as being halaal, this may lead to problems regarding the nation's mission in

food security for the Muslim population. South Africa is one of the African countries where Muslims form part of a religious minority and the Islamic regulatory bodies are tasked with ensuring food security and access to the country's Muslim demographic. There are five certification organisations in South Africa which issue certificates, making six in total, namely: the South African National Halaal Authority (SANHA); the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC); the Majlisush Shura Al Islam also known as Shura; the Islamic Council of South Africa (ICSA); the National Independent Halaal Trust (NIHT) and the Halaal Foundation of South Africa (HFSA).

The aim of this chapter is to explore semiotics and practices used to position halaal food and separate it from haram food in selected Cape Town foodscapes. Additionally, the halaal semiotics and their ideological meanings which are repurposed in the positioning practices of halaal food in selected foodscapes will also be explored.

The concept of halaal vs. haram

The Holy Quran says that for products to be considered halaal, it must meet the requirements of halaal, according to Islamic law (Bashir et al. 2019; Hyde et al. 2019; Ismoyowati 2015; Wilson and Lui 2010). There is a misconception with some foods and drinks that are considered halaal, however, are clearly stated as non-halaal (haram) or prohibited in the Holy Quran and the prophetic hadith. It is said that, Allah (SWT) commanded His Messenger Muhammed (PBUH), where He says: 'O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth...' (The Quran: 2: 168). Even though all foods are considered suitable for consumption by Muslims, there is a list of foods which are haram and not suitable for Muslim consumption. Hyde et al. (2019) expanded the list of haram foods to include not only certain animals and alcohol consumption, but also circumstances regarding the slaughtering of the animals.

The most common haram foods to Muslims would be pork and alcohol. Aside from it being 'explicitly declared haram' (Saloom 2012), pork and its animal by-products are seen as 'impure, unhealthy and harmful for humans due to the fats, toxins and bacteria it contains' (Saloom 2012) and the Quran states that Muslims should avoid the consumption of anything which would cause harm or toxifies the body. The other reason as to why pork is considered haram is because the animal does not have a neck and it cannot be slaughtered the Islamic way— an incision is made in the neck along the animal's carotid artery, jugular vein and windpipe in a single swipe (Meikle 2014), thereafter, the

animal's blood is drained. For meat to be considered halaal, the animal must be alive and well cared for before its slaughter. Meikle (2014) further states that the procedure must be performed by a Muslim. The Islamic method of slaughtering appears more humane to these animals than shocking the animals before their slaughter. However, in the case that a Muslim should find themselves in a situation where there is only pork and no other food available, the Quran states:

> And why should you not eat of that (meat) on which Allah's Name has been pronounced (at the time of slaughtering the animal), while He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you, except under compulsion of necessity? (The Quran: 6: 119)

This means that if a Muslim is faced with death by starvation, an exception can be made in their consumption of non-halaal food products (Saloom 2012), as suicide is seen as a sin in Islam. Alcohol is also considered to be haram to Muslims, this too includes any type of food that uses alcohol in its preparation. In addition to pork, Hyde et al. (2019) note that carnivorous animals, birds of prey and land animals without any external ears, are haram for Muslims. Khan and Haleem (2016) extend this list to animals with fangs, such as dogs, lions, tigers and wolves as well as domesticated mules, donkeys and elephants.

If there should be any spillage of blood or the inclusion of blood by-products in the preparation of foods, the food is then deemed haram. Most of the haram foods concern the actual food or product, however, another haram factor lies in the conditions of the slaughtering of the animal for its meat. The first condition is if the animal is not slaughtered in the name of Allah. In Islam, when animals are slaughtered for their meat, it is done in the name of Allah, as a form of a small prayer and this is done to express a sense of gratitude to the animal as well as to ask Allah's permission to slaughter the animal (Anwaar 2017). The second condition regards the welfare of the animal before the slaughtering takes place. If the animal is dead before the slaughtering occurs, their meat is considered haram to Muslims. In contrast to the slaughtering of animals that provide halaal meat, a sharp knife must be used in the act. Lastly, if any foods should be contaminated with the abovementioned haram items, the food is immediately considered as being haram, even if the food was certified as being halaal before the contamination took place. Wilson and Lui (2010) state that Muslims do not view the halaal term as being a brand, rather as a part of their belief system and moral code of conduct, which is an integral part in their daily life.

Branding: A case of halaal food positioning practices

Branding is defined as being able to create 'a recognisable and unique identity for an organisation and its products, so as to automate buying behaviour' (Mafofo and Wittenberg 2018: 454). According to Mafofo and Wittenberg (2018), the original concept of branding was connected to the practice of burning an ownership mark onto a product. In the mid-twentieth century, branding became a mainstream social phenomenon. Mafofo and Wittenberg (2018) identify branding concepts such as brand identity, brand positioning, brand awareness, brand association and institutional branding.

Brand identity not only includes the packaging and colour, it also includes the product's image in different types of media. Bashir et al. (2019) posit that a relationship between the brand and the consumer refers to a sense of brand loyalty. Identity in relation to halaal has to do with ethnic identity. Given that the halaal bodies were established with the sole purpose to assure the safety of meat products to Muslim consumers, it thus targets a specific ethnic group of people. Traditionally the term ethnicity has been described in many ways and usually refers to an individual's ancestral heritage, as well as their common descent, beliefs, customs and much more; it is often seen included with the concept of race (Ferris, Peck and Banda 2019). The shared element of Muslim consumers is the fact that they are Muslim, and per their religious beliefs, they are obligated to eat halaal food. This then leads to brand awareness, which according to Rossiter and Percy (1987, 1997), brand awareness concerns the consumer's ability to recall and recognise the brand in a different context, while still in sufficient detail to make a purchase.

According to Kotler and Keller (2005), brand positioning focusses on the points of difference which sets a brand apart from its competitors. Here the term positioning may be simply defined as how a brand is positioned in the mind of the consumer, while paying respect to the values with which it is differentially associated or "owns" (Marsden 2000, cited in Marsden 2002; Ries and Trout 1982). In relation to foodscapes, it can be seen how an establishment would position themselves as one that caters to Muslim consumers. It is interesting to find out the kind of semiotics that are used to brand or differentiate halaal food products from other food products. However, this does not necessarily mean that the unbranded products are not halaal, instead it tells one that another type of semiotic may be used to create meaning.

Brand association makes use of ideas, values and feelings that consumers would think of or

experience when they use or interact with a particular brand (Mafofo and Wittenberg 2018). This is the brand marketer's attempt to create mental associations that are positive and strong, by differentiating their products from competing brands. In the case of halaal foods, Muslim consumers will always remember halaal-certified food brands, since they depend on such foods to survive. Bashir et al. (2019: 3) state that South Africa is 'one of the five' largest manufacturers of halaal goods. Furthermore, Bashir et al. (2019: 3) add that South Africa is also broadly regarded as being the 'gateway' to Africa's halaal food and beverage market. This brand acts as the main symbol of trust and quality for Muslim consumers (Mostafa 2021), since it clearly distinguishes halaal-certified products from non-halaal products. Aside for emphasising the halaalness of a food product, Bashir et al. (2019) go further to say that the halaal brand also serves to identify healthy food from unhealthy food due to the specific food quality, safety and hygienic conditions which must be met.

Commodifying halaal into a brand

It becomes important to investigate the kinds of semiotics used to brand halaal foods in different foodscapes to reveal the practices and meanings regarding such food. Ali et al. (2018) note that even though Muslim consumers are given a wide selection of Halaal products and services, each product group offers many different local as well as internationally recognised brands. Wilson and Liu (2010: 109) state that the 'halaal' cannot be seen as a brand because,

> ...it is a philosophy, which whilst apparent and effective in branding, marketing and product development; stretches much further into disciplines such as management, organizational behaviour, cultural anthropology and sociology.

However, in this study specifically, halaal branding refers to the use of halaal logos and/or symbols that provide assurance (Ali et al. 2018) to its Muslim consumers. This branding ensures that the ingredients used and the production processes are according to the Islamic Shariah (Ali et al. 2018). However, the meaning of the word halaal is derived from the Arabic language, and it means to be lawful, permissible by Islamic Shariah Law (Ali et al. 2018). Ali et al. (2018) further state that halaal is the dietary standard, as well as a religious obligation for Muslims. As such, some scholars argue that the term halaal cannot be a brand denoting commercial products acceptable for Muslims to consume, and this is what makes the term halaal so complex (Wilson and Liu 2010). By trying to shape halaal into being a brand, institutional branding takes place. The mosque is a religious

institution where Muslims pray and it spreads the message of Islam from the Holy Quran (Afnarius, Akbar and Yuliani 2020). Even though institutional branding widely refers to companies, to an extent it would also apply to halaal.

The halaal certification was introduced to South Africa during the 1960s. At the time it was administered under the supervision of the Ulama (a religious leader of the Muslim community) and is now adopted by all the pro-Islamic organisations who know of its importance to the Muslim community. At this time, the certificate was limited to the meat industry which includes both meat slaughterhouses and abattoirs (Smith 2012). In the 1970s, the certificate then extended to include the poultry industry, and in the 1980s it included other consumables. It was SANHA who established itself as South Africa's pre-eminent halaal certification body (Smith 2012). Today, with the inclusion of SANHA, there are six well-established certification organisations in South Africa. However, HFSA is not held in the same regard due to an earlier conflict with a foodscape in Durban where non-halaal food and alcoholic items were sold on the same premises where Muslim patrons would engage in prayer, thus nullifying the act (Shaikh 2018). There are strict rules and regulations that must be followed once an establishment obtains a halaal certificate from a recognised halaal authority (SANHA n.d.) which extends to an inspection of the premises.

Discourses surrounding halaal privilege in the marketplace

Johnson, Thomas and Grier (2017) argue that privilege can be understood as being a set of unearned social benefits that a dominant group possesses. However, this concept of privilege brings to light a contrast when looking at halaal-certified foods, since only a small percentage of South Africa's population is Muslim (Bashir et al. 2019). This notion of market privilege dates to the 1860s when the Dutch settlers colonised the Cape and brought Muslim slaves with them (Baderoon 2014; Oppelt 2012). In Baderoon's work, '*Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid'*, the author draws on various literature which supports how Muslim slaves were able to preserve their religious practices including food preparation. By preparing food for their 'masters', it is said that Muslim slaves influenced some of South Africa's cuisine today (Baderoon 2014: 50–51). The Muslim's privilege in the marketplace took precedence when the minority group insinuated themselves within the homes of their Dutch owners. Baderoon (2014: 51) draws on De Certeua's '*The Practice of Everyday Life'* (1984) and notes that the 'powerless subvert the culture of the powerful' under the

guise of decimal transformations within the dominant cultural economy to shape it according to their own interests and rules. However, within the South African context, the halaal concept has been repurposed to adapt from its position in the kitchen to the marketplace in respect of securing food for the Muslim minority group.

As a result of the different religious and cultural backgrounds in South Africa, foodscapes cater to large demographics and they try to include everyone. This proves to be difficult due to popular food trends and that one's food regime changes because of people's mobility and globalisation. In terms of the halaal concept, statistics show that globally, South Africa supplies the continent of Africa with 25 per cent of their halaal goods (Bashir et al. 2019). Instead of conceptualising the halaal concept, it can be looked at from a Foucauldian perspective in terms of privilege and power (McWhorter 2005). This not only refers to the privilege of having the halaal brand in foodscapes, but also how one can investigate the types of semiotics present in terms of the halaal certification bodies, since these bodies can also be seen as holding a sense of power.

Towards a resemiotisation discourse analysis

The theoretical framework employed is a resemiotisation discourse analysis and includes both aspects of resemiotisation and critical discourse analysis. Iedema (2001: 33) defines resemiotisation as a 'process which produces not exact likenesses, but represents a multi-channel set of directions; that is a (semiotic) metaphors'. Resemiotisation is used to open discussions and mark the shift in meaning-making from different contexts in addition to inviting various modalities of the human experience to open up (Iedema 2003). Furthermore, Iedema (2003) states that resemiotisation provides one with: (1) an analytical lens to view how semiotics is translated across spaces through social transformations and (2) implores one to question why specific semiotics are utilised.

Whereas, the main concern of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to demystify ideologies and power through a systemic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data, whether it be written, spoken or visual (Wodak and Meyer 2009), even though the purpose of CDA is to study the 'opaque as well as the transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination power and control' exhibited in language (Wodak 1995: 204: cited in Blommaert 2005: 24–25). Whereas the study on CDA by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) focusses more on the socially constitutive in addition to the socially conditioned. These authors seek to prove discourse as being an 'instrument of power'

(Blommaert 2005: 25) which has demonstrated an increasing importance within contemporary societies. Thus, CDA concerns more than just discourse, since it also looks at the relationship between different domains. As such, Thomas and Selimovic (2015) argue that CDA is able to approach a task by critically situating its analysis of events which surround the discourse.

Methodological approach

This study is qualitative in nature and the data collected primarily consists of images and document analysis. The research sites consist of the foodscapes N1 City Mall, Value Centre, Avonwood Square, Tygervalley Mall, Cape Gate Shopping Centre, Wembley Place, Kromboom Centre and Kenilworth Centre, all situated in Cape Town, South Africa. The data captured was images of the semiotics that supermarket and fast-food foodscapes employ in terms of the resemiotisation of the halaal concept and their positioning practices of halaal goods. A CDA was used to analyse the semiotics to understand the semiotics that are used to position halaal food. Through the resemiotisation discourse analysis, new conclusions can be reached on the state of the halaal concept as well as the level of awareness that these foodscapes possess.

The data collection was conducted inside and outside of the selected foodscapes during the period mid-August 2019 to mid-November 2019. The data set consists of images of various semiotics used to position halaal foods and the data captured consisted of images regarding both inside and outside the selected foodscapes. To avoid a state of confusion, the data captured through the researcher's smartphone's camera were downloaded into folders with the appropriate name and date, and later they were transferred to the researcher's laptop device to be sorted and stored. In addition to the data captured, the researcher's observations in the foodscape were recorded via a smartphone device and verbal consent was given in foodscapes upon being informed of study.

Resemiotisation of halaal positioning semiotics in foodscapes

This analysis aims to explore the instances of resemiotisation through CDA for the semiotics used in the positioning practice of selected Cape Town foodscapes. The semiotics consist mainly of written discourse in the form of the halaal certificate, signage, stickers, shelf labels as well as the crescent moon and star symbol. The analysis below includes a few examples of each semiotic type along with the critique on their position in foodscapes in relation to visibility and accessibility of Muslim consumers.

...

One of the most prominent and easily recognisable halaal semiotic would be the halaal certificate which is issued to foodscapes to legitimise their halaal status. This certificate can usually be found on or behind the counter of a fast-food establishment as seen in Figures 14.1–14.3. Along with these semiotics, English and Arabic written discourse is also used. By utilising these signs in their positioning practices, foodscapes can clearly communicate that they cater to Muslim consumers.

Figure 14.1: Simply Asia – Cape Gate

The certificate above (Figure 14.1) issued to the foodscape "Simply Asia" in Cape Gate Shopping mall is positioned below the menu (positioned on the wall) and is elevated so that consumers know about the establishment's halaal status.

289

Figure 14.2: Debonair's Pizza – Tygervalley

The certificate shown in Figure 14.2, was issued to Tygervalley's "Debonairs Pizza" and it is positioned diagonally to the left below the menu. It is positioned in a consumer's direct eyesight, meaning that it is easily accessible by Muslim consumers should they decide to purchase anything from this foodscape.

Figure 14.3: Ocean Basket – Kenilworth Centre

The certificate shown in Figure 14.3 is positioned on the counter at "Ocean Basket" in the Kenilworth Centre. It is one of the first signs that a consumer would come across once entering the foodscape. The sign placed slightly in front of the certificate alerts consumers that their product is also available on the Uber Eats mobile application which they can order for delivery or pick-up.

Aside from the examples of the foodscapes above which have certificates, there are many Muslim-owned foodscapes that do not have them, however, that does not make them any less halaal. Take note that this does not mean that they did not apply for a certificate, even if they are not required to. For an establishment to brand themselves halaal, they position their foodscapes with halaal branding semiotics. This usually involves adding the Arabic word for halaal, "حلال" onto their foodscape semiotics or it is incorporated in their menus (see the white circles placed on the Figures 14.4–14.6).
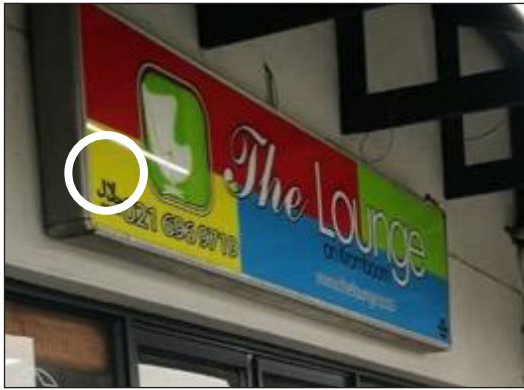
Figure 14.4: The Lounge signage

Figure 14.5: The Lounge menu

Figure 14.6: Spitfire menu

Another example of this type of positioning of halaal foodscapes is Wembley Place in Belgravia (see Figures 14.7–14.9 below).

Figure 14.7: Wembley Place

Figure 14.8: Wembley Place side-wall

Figure 14.9: Bismillah Restaurant

All the foodscapes at Wembley Place are halaal, which is evident by the semiotics positioned on the building as we can see the words "*Bismillah*" (Figure 14.9) on the banner of the Cape to India foodscape and the word "HALAAL" (Figure 14.8) on the "Tai-Chung" sign (see the word written in white). With Figures 14.8 and 14.9, the logo of the "Cape to India" foodscape is a mosque (see the white encircled image); thus, the Muslim's place of worship is used as this foodscape's branding semiotic. Aside from these eateries, there is also a butchery, a market and a takeaway known as "Wembley Road House" (Figure 14.10). Wembley Place is in a majority Muslim-populated community, which is why there are no non-halaal food products sold on their premises.

293

Figure 14.10: Wembley Roadhouse

Another interesting foodscape found was a supermarket's butchery. The reason being, when the halaal bodies were first established, the halaal certification was only applicable to the meat industry. However, over the years it has surpassed the meat industry and it now includes other consumables. The next section of the analysis compares the meat positioning practices of foodscapes such as Spar, Woolworths, Checkers and Pick 'n Pay.

The Spar stores visited were in two different areas, Spar A in Elsies River and Spar B in Crawford area. Spar A does not sell any halaal meat, including chicken. However, Spar B sells halaal meat in addition to non-halaal meat. In both foodscapes, the butchery makes use of open fridges with shelves where the meat is packed. Spar A makes use of labels for their beef fridge (Figure 14.11) which says "BEEF", whereas the only semiotics which references the meat in Spar B is the price tag aside for the faint MJC logo on the last pack of viennas (Figure 14.12).

Figure 14.11: Spar A – beef fridge

Figure 14.12: Spar A – cold cuts fridge MJC stamp

A few of the Woolworths foodscapes visited were also located in different areas. Woolworths A is in Goodwood, Woolworths B is in Kraaifontein and Woolworths C is in Kenilworth. What has become a trend among a few Woolworth's foodscapes was the instalment of fridges as part of a power saving scheme. Meaning, the meat products are no longer packed on the same shelves, which previously offered the halaal meat products little protection from non-halaal products. In the Woolworths foodscape, different meat products would be allocated a shelf, but as seen across many other foodscapes, consumers tend to "pick up and put back" products. This is not accusing Woolworths of this act; it is merely an observation that was made while collecting the data. Nonetheless, with this act committed by consumers, non-halaal meat products would be placed with halaal meat products and vice versa. With Woolworths installing these fridges, there is hope that these acts would be eliminated. The figures below illustrate the fridges available in Woolworths A (Figure 14.13) and B (Figures 14.14 and 14.15).

Figure 14.13: Woolworths A fridge

Figure 14.14: Woolworths B chicken fridge

Figure 14.15: Woolworths B packaged foods fridge

In contrast to Woolworths A and B, Woolworths C did not have the fridges as shown in Figures 14.13–14.15 above, installed in its foodscape. Instead, it still used the open-fridge with the shelves, however, there is an open corridor which separates the halaal meat from the non-halaal meat stocked on the shelves, see Figure 14.16.

Figure 14.16: Woolworths C shelved fridge

On the left side of Figure 14.16 one can find the halaal meat products (Figures 14.17 and 14.18) stocked with the MJC halaal certificate visible. And on the right side the non-halaal meat products (Figure 14.19) are stocked. These fridges also use glass partitions to separate products, which physically positions the halaal and non-halaal meat products separate in these foodscapes both with and without the doors. The initial measures taken by Woolworths are the discourse displayed on the halaal certificates (Figures 14.16 and 14.17), the product's price tag (Figure 14.18) and foodscape packaging stickers (Figure 14.19). The halaal certificates are indicated by the stickers on the top right of the packaging.

298

Figure 14.17: Halaal fridge and certificate

Figure 14.18: Woolworths label – halaal beef ribs

Figure 14.19: Woolworths sticker – halaal smoked beef viennas

By using the additional semiotics discussed, this foodscape is seen as adhering to and even going beyond the rules and regulation regarding the halaal certificate. They have put a sort of security measure in check by labelling the price tags as "halaal", and they even created their own sticker which is the recontextualisation of the imagery on the halaal certificate (Iedema and Wodak 1999). This could have been done as a means of creating association between brands.

The few Checkers foodscapes visited were also located in different areas, however, for this analysis only two were chosen. Checkers A is in Goodwood and Checkers B is in Kenilworth. The Goodwood area has a fifty-fifty Muslim to non-Muslim ratio, whereas the Kenilworth area is seen as a majority Muslim dominant community. The Checkers A foodscape sets up appropriate labels like the Spar foodscapes and positions its halaal meat products on one side of a four-sided shelved fridge (Figure 14.20). This fridge only stocks chicken products, such as County Fair chicken as well as Fresh Choice (Checkers' own brand) both of which are halaal certified by the MJC.

Figure 14.20: Checkers A – halaal chicken

The image shown above in Figure 14.20 is of halaal-certified chicken. The products here contain a mix of County Fair and Checkers' poultry products, with the halaal certificate placed on the side. In Checkers B, there are two separate butchery sections, however, as of 3 November 2020, Checkers no longer have an in-house halaal butchery (Sedick 2020). When entering this foodscape, the non-halaal butchery is to the left of the foodscape and the halaal butchery is to the right. This foodscape makes use of semiotics to position and distinguish the halaal meat from the non-halaal meat. There is a large neon sign that says "non-halaal" on the wall of the non-halaal butchery (see Figure 14.21 below).

Figure 14.21: Checker B – non-halaal

The semiotics used to position and distinguish the halaal butchery from the non-halaal butchery is the use of halaal certificates, specifically MJC issued certificates (see Figures 14.22–14.23 below).

Figure 14.22: Checkers B – halaal butchery certificate

Figure 14.23: Checkers B – poultry counter halaal certificate

The certificate in Figure 14.22 is positioned on a pillar behind the counter of the halaal butchery, and it is placed high enough so that consumers can see it. This placement immediately alerts consumers of which in-store butcher they were at. As seen in its placement at other poultry counters, the certificate in Figure 14.23 is positioned on the wall of the fridge in which the halaal chicken is placed. This positioning reinforces the fact that this fridge is for halaal poultry products only. This is also seen as once again providing halaal food products with privilege and power (McWhorter 2005) in the marketplace.

The meanings and implications attached to the resemiotised semiotics

The semiotics that these foodscapes use to position halaal goods from non-halaal goods promote power, ideology and hegemony in relation to privilege in the marketplace (Foucault 1977; McWhorter 2005; Van Dijk 1993). The semiotics discussed are mainly in the form of written discourse. First it promotes power by giving both halaal and non-halaal meat products the semiotics necessary to communicate their status. However, one meat product is not seen as having more power over

the other. Both types of products can be sold to the respective consumers. Despite there being this sense of equality among the products, in some foodscapes there is the case of inequality with regards to the food products available. Despite there being a mosque located not far from Spar A, the halaal meat options are scarce.

The certificate, logo, sticker and other forms of written discourse are seen as the semiotics used to market halaal-certified foods in foodscapes. This act is seen as the commodification of the halaal ideology in relation to a Muslim's diet and food consumption by marketing companies. This is promoted by the resemiotisation of the halaal concept and the semiotics by which it is presented to the material world. Thus, hegemony is employed by the actual marketing strategy which is seen as hiding behind the halaal branded goods that the consumers see.

To an extent, halaal foods do have privilege, however, this privilege has not been gained by traditional means. Foucault's (1977) theory on privilege stated that for there to be privilege, it must be done by the dominant group. In contrast to Foucault's (1977) view, the Muslim demographic only makes up a small percentage of South Africa's population, yet most of the foods in foodscapes are halaal branded. With the researcher's extensive data collection in mind, it is believed that the reason for the halaal certificate to be extended to other consumables is a factor of a new-found marketing strategy employed by bigger corporations.

One of the most prominent modes encountered when it comes to halaal-certified foods and foodscapes, is the symbol of the crescent moon and the star. Despite that this symbol holds no substantial meaning in Islam, because of its association with the Ottoman Empire, this symbol has become resemiotised as a mode which is utilised by some halaal bodies (Arnold 1928; Zuhudi and Dolah 2018). Even though this point has been stressed many times in Islamic literature, because of the Ottomans, many believe that this symbol is used to represent Islam, however, it does not. This symbol is not only seen on the halaal certificates and an organisation's logo, it is also commonly found in Muslim-owned and other halaal foodscapes, such as a takeaway. Although some informal halaal foodscapes operate as such, there are others that do obtain the certification to verify their legitimacy and claim their power in a sense (Van Dijk 1993). The distinction between Muslim-owned and other halaal foodscapes is made because most informal foodscapes such as takeaways do not acquire the halaal certificate, although they are a halaal establishment.

On the halaal certificates it is the colour green which is the most dominant across all certificates that catches the eye (Olesen n.d.; Sisters Magazine 2019). While it is the most dominant colour, there are other colours which are seen used on the certificates as well. All the certification organisations use the colour green in the visual presentation of their sign. By doing this, these organisations can be differentiated from one another by, and not limited to, Muslim consumers. Besides their colour scheme, the organisations are also seen positioning their certificates differently from each other even though they all display the same content and intention to a Muslim consumer; thus, they are presenting it as a brand.

Intertextuality (Bullo 2017; Koller 2010) is prevalent in the branding semiotics discussed. In cases where there is no certificate, the owners would position the symbol or even the word "halaal" in English or Arabic "حَلَال" on either a sign outside the foodscape or inside the foodscape. Aside from the certificates, many halaal certified organisations incorporate the symbol with their halaal brand to distinguish them from other halaal certified organisations. Aside from the word "halaal" being used as the main sign which is repurposed with halaal positioning semiotics, another prominent mode found associated with halaal branding is the symbol of the crescent moon and star symbol " ". Arnold (1928) notes that this symbol has become associated with Islam, in the same way that the cross is associated to Christianity. Even though this mode is associated to Islam through halaal branding semiotics, it has no significant meaning in Islam. Another tie that the symbol has with Islam could be with its relation to the lunar calendar. Ahmed (2006) states that all annual Islamic events, such as Ramadan, Eid and Hajj are dictated by the sighting of the moon, thus, the lunar calendar is of importance to Muslims. The crescent moon and star appeared during the Ottoman (*Umayyad*) Empire, thus linking it to the Muslim world (Zuhudi and Dolah 2018). Despite this, Zuhudi and Dolah (2018: 55) exclaim that it is used as one of the 'core visual elements' for halaal brandings semiotics.

303

Conclusion

This chapter put the positioning practices of halaal food into practice by problematising the selected foodscapes. Results showed that selected Cape Town foodscapes do use specific semiotics to create halaal branded spaces. Examples of this include poultry fridges as well as fully-halaal establishments as discussed in this chapter. Another notion explored was the meanings and implications of the repurposed signs to Muslim consumers regarding their ideologies. With the

analysis of this chapter, one can see how the ideological meaning behind the halaal concept is now resemiotised and recontextualised in foodscapes, evidence of intertextuality was also found. These repurposed ideological meanings have also contributed to halaal foods being granted a kind of power and privilege in the marketplace. Furthermore, the semiotics discussed have shown that they serve as a kind of universal sign to Muslim consumers in selected Cape Town foodscapes, aside from solidifying its power and privilege in foodscapes.

References

Ahmed, D. 2006. *Astronomy, moon sighting and Hijri calendar*. [online] Researchgate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283826321_Astronomy_Moon_Sighting_and_Hijri_Calendar

Afnarius, S., Akbar, F. and Yuliani, F. 2020. Developing web-based and mobile-based GIS for places of worship information to support halal tourism: A case study in Bukittinggi, Indonesia. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 9(1): 52.

Ali, A., Xiaoling, G., Sherwani, M. and Ali, A. 2018. Antecedents of consumers' Halal brand purchase intention: An integrated approach. *Management Decision*, 56(4): 715–735.

Anwaar, A. 2017. *Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) diet*. Islamic Finder. Available at: https://www.islamicfinder.org/news/prophet-muhammads-pbuh-diet

Arnold, T. 1928. Symbolism and Islam. *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 53(307): 154–156.

Baderoon, G. 2014. *Regarding Muslims: From slavery to post-apartheid*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Bashir, A.M., Bayat, A., Olutuase, S.O. and Abdul Latiff, Z.A.A. 2019. Factors affecting consumers' intention towards purchasing halal food in South Africa: A structural equation modelling. *Journal of Food Products Marketing,* 25(1): 26–48.

Blommaert, J. 2005. *Discourse: Key topics in socio-linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bullo, S. 2017. Investigating intertextuality and interdiscursivity in evaluation: The case of conceptual blending. *Language and Cognition*, 9(4): 709–727.

Chouliaraki L. and Fairclough, N. 1999. *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

De Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by S.F. Rendall. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.

Ferris, F., Peck, A. and Banda, F. 2019. Language and identity. In: Z. Bock and G. Mheta, (eds.), *Language, society and communication: An introduction*. Van Schaik   Publishers. Available at: https://search-ebscohost-om.ezproxy.uwc.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2125834&site=ehostlive&scope=site

Foucault, M. 1997. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage.

Hyde, J., Miller, A.N., Morisco, S. and Ollendyke, D. 2019. *Marketing to ethnic segments: Halal products*. [online] Penn State Extension. Available at: https://extension.psu.edu/marketing-to-ethnic-segments-halal-products

Iedema, R. 2001. Resemiotization. *Semiotica*, 2001(137): 23–39. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2001.106

— — —. 2003. Multimodality, resemiotization: Extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice. *Visual Communication*, 2(1): 29–57.

Iedema, R. and Wodak, R. 1999. Introduction: Organizational discourses and practices. *Discourse & Society*, 10(1): 5–19.

Ismoyowati, D. 2015. Halal food marketing: A case study on consumer behavior of chicken-based processed food consumption in central part of Java, Indonesia. *Agriculture and Agricultural Science Procedia*, 3: 169–172.

Johnson, G.D., Thomas, K.D. and Grier, S.A. 2017. When the burger becomes halal: A critical discourse analysis of privilege and marketplace inclusion. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 20(6): 497–522.

Khan, M.I. and Haleem, A. 2016. Understanding "Halal" and "Halal certification & accreditation system: A brief review. *Saudi Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 1(1): 32–42.

Koller, V. 2010. Lesbian nation: A case of multiple interdiscursivity. In: R. de Cillia, H. Gruber, F. Menz, and M. Krzyzanowski (eds.), *Discourse, politics, identity*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, pp. 369–381.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L. 2005. *Marketing management*, 12. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
MacKendrick, N. 2014. Foodscape. *Contexts*, 13(3): 16–18.

Mafofo, L. and Wittenberg, H. 2018. Branding. In: Z. Bock and G. Mheta, ed., *Language, society and communication*, 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, pp. 453–469.

Marsden, P. 2000. Brand selection, naturally: A case study. In: *Proceedings of the market research society conference March 2000*.

— — —. 2002. Brand positioning: Meme's the word. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 20(5): 307–312.

McWhorter, L. 2005. Where do white people come from? A Foucaultian critique of whiteness studies. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 31(5–6): 533–556.

Meikle, J. 2014. *What exactly does the halal method of animal slaughter involve?* The Guardian News and Media. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/08/what-does-halal-method-animalslaughter-involve

Mostafa, M.M. 2021. Information diffusion in halal food social media: A social network approach. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 33(4): 471–491.

Olesen, J. n.d.. *Gold color meaning: The color gold symbolizes wealth and success*. [online] Color-Meanings. com. Available at: https://www.color-meanings.com/gold-color-meaning-the-color-gold/

Oppelt, R. 2012. C. Louis Leipoldt and the role of the "Cape Malay" in South African cookery. *Journal of Literacy Studies*, 28(1): 51–68.

Regenstein, J.M., Chaudy, M.M. and Regenstein, C.E. 2003. The kosher and halal food laws. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety,* 2(3): 111–127. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/crfs.2003.2.issue-3/issuetoc

Ries, A. and Trout, J. 1982. *Positioning: The battle for your mind*. New York, N.Y.: Warner.

Rossiter, J.R. and Percy, L. 1987. *Advertising and promotion management.* New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.

———. 1997. *Advertising communications & promotion management*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Saloom, A.A. 2012. *Ask Ali: Why pork is forbidden for Muslims*. The National. Available at: https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts/ask-ali-why-pork-is-forbidden-formuslims-1.444442

SANHA. n.d. *Historical background*, *South African National Halaal Authority - Home*. Available at: https://www.sanha.co.za/a/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25&Itemid=84.

Sedick, S.A. 2020. *Checkers Kenilworth centre butchery no longer Halal*. Muslim Judicial Council Halaal Trust. Available at: https://mjchalaaltrust.co.za/checkers-kenilworth-centre-butchery-no-longer-halal/

Shaikh, N. 2018. *Durban steakhouse serves halaal and non-halaal food side by side | Sunday Tribune*. [online] www.pressreader.com Available at: https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-tribune-south-africa/20180729/282368335447085

Sisters Magazine. 2019. *How symbolic ss the colour green in Islam? The science of light and colour.* [online] Amaliah. Available at: https://www.amaliah.com/post/45896/symbolic-colour-green-islam-science-of-light-and-colour

Smith, P.S. 2012. *South Africa: The halal kingdom*. Gulf Business. Available at: https://gulfbusiness.com/southafrica-the-halal-kingdom/

The Quran. Al-An'am. 6: 119. Translated by Maulana W. Khan (2014). Goodwood Books: New Dehli.

The Quran. Al-Baqarah. 2: 168. Translated by Maulana W. Khan (2014). Goodwood Books: New Dehli.

Thomas, P. and Selimovic, A. 2015. "Sharia on a plate?" A critical discourse analysis of halal food in two Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 6(3): 331–353.

Van Dijk, T.A. 1993. *Elite discourse and racism*. London: Sage Publications.

Wilson, J.A. and Liu, J. 2010. Shaping the halal into a brand? *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 1(2): 107–123.

Wodak, R. 1995. Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In: J. Verschueren et al., (eds.), *Handbook of pragmatics: Manual*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. 2009. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

Zuhudi, N.W.M. and Dolah, J. 2018. Design recognition & significance: A finding on consumers' feedback on halal logo. In: *3rd International conference on creative media, design and technology (REKA 2018)*. Atlantis Press, pp. 55–57.

Chapter 15

"Eating the Other" at Disney's Animal Kingdom Park and Resort

By Ani Steele

> The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture.
> – hooks 2012

Introduction

Often, the work of portraying Africa to the world has not been in the hands of the people represented. More often than not, the messages, stories and depictions of Africa are filtered through the observations and interpretations of those outside of Africa, and especially, those in the global north. In fact, it has been through the observations of white missionaries, scientists and explorers that the basis for what is "Africa" and therefore, also often what is "Black", has been established for western audiences. W.J.T. Mitchell eloquently explained, 'When we look *at* something we always, necessarily, look *from* somewhere else' (Grinker, Lubkemann and Steiner 2010: 3 as cited by Parasecoli 2010).

The western understanding, or misunderstanding of Africa is structured through the American/European framework of their values, assumptions and beliefs (Grinker et al. 2010). This western-centric gaze gives 'power to order objects and persons into a world to be known and to lay it out before a vision capable of encompassing it as a totality' (Grinker et al. 2010: 3) to the observers, also known as American/European views. Additionally, this authority in looking also allows the see-er to be seen and to become visible as a subject since it is their view and values that their subjects are being depicted through. Many claims of unbiased, authentic representations of Africa, even when the intentions are positive and well-meaning, are misleading. Positive intent alone does not nullify the stereotypes of Africa and Africans when it is only celebrated through the viewpoint of the standard western gaze.

This is where the Walt Disney Company and their Animal Kingdom Park and Resort, specifically, enters the conversation. The Walt Disney Company is an enterprise consisting of theme parks (in the US and overseas), animated and live-action films, film production companies, their own town and government, ESPN, streaming services, the Disney channel, the Disney cruise line and is a major employer and economic source in the state of Florida as well as California. It all started with a mouse character, namely Mickey Mouse and the first theme park, Disneyland opened its doors in 1955. Sixteen years later, plans for Disney World began with four major kingdoms finding their home in Kissimmee, Florida: Magic Kingdom (1974), EPCOT (1982), Hollywood Studies (1989, formerly MGM Studios) and the final land, Animal Kingdom, opening in 1998. It is no overstatement what the cultural impact Disney possesses at home and abroad. Since Oswald and Steamboat Mickey, Walt Disney, his animators and his Imagineers (engineers with a fun twist) have helped construct Americana culture; they have been a source of education and entertainment as well as a global power whose influence cannot be overstated.

Within Disney's Animal Kingdom are four lands: Africa, Asia, Pandora: The World of Avatar, and Dinoland U.S.A. Harambe Village, Africa, is where you can visit the Harambe Market, go on a "two-week" safari, buy "hand-carved" kitchen spoons or flutes, and dance to the drums played by the "locals" (Disney Cultural Representatives). Disney is the industry leader in the art of storytelling in their films and parks. Their carefully crafted worlds incorporate fantasy and culture, myth and truths through the cultural representatives, menu offerings, buildings and structures, music and clothing. And yet, it is this dedication to immersive, fantastical storytelling first, rather than portraying the true and complex experience of Africa, which draws Disney into trouble. Disney creates an Africa which is palatable for the general white, middle class, American audience. They present an opportunity to visit the whole continent of Africa without leaving the American shores and here lies the problem. Without calling themselves the experts on Africa, Disney positioned themselves as the real thing, where visiting Harambe is the same as walking the streets of Johannesburg, South Africa or Lagos, Nigeria. Guests walk away with reinforced stereotypes of Africa and Africans which are then brought home and shared along with their souvenirs with their families and friends.

Another way to reinforce these stereotypes or incomplete narratives of Africa is the way in which African cuisine, food cultures and food practices are written about and portrayed by professionals who the public sees as an expert on the topic. Instead of seeing the African continent as 'a place of blending of many cultures, a process called syncretism' (Grinker et al. 2010: 7), Ako-Adkei (2015)

points out, American/European audiences still view African foods as a monolithic eating experience that is the same across climatic zones and people, resulting in the stereotype of a single Africa.

Workneh (2020) explains how 'in imagining the Other, the colonizer posits its own culture as the normal, central, and typical, and views the native and his or her worldview ... as the outlier, the fascinating, the exotic' (122). This perspective can be found in a 2002 article in the popular wine magazine '*The Wine Spectator*', titled '*Lion King Dining*'. Mariani (2002) reviewed Jiko-The Cooking Place, one of the African themed restaurants at the Animal Kingdom Lodge and wrote the following about the food, wine and décor:

> To sample the best of South Africa, you need travel no farther than Jiko, in Florida's Disney World ... Set in an African-themed restaurant in a Florida resort lodge ... and people will not likely expect top -quality cooking and wine service ... the convivial waitstaff, mostly young Africans, is decked out in vivid African fabrics and bright, plaid head scarves ... Jiko sells the lion's share of several small South African wineries (112–114).

Another review of the styling and design of the Animal Kingdom Lodge falls into the same trap:

> The subtle references to Disney's famous icon are relegated to mere cameo appearances. Clearly, Africa is the star of Disney's newest resort ... this exotic lodge is the latest answer to Disney Chairman Michael Eisner's mandate to create architecture that is never boring .... The "Africa" that lies over the threshold of the main lobby is neither cartoon nor caricature, but an innovative reconstruction of Africa's art, culture, and way of life ... huts and low walls corral the seating arrangements in the 280-seat family restaurant, Boma in its stead is an assemblage of eclectic huts and houses with a mix of colored euki wood, thatch, and other traditional African materials that make this seem more like a marketplace than a restaurant (Out of Africa 2001: 237–238).

Both reviewers gladly revert to the old tropes of the happy native (convivial wait staff, mostly young Africans), the exotic and fascinating (vivid African fabrics; exotic lodge, architecture that is never boring, neither cartoon nor caricature, yet an innovative reconstruction) and typical stereotypes that leave the authors in awe at the presentation of this Africa with their eclectic huts, and coloured *euki* (*sic*) wood. It is the belief that this is the only version of Africa which lends them to believe

in the trueness of this place. To quote Grinker et al. (2010: 11): 'For this reason, representations of Africa generally tell us far less about those who are being represented than they do about the preoccupations and prejudices of those engaged in the act of representing.'

I must confess that I have been a fan of Disney animated films and their parks since I was a young girl. Disneyland was the first vacation my brother and I went on with my dad after my parent's divorce. Disneyland, "The Happiest Place on Earth", was exactly that for me. It was a place where other families, kids, adults, couples, whoever, were all normal and without dysfunction. At least on the outside. This fandom led me to visit Disneyland and Disney World multiple times, even interning at Disney World during the spring semester of my freshman year at college. Therefore, my expertise of Disney is not one of an outsider who has studied and observed, but that of one who has seen it as a safe space for most of her life.

Based on my previous visits and experiences, it was not a stretch to visit Animal Kingdom as part of my research in October 2021. Part of visiting the Park in person was to have first-hand experience of how the multiple layers of theming, stories, stereotypes and truths were blended into one another to create a space where fantasy and culture, embellishment and truth were one and the same. Not only was I able to observe and process the bold and muted details in the space in my own way, I was able to witness how other guests and their families processed this information as well. Additionally, I analysed the menus and cookbooks from Disney and their African-inspired restaurants to provide a well-informed critique of how they present "their" Africa at the Animal Kingdom.

Studying Disney, studying food

To answer my question about Disney's use of food and other cultural items as authenticators of their Africa, I stayed at the Animal Kingdom Lodge in October 2021 and performed participant observation in the park and restaurants. Additionally, I analysed the cultural texts of cookbooks, restaurant menus and Disney published texts and assessed their techniques of how they staged their African inspired spaces. Through this, I hoped to address: how Disney, as an influential conduit of stereotypes in globalised popular culture, turns to food and dining spaces as cultural authenticators in representing Africa. A related purpose was to reflect on how Disney reinforces and even intensifies hegemonic stereotypes about Africa and people of African descent through its treatment of African food and dining experiences.

1) How does Disney use food and dining experiences as cultural authenticators for their presentation of their Africa?
2) How does Disney's version of Africa contribute to or limit the ways in which the cultures and peoples of Africa are presented to western audiences?

African-inspired spaces at Disney World included the Kenyan festival booth at Epcot for the International Food and Wine Festival, Tamu, Tamu and Harambe Market (both quick service restaurants), Sanaa, *Boma*-the Flavours of Africa, Tiffins, and Jiko-The Cooking Place (Due to COVID-19, I was not able to eat at Jiko, however, their menu was available online). Lastly, Disney-published cookbooks, '*Taste of Epcot: Festival Food from Around the Globe*' (Brandon n.d.) and '*A Cooking Safari with Mickey: Recipes from Disney's Animal Kingdom theme park and Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge*' (Brandon 2015) were drawn upon to analyse the way African food is spoken about and what dishes are used.

Goffman's (2007) dramaturgical theory emphasises the actions and efforts we take to craft our presentations to the public. According to this theory, individuals construct and assign what they allow to be on their "front stage", also known as, what people see. For example, one's Instagram profile, daily outfits, choice of slang one does and does not use are constructions of what is on front stage for people to easily access; it is what one wants the public to see. There is also a "backstage" and it is here where one reserves what one does not want the public to know. Examples of the backstage are family holiday dinners, cultural hair secrets, expressions of vulnerability etcetera. These stages are situated to adjust and control how individuals are perceived by others. I argue this ability to decide what is placed in the front stage and what is reserved for the back stage, a person, culture or community can decide how much of themselves they are willing to share.

In relation to Disney and their Harambe, Africa, there is an attempt to control the perception of their front stage by presenting African cuisine and culture as if the Imagineers and/or Disney itself are experts of Africa's "backstage". This is important, because if one realises Disney's Harambe is a construction and not the real thing, then it shatter's Disney's attempt to integrate the audience into their hyper-realistic space. One no longer needs to go to Harambe to see Africa at home, because everyone knows this Africa is not truly *real*. It relates back to Fjellman's (1992) concepts discussed in his book, '*Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America*': the 'real real, the real fake, the fake real, and the fake fake' (255). The "real real" are the animals and people, the "real fake" is the animated Mickey Mouse, the "fake real" is the Mickey Mouse that one meets at Disney World even though

you know he is only a character and the "fake fake" are the stories of a magic carpet ride and a cuddly, blue alien in Hawaii. Disney needs their food, restaurants, attractions, hotel and staging to make guests feel they are viewing the intimate backstage of Africa, also known as the "real real" or their storytelling does not work. It is "fake real" at best; however, this is not what the visitors are paying to see.

At the beginning of this research, I thought about the value of authenticity, positivity and respectfulness in representations which counter stereotypes, especially of Africa and African bodies through food. Now, however, I would expand attention to the problems of representing Africa and African food to include seemingly positive and respectful representations. As I go on to show, many repeat limiting stereotypes even when they seem laudatory, reinforcing binaries between Africa as, for example, "natural" and "spontaneous" versus the west as rational and "boring". My analysis, therefore, focusses critically on the semiotics of, for example, language, décor, bodies and food items, rather than on obviously disparaging or racist meaning-making. I believe that it is only through humble exploration of another culture *and* the ability for members of that community to see themselves in this presentation, that stereotypes about Africa and African food can be challenged.

For this research, I began by breaking down what the Disney Park and Resort used for their tools of storytelling, which then led into how they are representing a continent of people. Part of Disney's storytelling is dependent on their use of edutainment, a blend of entertainment and education. As I combed through the pictures, restaurant menus, cookbooks and the notes I took from my observations and online materials, I identified two themes under entertainment, two which fell under education and a final theme under experiential experiences. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Disneywashing

Pulling from Fjellman's (1992) definition of Disney Realism—which is the use of countless coordinated details, such as cultural ambassadors, cuisine and décor—to over-stimulate one's power of discrimination, I came up with *Disneywashing*. A play on whitewashing, this theme incorporates examples of "fun, safari-themed" language to describe meals or experiences. In addition, this also includes the use of Disney characters, such as a Simba cupcake or dressing Mickey and Minnie in matching safari garb to Disneyfy the presentation of Africa.

The effect of *Disneywashing* a place is like whitewashing histories and cultures. Whitewashing gives control to the narrator and when one has control of the story, they have control over the people and how events took place in those stories. It also allows white audiences to feel comfortable and avoid any guilt in the acts of oppression and white supremacy they (or their ancestors) have willingly engaged in. Harambe Village must be *Disneywashed* for it to maintain the exotic and fantastical story of Africa which has been told for centuries, however, is still a place white people will feel safe (physically and emotionally) to visit. It must be enticing enough to encourage the bored American's adventurous spirit, but not radical enough to provoke un-magical conversations. Enough truth needs to be present for the fantasy to be accepted. This appears to be very effective considering the number of people who visit the Continent looking for Harambe Village and finding something different instead.

Language is a powerful tool in any storytelling. While Disney relies on visual and sensory cues to incorporate their guests into their lands of real and make believe, the use of language is still a major component to a well-told story. Through reading their menus, both in person and online, and reading descriptions of their dishes and dining spaces, I found Disney used descriptions which related to adventure, travel, culinary exclusivity and fun experiences to describe their offerings. For example, the savanna was often used to invoke imagery of spaces or as the descriptor of dishes.

315

> *'Step inside this exquisite, East-African inspired eatery, which evokes a traditional spice market, decorated with handcrafted wares under the graceful branches of an acacia tree.'* (Description of Sanaa, table service restaurant)
>
> *'Set off on a safari of flavor as you enjoy traditional Kenyan food and beer.'* (Kenya, booth Epcot's International Food and Wine Festival)
>
> *'Savanna Spring rolls'* (recipe from *A Cooking Safari with Mickey*)

The use of Disney characters and movies were also used to make African food more approachable and familiar. *Zawadi* Marketplace is the onsite gift shop at the Animal Kingdom Lodge where souvenirs and staple groceries can be purchased (a quick google search taught me that *Zawadi* is Kenyan for gift). Souvenirs include Mickey and Minnie plushies in safari wardrobe and an orange tank top of Goofy with the saying "Safari so Good" printed on the front (see appendix for photos taken by the author). This was also true for the souvenirs sold within the theme park. An interesting depiction of a "Disneyfied" version of African culture were two fables, Fauna and Environ. Both

used the African fable story telling structure to relate a Disney-created story about the birth of the dung beetle and explain the purpose of savanna fires. For example, here is the story Fauna:

> Weary of the scarcity of food, a wise old stork called a council. "Giraffe," he said, "You alone can reach the tender leaves of the trees. Let the others eat the grass." To the zebra and wildebeest, he said, "Do not feed in one place, move to where the grass is always fresh and tender." So, one by one, he showed the animals how to share the savanna. Finally, a tiny voice said, "What about me?" Looking down at a small beetle, the stork laughed and said, "My friend, the others will leave plenty behind for you." And that is how the dung beetle came to be. –A Disney tale of the Savanna, signage at the Animal Kingdom Lodge and Resort (see appendix for photo)

This blending of what is Africa with what is Disney is subtly displayed here. Part of African culture is the transmission of oral history and stories, providing answers to the creation of the planet, weather patterns, and the birth of animals, insects and humans. What Disney has done here is "Disneyfied" an African cultural component to increase the playfulness of the space and the perception of Africa.

316

Savouring the exotic

Savouring the exotic involves instances when visitors can experience a variety of African cultures and foods by using specific ingredients in certain dining styles (quick service, table dining, fine/signature dining) and through souvenirs available for purchase, such as cooking utensils or cookbooks. This theme indicates the guest's ability to consume parts of Africa in both physical and metaphorical ways. This consumption of the "Other" is discussed by hooks (2012) in her essay, '*Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance'*, and later in Bryman's (2004) term, "Disneyization". To truly understand the impact of "savouring the exotic", I need to take some time to explain the pitfalls of consumption culture.

Packaging of the "Other" within the US's capitalist, patriarchal and white supremacist society is a longstanding practice. The commodification of the "Other", particularly those considered different or non-white, has been ingrained in western culture for centuries. As explained by hooks (2012), in a consumer-driven culture, ethnicity is often treated as a spice, used to add flavour to an otherwise mundane mainstream culture. Even within places like Disney World, where everything seems to

be up for sale, white audiences can indulge in a taste of the exotic, seeking an escape from their everyday lives. However, this desire and sense of entitlement to experience and purchase aspects of another culture can lead to harmful acts of appropriation. Even when done with seemingly harmless or respectful intentions, such consumption often reinforces harmful stereotypes and beliefs, rather than challenging them.

Bryman's (2004) concept of "Disneyization" parallels hooks' (2012) discussion of the commodification of the "Other". "Disneyization", akin to "McDonaldization", but with Disney's principles at its core, is infiltrating various sectors of American society (Bryman 2004). It comprises theming, the blurring of consumption boundaries, merchandising and emotional labour. The blurring of consumption boundaries, refers to the trend where different realms of consumption intertwine, making it harder to differentiate between them. This concept mirrors hooks' (2012) observations about how the "Other" is packaged for consumption by white audiences across various mediums, including food, film and theme parks.

With this understanding in mind, it is understandable why the act of "savouring the exotic" is an important component of Disney's use of food and cuisine for their storytelling. Disney's brand relies heavily on nostalgia and escapism. Their products must be marketed so that the visitor wants to take a piece of it home with them or crave their next opportunity to visit the parks. Marketing of an orange "Safari so Good" tank top is transparent in its attempt for a visitor to take a piece of Disney home with them. With food and dining, however, there must be other strategies for one to "savour" the experiences and food engaged with at the resorts and parks. For a theme park like Animal Kingdom, whose partial goal is to present an "authentic or traditional" view of Africa, the type of food served through specific dining outlets is important to consider in the structuring and location of these spaces.

Quick service restaurants, such as Tamu, Tamu, Kenya's booth at EPCOT, the Mara and Harambe Market served items that were "American favourites" and used similar ingredients at each location, such as berbere spice, Ghanaian chocolate, tamarind, Kenyan coffee, or guava. Typically, these restaurants target young families and quick stops while in the park; prices were typically under US$15, and the use of African ingredients were used to flavour American dishes. For example, at the Mara, I had a berbere spiced bacon cheeseburger, but without the menu description listing berbere spice as an ingredient, I would not have thought it anything more than your average American style

cheeseburger. In this way, these restaurant styles were used to introduce a foreign flavour profile on a familiar food item, such as a cheeseburger.

The table service restaurants, such as Sanaa, were slightly more expensive, ranging from US$15 to $34.99 per adult meal. As such, the ingredients and dishes offered were more "African", not relying on the backdrop of American favourites to introduce the guest to new flavours. Sanaa, is a fusion restaurant, describing itself as "the art of African cooking with Indian flavours". Ingredients here are still "accessible" to the American palate, however, flavours of Africa and India are present. Chicken, berbere spice (which is present at almost every African themed food establishment), tamarind, *boerewors* (South African sausage), curries and Kenyan coffee and beer made common appearances throughout the menu. *Boma*-the Flavors (*sic*) of Africa used the format of a buffet to introduce various dishes for guests to sample and savour, allowing them to dip their toes into traditional African spices and dishes.

The fine/signature dining restaurants such as Tiffins and Jiko- The Cooking Place, were more focussed on a modern, upscale approach to traditional African favourites. Reservations to these restaurants are hard won and the price for an adult meal begins at US$35. It could be reasoned there is an assumption that this is a more adventurous or curious group of guests, therefore, ingredients such as chakalaka (spicy South African vegetable relish), lamb, *braai* (bbq) spiced veal, wild boar, hibiscus, West African Koki corn, or Egyptian *fatir* (flat) bread are "safe" to present at these dining locations. It also does not hurt that guests of these types of restaurants most likely occupy a higher financial class, thus able to afford these luxuries and are perceived to be more open-minded to exotic flavours.

In the Disney sponsored cookbooks, *'A Cooking Safari with Mickey'* (Brandon 2015) and *'A Taste of Epcot: Festival Food from Around the Globe'* (Brandon n.d.), similar ingredients were used as was found in the quick service and table service restaurants: Durban style chicken, berbere braised lamb, mango, chakalaka, *bobotie* (a South African dish of minced meat with curry, dried fruit, and an egg-based topping), beef and corn mealie pap (cornmeal porridge). Lastly, African items, such as drums, jewellery, hand carved items and other artwork were offered for purchase or used as museum-like exhibits for guests to admire. These were some of the ways Animal Kingdom Lodge and Park encouraged its guests to savour their time at the park and recreate those memories at home.

Authenticity (real or created)

To savour a culture which is new and unknown, one must believe in the story being told. The use of structures, façades, textures, paint, furniture and descriptions are all tools to give a depiction of Africa that is in a Disney reality. Surprisingly, the word "authentic" was not used as often as I expected. Adjectives such as "traditional" or "African- this, Kenyan, or Ghanian, or West African that" were alternatively used in describing dishes.

There was a conscious choice by the decision-makers and Imagineers at Disney to avoid entangling their version of Africa with the real Africa. They were presented with a challenge of how to give guests an experience of an African village without having to acknowledge some of the history, good and bad, of that place. Wright (2007: 66) explains in the '*Imagineer's Guide to Animal Kingdom'*,

> There was a conscious effort not to rely heavily on colonial architectural forms, as these outside influences would take us away from *our* African story; Another reason we created a fictitious place is that it allowed us to avoid becoming linked to the political history of any specific country (emphasis added).

Instead, Disney let the décor, food and descriptions do the talking for them.

At Harambe Village at the Animal Kingdom Park and the Kenyan festival booth at Epcot, the structures are composed of exposed brick and textured walls, straw and thatched roofs, crates, and posters advertising for community events, jobs and announcements, giving flesh and bones to this created world. The Animal Kingdom Lodge's lobby and select rooms were structured as an art museum. Encased in glass were horns, masks, tools and other items that resembled lost artifacts, all accompanied with informational placards explaining the cultural and/or historical status of the item. For example, a sixteen-foot, multi-coloured mask used by the Igbo tribe of Nigeria cordoned off by ropes and five small, glass displays, these displays discussed the culture of the Igbo people, while providing pictures of the ceremony in which this mask would be used (see appendix for photos).

The restaurants and other spaces in the lodge draws visitors into an African "marketplace" using African prints, textures, cloths, and other cultural materials used as seating, décor, tables and

lighting. These details are not used in their literal use—shields are not used as shields and the colourful, wooden beads are magnified to be used as pillars instead of hair adornment—however, the simple *knowledge* and *use* of these details persuades visitors that they are experiencing a true African place, people and culture, even if they do not understand the meanings of those details. The Tiffins restaurant in the Animal Kingdom Park amplifies the strategy of modelling its space after an art space. Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge (n.d.) website describes Tiffins as 'a gallery of art based on the travel and adventure that inspired the creation of Disney's Animal Kingdom'. This can be seen clearly as the burnt-orange-coloured walls are a canvas for the pieces of buildings and materials which would later inform the construction of Harambe Village's building and spaces (pictures in appendix).

Africa, nature and animals

Disney attempts to celebrate the art and food offerings that represent Africa, however, some of the representation points back to old and known stereotypes. This was done in part because of the company's desire for Animal Kingdom to focus on the conservation and care of the wildlife species in the continents of Africa and Asia, rather than on the people in these spaces. As such, the people and places had to provide a context for where these animals would be found, neglecting the possible damage this could cause. The stereotypes of Black people as animalistic and primitive can be strengthened when they are only spoken of and celebrated when it comes to their proximal relationship to the native wildlife of the African continent.

Imagineer Wright (2007) explains the choices made in the Africa Disney chose to create:

> Certainly there are places in Nairobi or Lagos or Johannesburg in which one could mistake the setting for any large, modern city around the world. But to focus on that here would be to miss the point- this story is about animals, not humans (66).

Wright (2007: 66) continues by saying, 'While a cultural backdrop adds detail and enriches the experience, the core story-line only deals with human development to the extent that it affects the animal kingdom'. Considering that the park was opened in 1998, this guide was published in 2007 and this piece was written from 2021–2022, it could be argued that Disney has recognised some of their errors and have attempted to rectify this by incorporating more African art, artifacts and cultural representatives.

However, some of the marketing for restaurants such as Tiffins and Sanaa focussed on the 'spectacular views of African wildlife on the lush sunset Savanna outside' (disneywold.com for Sanaa), while Tiffins had a designated dining area titled the "Safari Gallery" to showcase the work of the Imagineers and animal scientists as they travelled through eastern and southern Africa. Although there are cultural representatives for the guests to interact with (due to COVID-19, there were few cultural representatives that I could identify), there are no examples of the work Disney put into understanding Africanness or specialists they tapped to help contextualise their Harambe Village or their resort.

The last data point I want to point out is the informational posters hung in two of the hallways I passed by daily. One was titled "Mysterious Africa" with Black children painted in white paint while the other "Masks of Africa" displayed men and women with painted faces. Depending on the guest viewing these images, it could solidify the stereotype of the primitive, single Africa or could be seen as one chapter in the lives of African people; the benefit of the doubt must be heavily assumed to believe that all guests view these depictions without prejudice or confirmation of their anti-Black beliefs.

Food adventures by Disney

Browsing through the Disney World website, I was surprised at the conspicuous absence of the foodie's beloved adjective, "authentic". Authenticity can be likened to Bourdieu's habitus, behaviour and relational structures which lead to power, legitimacy and distinction, also known as social capital (Sánchez Prado 2020). Keep this in mind as we circle back to the discussion on Goffman's (2007) dramaturgical concepts. For Disney to convince guests they are engaging in the true backstage of African culture and not an elaborately staged front, there must be a belief that what is being shown is what truly happens in the everyday life of Africans. Since food and travel are seen as opportunities of "learning about the other", the demand for what is authentic has come centre stage. The ability to state that you had an "authentic" Mexican meal at the hole in the wall restaurant in an obscure part of town serves two purposes for the foodie: 1) it allows them to wield a privilege of authority and expertise on another culture and 2) it gives them substantial social capital in their own communities.

Lisa Heldke calls these types of eaters, "food adventurers". Food adventurers seek to consume

another culture without understanding and appreciating the 'social dynamics underlying ethnic foods' (as cited in Sánchez Prado 2020: 5). White individuals and organisations play an integral role in perpetuating the food adventurer. Sánchez Prado (2020) assessed this relationship in his article regarding Diane Kennedy and Rick Bayless' position of authority and rights of authenticity in Mexican cooking. No one wants to be accused of cultural appropriation or as hooks (2012: 374) phrased it, 'eating the Other', but this is what happens; white chefs who can commodify the cuisines of the colonised, marginalised, and the global south for their own benefit, are appropriating the experiences of the other.

Therefore, the challenge for white subjects, who prize ethnic culinary traditions, is to engage with it as part of an "anti-colonialist project" (Sánchez Prado 2020). Sánchez Prado (2020) cites Lisa Heldke to define food anticolonialism as 'ways of approaching food that foster a respect for one's own tradition without advocating isolationism and cultivates an openness to other traditions without objectifying them or treating them as resources from which to support one's own lifestyle' (570–571). Sánchez Prado (2020) argues that Bayless and Kennedy could hold both titles as food adventurers and proponents of food anticolonialism. Yes, there are components of these white chefs integrating themselves into the Mexican food world for their own economic benefit, however, they have also provided an alternative narrative to the American and European public about what Mexican culture is that these audiences may not have accepted from anyone else.

Where does this leave Disney? As I said before, there were few claims to authenticity in the descriptions of their restaurants, spaces, or parks. Wording such as "African-inspired", "resembling a lively African marketplace", "South African wines transport you to the heart of Africa", "a delicious blend of traditional African, Indian, and Mediterranean cuisine" allows the company to skirt the controversial "authentic" label while still strongly implying that they are the real deal. On the other hand, they may provide an opportunity for people to go out of their comfort zones and try something new through an organisation people generally trust.

A Goofy-sized problem arises when the company streamlines the complexities of Africanness and foodways into a more consumable bite. In fact, one could argue this practice is anti-Black as Black cultural food practices and traditions are boiled down and "Disneyfied" for the American public. While there are plenty of details and moments of engagement with what is "Africa", these dishes, ingredients, and food cultures are sampled throughout the regions of Africa and presented as a

complete representation of Africanness. It falls into anti-Black practice for its action of simplifying and objectifying the foodways, culture and the people of Africa. What Disney misses is creating the Animal Kingdom space as a 'Black sense of place' (Newman and Yung 2020: 133) instead of a blank page in which they can rewrite the narrative and history of African experiences and foodways.

I felt the disconnect between connecting the creativity, ingenuity and development of the dishes and ingredients served at Disney's restaurants to the hands, minds and stomachs of the African people. Yes, there were pictures of women and men with painted faces as masks or holding village-wide celebrations, showcasing a sense of "Black Joy". A connection was made for the guests between the typical African art one is accustomed to, however, there was little connection between the people and their direct interaction with the food being served. Yes, it was South African or west-African inspired dishes, however, these generalisations allowed a disconnect between the stomachs of the guests and the African culinary history the visitors were engaging in. There were pictures of Black faces when it came to the stereotypical presentation of African décor, masks and expressions, yet that same representation was muted in the dishes and dining spaces.

This is why the generalisation can fall into an anti-Black practice to consolidate the experiences and voices of so many into a few instances or menu items. Although Disney is trying to point to Black culture, it feeds into an anti-Black narrative which disallows both the ordinary and spectacular of African food and culture to be present. Disney is faced with this "problem" discussed by W.E.B Du Bois who highlights the elephant in the room for white allies and progressive companies (Williams-Forson 2014)—how to tackle representation and equality without making themselves (white people) uncomfortable or African/Black people aware of their constant reminder to white audiences of past and current wrongs. Instead, we dine on ribs, *bobotie*, passion fruit and tamarind dishes to avoid looking each other in the eye about how it feels for the Black diaspora community to be constantly seen as a problem. By avoiding the whole, and hyper focusing on a few details like maize, jollof rice or fufu, Disney celebrates their African representation without rocking the boat too much for their non-Black visitors.

This section ends with a warning by hooks (2012: 380),

> The over-riding fear is that cultural, ethnic and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate – that the Other will be eaten, consumed and forgotten.

The desire to know other cultures and the people within those cultures is not inherently wrong, however, hooks (2012) stresses that one must think critically of *why* these desires exist and how they impact the subjects of those desires.

Conclusion

Disney's Animal Kingdom and Animal Kingdom Lodge promise you a trip to the countries of Africa without the need of a passport. Walking through the Harambe Market, dining at Jiko-The Cooking Place, travelling through the Kilimanjaro Safari or viewing the African savanna at sunset from the comfort of your balcony, these are experiences which promise to transport one to the Africa that you have heard about, but never seen. The use of décor, furniture, textiles, people and food were positioned to be the cultural authenticators Disney needed to sell the legitimacy of this version of Africa. The presentation of the backstage of African culture and traditions is dependent on the familial, cultural and linguistic capital cultivated by African communities for centuries, despite the constant barrage of white supremacy and bigotry.

Disney is praised for their unparalleled attention to detail in how their worlds are created, and the Animal Kingdom Park is no exception. The ability to create a world that is at once fantasy, but also a replication of the real world, is the result of hyperrealism. This ability to "Disneyfy" a place or people within the context of a hyper-realised space allows Disney to decontextualise the details and social commentary under which these cultural activities take place. I am giving Disney the benefit of the doubt of no intended maliciousness in this presentation of the "Other" through their food and dining, that it was a business decision by a capitalistic entity needing to make board members and investors happy with a consistently successful revenue stream.

This, however, does not let Disney off the hook for their participation in encouraging "food adventures" by serving cuisines to guests who then fail to continue their own personal learning about African cultures, partaking in the white supremacist act of "eating the Other". Several "African descriptors" admonished by Wainaina (2008) were present in various forms at the Disney site.

> Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title...Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book, or in it, unless that African has

won the Nobel Prize... If you must include an African, make sure you get one in Masai or Zulu or Dogon dress. In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving...Make sure you show Africans have music and rhythm deep in their souls... Animals, on the other hand, must be treated as well rounded, complex characters... Never, ever say anything negative about an elephant or a gorilla. Elephants may attack people's property, destroy their crops, and even kill them. Always take the side of the elephant. (Wainaina 2008: 2–3)

You get the gist. Disney has an opportunity to engage in food anticolonialism by showing the full breadth of diversity and beauty of African cultures by erasing the single Africa narrative of straw huts and painted bodies. For myself, dining at their African-inspired restaurants allowed me to try dishes I have not experienced before and to enjoy the experience of viewing wildlife from the comfort of my hotel room balcony. It also afforded me the chance to hear how other guests were engaging in the same space I was experiencing, and many walked away with the understanding that "*Jambo*" was how "*they*" say hello and that all the cultural representatives spoke Swahili (despite their recruitment from various African countries).

325

A limitation of this study was the limited time I had to visit the park, going once for a period of four days during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, I was not able to personally visit Jiko-The Cooking Place, a high end African and Indian fusion restaurant, nor engage with any of the cultural representatives. Because of travel restrictions and visa complications, the cultural representatives were not available in this presentation of Africa, however, glimpses of them were present with a Black man carving wooden figurines outside of the resort's gift shop and the empty stands where the cultural reps should have been.

Within the broader discussion about how Africa has been, is and should be represented, I have hopefully identified how nuanced the work is to adequately represent the varying expressions of African culture and cuisine. Especially when it is a white corporation that is taking it upon themselves to showcase a community of people, who have traditionally been the subject of racism, colonialism and demeaning language, as part of a theme park. Even the concept of presenting artifacts in a museum-like manner rings of the eighteenth-century explorer visiting the "Dark Continent" and

taking whatever they wanted. Further study must be done to explore how white allyship can lend itself to dismantling food colonialism, yet also give more space for Black voices, chefs, cooks, artists, performers and scholars to be the leaders for how these spaces are formed.

Spaces must be made by us for us, but recognise that we (Black and other people of colour) must also inhabit spaces which were not initially made for us. Disney parks and resorts were created for the enjoyment of all, even if it was not particularly made for the comfort of Black folks. This, however, does not mean that people of colour must abstain from these venues of joy, entertainment and fantasy. At the beginning, the hope of this project was to have a reckoning between myself and Disney, however, I realise that this phenomenon goes beyond just Disney.

Part of my goal as a scholar is to ensure that my learning does not stay only within the rooms and pages of academia. The use of this research could inform how all people can joyfully interact with this space while also holding space that this is not the full story of a group of communities. This upcoming generation demands transparency, and Disney can now prepare for these demands by refraining from telling a single story of Africa. The stories and narratives of the various regions, countries, cities, villages, homes and individuals are too plentiful to be captured in a single moment. Indeed, eating *mealie pap* (corn porridge) from South Africa with a Kenyan coffee crusted beef tenderloin does as little for the representation of African food as it does for the "progressive" image of the company itself.

Appendix

Pictures taken by the author from a trip to Disney World Resorts, October 2021

Animal Kingdom Lodge aka Safari Reserve

Edutainment at Animal Kingdom Lodge

328

Buying Africa

Harambe Village Staging

Staging and Dining of Harambe Market

Boma Staging and Dining

330

Tiffins Staging and Dining

Sanaa Staging and Dining

Kenya and The Mara
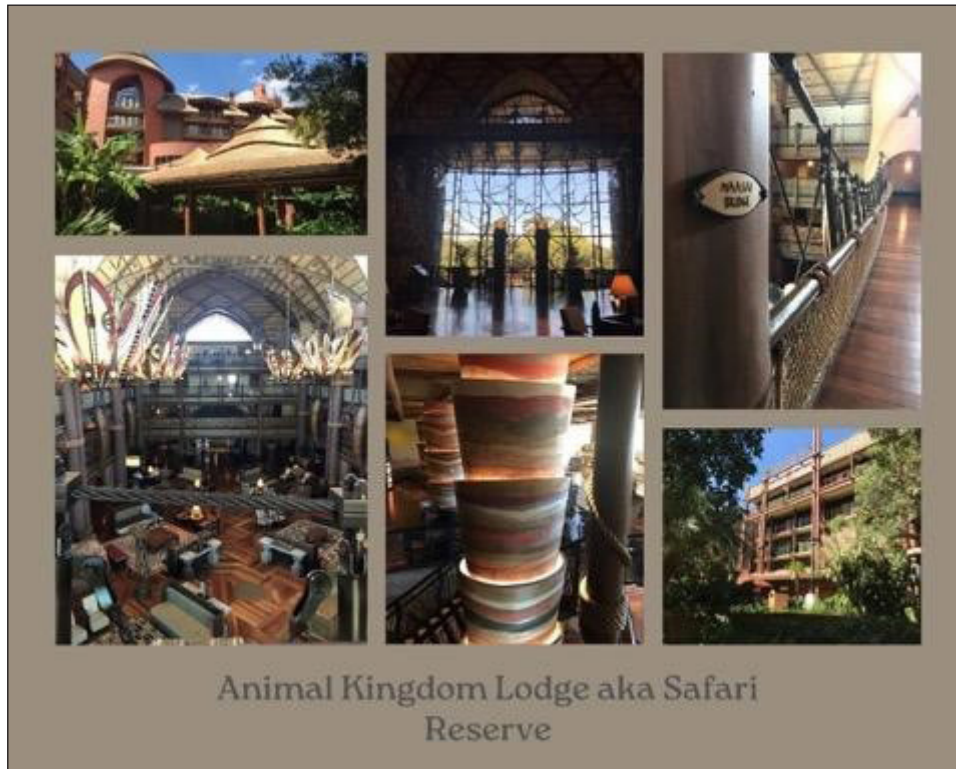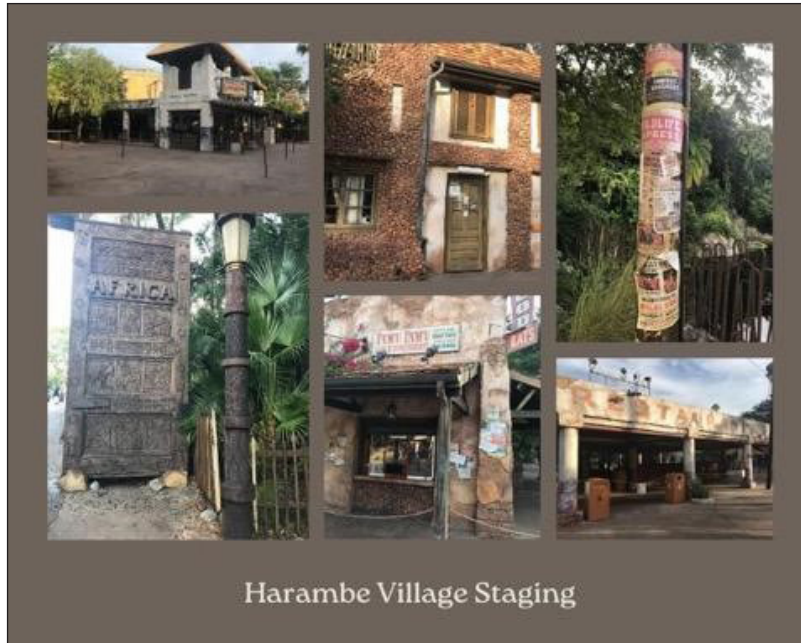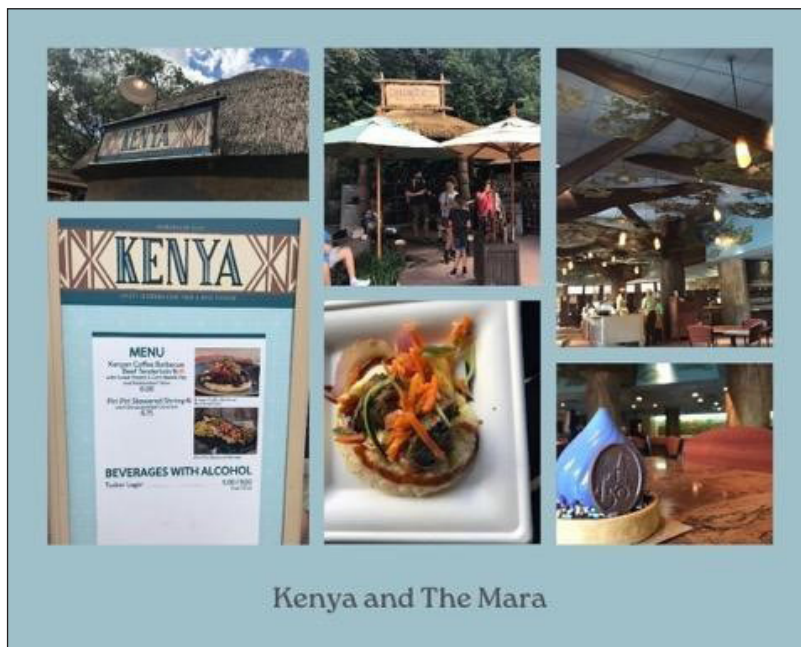
References

Ako-Adjei, N.B. 2015. How not to write about Africa: African cuisines in food writing. *Gastronomica,* 15(1): 44–55. https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2015.15.1.44

Brandon, P. n.d. *A taste of epcot: Festival food from around the globe*. Disney Editions.

— — —. 2015. *A cooking safari with Mickey: Recipes from Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park and Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodg*e. Disney Editions.

Bryman, A. 2004. *The Disneyization of society*. Sage Publishers.

Fjellman, S.M. 1992. *Vinyl leaves: Walt Disney world and America*. Routledge.

Goffman, E. 2007. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Academic Internet Publishers Incorporated.

Grinker, R.R., Lubkemann, S.C. and Steiner, C.B. (eds.). 2010. *Perspectives on Africa: A reader in culture, history, and representation.* (2nd ed). Wiley-Blackwell.

hooks, B. 2012. *Eating the Other: Desire and resistance*. Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks, 308.

Mariani, J. 2002. Lion King dining. *The Wine Spectator*, 26(17): 112–114.

Newman, A. and Jung, Y. 2020. Good food in a racist system: Competing Moral Economies in Detroit. In H. Garth & A. M. Reese (eds.), *Black Food Matters: Racial Justice in the Wake of Food Justice,* pp. 131–157. University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctv182jtk0.8

Out of Africa. 2001. The Animal Kingdom Lodge, Orlando, Florida. *Interior Design*, 72(8): 236–240.

Parasecoli, F. 2010. A taste of Louisiana: Mainstreaming blackness through food in the princess and the frog. *Journal of African American Studies,* 14: 450–468. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-010-9137-y

Sánchez Prado, I.M. 2020. Diana Kennedy, Rick Bayless and the imagination of 'authentic' Mexican food. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies,* 97(4): 567–592. https://doi.org/10.1080/14753820.2020.1699330

Wainaina, B. 2008. *How to write about Africa*. Kwani Trust.

Walt Disney World Resort. n.d. *Disney's animal kingdom lodge*. Available at: https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/resorts/animal-kingdom-lodge/ [Accessed on 12 February 2022).

Williams-Forson, P. 2014. "I Haven't Eaten If I Don't Have My Soup and Fufu": Cultural Preservation through Food and Foodways among Ghanaian Migrants in the United States. *Africa Today,* 61(1):69-87

Workneh, T.W. 2020. Exotica Africana: Interrogating African otherness in bizarre foods with Andrew Zimmern. *Popular Communication*, 18(2): 121–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2019.1637524

Wright, A. 2007. *The imagineering field guide to Disney's Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World: An Imagineer's-eye tour* (1st ed). Disney Editions.

_____

Chapter 16

Mass and Social Media, Food and Navigating "Being Black and Middle Class" in South Africa

By Pamela Gysman

Introduction

Racial division and racism continue to plague South African society almost 30 years into democracy. However, post the 1994 democratic elections, classism, racism and segregation operate in a mostly covert and symbolic manner. Classed prejudices and racial tensions persist to shape subjectivities along racial lines, inhibit class progress by black people and affect how black people occupy and experience being middle class. Among the struggles, the black middle class must endure pressures from both the 'white gaze' and the 'black gaze' that continually monitor, police and judge them (Canham and Williams 2016: 25). Affixed to this policing and accompanying judgements are racist and colonially distorted discourses (in academia, the media and the public) regarding the black middle class. These discourses often characterise the black middle class as a one-dimensional, materialistic, lazy, impressionable and immoral group. Additionally, these discourses insist on lumping black people into one homogenous group with homogenous experiences and history. The black middle class consists of different sub-cultures with distinctive origins. Therefore, rather than there being one homogenous black middle class, the black middle class comprises several middle classes, each with its own sub-culture, values, habitus and coding (see Gysman 2022).

The dominant discourses on the black middle class of South Africa often give a false impression that this group developed after the democratisation of South Africa in 1994. However, sociologist Roger Southall traces the genesis of the black middle class to the late 1800s (Southall 2016). Although small, the early black middle class demonstrated its resilience and resolve to survive by thriving, despite attempts by the apartheid government to stymie them and replace them with a comprador black middle class controlled by the state. This indicates that the black middle class is an agential group with a history of thriving independently from "mainstream" society or the

335

resources it provides. They also have a history of balancing navigating racism, their aspirations and maintaining their dignity, cultural heritage and identity by living a hybridised lifestyle. Figure 16.1 depicts subjects of apartheid engaging in modern culture despite the difficulties and constraints of apartheid. Rather than the typical images of black people under apartheid that exhibit violence and oppressed figures in need of help, these images are evidence that black people have always been determined and agential in their objective to enjoy life and access the privileges of liberty and middle-class life, such as parents supporting and celebrating their children's milestones, pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours and engaging in leisure activities, such as ballroom dancing, ladies socialising and friends spending the day at the beach.

Stylish women dressed in the latest fashion
Location: East London (1950s)

Caption under the photo:
Mrs F.M. Matikinca, a wife of the proprietor of a new trading station at Ngewazi, Middle-drift, looks proudly at the site after the station had been officially opened last week. With her is Mrs G.M. Matikinca, wife of an elder brother of the proprietor.
(**source:** *African Edition* **of the** *Daily Dispatch* **– the 1950s)**

Leisure activities included spending the day at the beach and socialising with friends, family celebrations of milestones and high-culture cultural activities such as ballroom dancing. Location: East London (1950s)

Figure 16.1 Visual snapshots of 1950s East London under apartheid: Showcasing fashion, entrepreneurship, and leisure against the backdrop of forced removals and societal upheaval. Source: Morolong (2018)

This study contends that a transgenerational transfer has occurred between this early group and the contemporary black middle class. Contemporary black middle-class aspirations, determination, ethos and lifestyle build on those of the earlier black middle class. Despite the decades that separate these two middle-class groups, beneath the surface of democracy, they still share multiple similarities and must contend with similar colonial pressures that challenge their aspirations and their pursuit of them. As with the early black middle class, the contemporary black middle class has developed strategies to navigate their raced and classed identity and assert their blackness as belonging in society, while also determining and affirming their individualised identity. One of the strategies used by the black middle class is the construction of a distinctive and independent hybridised culture that consists of distinct symbolisms and codes. For black people, symbolic messaging and encoded performances have become essential tools to navigate racism and classism and to communicate affiliation, affinity and belonging. Globally, studies conducted on the black middle class (Meghji 2019; Rollock et al. 2011) reveal that the black middle class feels pressure to develop creative strategies to keep safe and help navigate their black middle-class identity, especially in white public spaces. Middle-classness for a black person, especially of African nationality, is often treated as an extraordinary identity. Perhaps this is because it adheres to neither colonial nor postcolonial imaginations or definitions of "black" or "Africa". Like Lamont and Molnár (2001), this study considers black middle-class consumption a political act. The black middle class utilises consumption and tastes to communicate their class, affiliations and belonging in public spaces. Consumption is used to share their collective identity, defy racism and assert their dignity and agency. Most studies on the black middle class often fail to fully consider the complexities attached to black identity. Even fewer of these studies explore the black middle class as bona fide bearers of cultural capital (Wallace 2018) or address how the black middle class legitimises their wealth and social mobility (Krige 2015). These studies often portray an image of a group that inhibits democracy and economic progression and is obsessed with status and frivolous consumption. Another common problem is that while the world evolves, the character and ambitions of black people are assumed to have not evolved despite the social, economic and political changes that have taken place. Discourses on the black middle class persistently view black people, their experiences and their aspirations as always reacting to whiteness, white history or other external stimuli instead of ideas generated within the group. These are echoes of colonialism in that these discourses strip black people of their independent thought and independent existence outside of European reality.

Food has long been central to black South Africans' communal style of social organisation. Historically, black communities have used food to show love, *ubuntu* (humanity to others), belonging and acceptance, and to build and maintain social relationships (Puoane et al. 2006). Colonialism, apartheid, violence and the displacement experienced disrupted indigenous culture, lifestyles and historical foodscapes such that food and food practices became raced and classed. As a communicant, food utilises a semiotic network of interconnected systems that shape, create and transmit meaning and are shaped, created and transmitted by meaning in return (Parasecoli 2011; Stajcic 2013). Food connects individuals to each other and to society at large. Thus, food can be a political agent that transmits messages relating to identity and belonging, facilitates power and social interactions, and navigates social positions. Therefore, food and foodscapes as an analytical lens can be a powerful lens that offers fresh approaches to analysing class, identity, power, social structures and cultural performances (Ceisel 2018). This chapter is based on a larger study, which took a phenomenological exploration of black middle-class engagements with foodscapes and food culture as expressions of identity (see Gysman 2022). Centring foodscapes and food culture, the study placed a critical food studies lens on black middle-class consumption and tastes. The study was interested in exploring the politics of black middle-class consumption and nuanced dynamics within a group that has developed its own meanings, class dynamics and food rituals. As such, two intersectional lenses that drew on Bourdieu (1973) positioned the study. A system-centred intersectional lens (Choo and Ferree 2010) was used to explore objective structures such as racism and structural socio-economic challenges faced by black South Africans. A process-centred intersectional lens (Choo and Ferree 2010) was used to explore how the black middle class is constructing and scripting—simultaneously—a distinct black identity, a middle-class identity, and their self-determined group symbolisms, meanings and habitus. Earlier, this paper established that black middle-class consumption patterns can be complex political statements. What follows is a discussion on black middle-class tastes and engagements with food culture as expressions of identity and belonging. This chapter is organised as follows: a discussion on black middle-class experiences of racism in dining spaces; followed by an examination of the transition and influences of evolving food culture and tastes in the black community and last, an analysis of select popular Instagram accounts as case studies to analyse how the black middle-class use food to construct code and perform identity.

Dining while black in South Africa: Black middle-class engagements with food-scapes and food culture

Several examples by African authors highlight the socio-political significance of food, food culture and food symbolism in post-colonial African societies. For example, Ama Ata Aidoo's *Dilemma of the Ghost* (Aidoo 1987) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's semi-autobiographical *Nervous Conditions* (Dangarembga 1989*)*. These works of fiction on post-colonial African life and experiences engage food in critical ways. Food and food symbolism are used to navigate the characters socially and highlight the politics and power dynamics of identity, race, class, gender, social position, culture, status and nationhood. The *Dilemma of the Ghost* draws out cultural differences and shifting African, global and gendered identifications by demonstrating how different characters relate to the same food items or how characters respond to various food items and food rituals. In *Nervous Conditions*, food is palpable in articulating race, status, upward mobility, oppression and class within Zimbabwean society and family structures. All the women in the novel navigate the complexities of being black, female and *Shona* (African tribe) in Zimbabwean society. Food describes the women and navigates and inscribes their femininity, womanhood and social positions both in the family and in society at large. Dangarembga's (1989) work vividly demonstrates how food constructs and articulates cultural customs, power and status. *Nervous Conditions* also articulates the psychological connection between people, food and society. For example, Harper's (2016) observation that trauma can manifest in bodies through relationships with food is exemplified in *Nervous Conditions* by Tambu's anxiety when eating "good" food for the first time and Nyasha's bulimia. Both are young women at a precarious stage in their lives and of the same family, whose relationship with food articulates their anxieties stemming from differentiated gendered, classed and raced experiences.

Food and dining as a symbolism of identity, authority and belonging are visibly observable in a contemporary South African dining culture. For black people, dining and food culture are experiences of both invisibility and hyper-visibility. In Cape Town, for example, the dining culture in certain parts of the city and at certain establishments is visibly racially imbalanced and non-reflective of the South African population. Black people (including black international tourists) have made numerous complaints about the racist dining culture in Cape Town. It is not uncommon for black diners to experience exclusion and discrimination via various schemes, such as policing and sexualisation of black women's clothing and bodies (for example, see Figures 16.2 and 16.3) and

340

racialised classism. The classist and racist lenses of the white gaze are often quick to assume black people's economic and cultural capital. Racialised classism often involves profiling black subjects and either making them invisible or hyper-visible. Whether the black subject is made invisible or hyper-visible, the message is the same: the black subject does not belong in the space. In the following recollection, well-known South African author Ndumiso Ngcobo recalls he and his wife's experience while waiting patiently to be seated at a restaurant in Cape Town:

> They literally did not see us, for seven minutes. We were just invisible; we were just standing there. And then a white family came, I mean they had not been there for literally 15 seconds and someone [white waitress] came and, "Hi, table for five?" My wife and I are like, "Excuse us, we have been standing here for almost 10 minutes" and then she says, "I'll be with you in a moment." And then back to the family of five. (Ndlovu 2021: 8)

However, as described earlier, black diners do not endure racial profiling, discrimination and judgement only from white people. The "black" gaze also influences how the black middle-class experiences or occupies their middle-class status. Figure 16.4 shows examples of how, sometimes, black diners must endure discrimination, racial profiling and prejudicial assumptions from other black people. In 2016, Scott Magethuka shared on X (formerly known as Twitter) his dining experience at The Bungalow in Clifton, Cape Town. Magethuka and his partner were marked on their bill by their waiter, Mike Dzenga, a Zimbabwean national, as '2 blacks' rather than marking their table number. The offence some people took to this description indicates black people are sensitive to being reduced to simply a racial marker. Thus, for black people, being stripped of any other identifier (and subsequently, markers of success) and being reduced to a racialised identifier (which has low social status) is personal and sensitive, regardless of who the perpetrator is. Linked to the prejudicial assumptions and reactions of the black gaze when the object of its gaze is the black middle class or a black person in a "middle-" or "upper-" class setting are transgenerational traumas and internalised messages about race, class, cultural capital, status and belonging. Most of these messages have placed blackness at the bottom of the social hierarchy, devalued aspirations and cultural capital carried by black people and glamorised black struggle and poverty as badges of honour.

Figure 16.2: Nigerian model, influencer and television personality, Adeola Ariyo was reportedly turned away by the manager at ZenZero, a beachside restaurant in Camps Bay, Cape Town for being dressed "indecently". The manager is reported to have stated Adeola's crop top was a bra Source: Pasiya (2021)

@Mazikhali_Veto commented: "Cape Town restaurants do that all the time, two weeks back, I was turned away at Bungalow Clifton by the bouncer saying my dress code wasn't meeting their standards. I respectfully left because I just couldn't understand."

@HlumelaFinca wrote: "This happened to me and my friends in a restaurant called Bilboa in Camps Bay. They said that we were dressed provocatively and that their restaurant doesn't allow that. We were wearing summer dresses."

Another user, @Acesotshisa said: "This also happens at Bobo's, and they said that my friend's shoulders were exposed when she was wearing a simple black dress."

Figure 16.3: Twitter users recount experiences of discriminatory dress codes in Cape Town restaurants, highlighting instances of refusal based on ambiguous standards

Figure 16.4: A controversial bill from The Bungalow in Clifton sparks outrage on social media after customers are described as "2 BLACKS", raising questions about racial sensitivity and accountability in hospitality establishments. Source: Sethusa (2016)

Although African cuisine is popularised and celebrated in contemporary global food culture, the continent's culinary landscape and food traditions emerge from a torturous, violent, dehumanising and oppressive history (Mellett 2020). Secondly, despite this "celebration" of African cuisine, Africa and Africans on the continent still carry a stigma and negative connotations. African cuisine, like other ethnic cuisines, is acceptable in mainstream society only as far as it pleases "white" tastes. In South Africa, colonialism and apartheid have strongly influenced and racialised food choices, tastes and knowledge. The history of race and class in South Africa includes colonial regimes using food and foodways to construct racial and ethnic identities, stratify society, justify segregation and cement racial biases. The following argument by colonial administrators demonstrates that food tastes and "ethnic" diets in South Africa were fabricated and justified through colonial policies aimed at dividing South African society:

> The nationalities you mention are none of them in their own countries accustomed to European diet. The St. Helena lives on yams and fish. The West Indies Negro on plantains, yams and fish (chiefly salt). The Chinese on anything he can get and the Arab on rice, dates, etc. Why then should... they be fed on the same diet as the flesh eating Europeans? (Peté and Devenish 2005: 15)

> The Cape men, Creoles, St. Helenas, etc. now grouped under the name of Hottentot are the best labourers in the Gaol. Many of them have European blood in their veins; all have been, equally with Europeans, accustomed to animal food. It appears to me most unreasonable as well as unjust, that these people, only on the grounds of colour, should be reduced to a diet, which in comparison with that of Europeans is near to starvation. (Peté and Devenish 2005: 15)

The above quotes reflect how ethnic diets and stereotypes about different ethnic groups were created by European colonists. The pronouncements about the Chinese and Arabs demonstrate and reinforce colonial prejudices surrounding Orientalism and racist descriptions of Eastern diets, while the seemingly "positive" points about racially-mixed Cape men indicate that due to their partial "white blood", they should be entitled to a "more superior diet" that includes eating meat. The quotes above reflect how colonisers encoded and racialised the culinary scape in South Africa, thereby laying the structures for future culinary "scapes" and racialisation of food and social structures. Certain keywords, such as "unreasonable" and "unjust" are used by the administrators

to justify and reinforce the racialisation of food and diets and to lay claims of exclusivity to certain foods (in the case of the above example, meat). These distinctions are constructed to differentiate and create great distance between the "master" (who is European) and the "savage native". The description of non-European diets as being "near starvation" encodes all the non-European diets as lacking and sub-par, while simultaneously scripting the European diet as being superior. Congruently, these narratives racialize and class-encode diets by scripting race to foods and encoding hierarchical symbolic value to foods. Contemporary black middle-class engagements with food and global food culture, both online and offline, evidence Africans (and Africans in diaspora) are interested in reconfiguring their imaginations of themselves and their cultures (in this case symbolised by food and food practices), reclaiming their tastes, and reconstructing their identity. Thus, contemporary black middle-class engagements with food can be read as political resistance or warfare against these colonial constructions of race, taste and diet. Black middle-class engagements often decode white symbolisms as a strategy to inflect and deploy "white" symbolic codes in ways that configure racially distinct black middle-class identification (Henderson 2007; Meghji 2019; Rollock et al. 2011).

South Africa's culinary landscape has many influences that have hybridised cuisine, tastes and food preparation. The transformation and adaptation of black people's lifestyle and culture can be traced to influences from other cultures and the adaptation thereof into black people's lifestyle during apartheid (Southall 2016). This transformation and adaptation include black people's identity, tastes and food preparation. For example, the practice of slavery in the western world introduced slaves into South Africa, and some have noted that this entailed tremendous cultural and culinary fusion (Mellet 2020). Through colonialism and apartheid, western culture was enforced upon black people and imported slaves into South Africa. Imported slaves brought with them their own culinary tastes, knowledge and food culture. This, together with the enforced dominance of western culture (including food culture) and the consequences of apartheid on indigenous social and physical structures, radically interrupted indigenous foodscapes, food knowledge and food culture. In contemporary times, the migration of Africans from other countries on the continent, as well as migrations by other nations from the global north, has also had an impact on the national culinary landscape. This has resulted in an eclectic kaleidoscope of cultures in South Africa that influence the modern black person's lifestyle, including the food they consume, are exposed to and subsequently have developed tastes for. Modern technology and globalisation have also impacted local culinary tastes and food preparation, including the preparation of indigenous food.

Constructing black middle-class tastes and identity

Icon Mama Dorah Sitole is considered a pioneer not only for bringing evolution to dinner tables in black homes, but also for bringing a culinary revolution to the local mass media landscape. Sitole entered the culinary industry as a junior home economist at the Canned Food Advisory Service. While working there, she trained as a chef at *Le Cordon Bleu*. After her time at the Canned Food Advisory Service, Sithole became the food editor for the national lifestyle magazine, *'True Love'*, which targets middle-class black women (Hartebeest 2019). Sitole and *'True Love'* magazine's influence significantly contributed to creating a distinct cuisine that unified indigenous South African cultures to create a distinctly modernised African identity (Sitole and True Love Magazine 1999). With *'True Love'*, Sitole merged African cuisine with modern culture and influences from other cultures to create a distinctive hybrid cuisine that, in many ways, echoes *'Ebony'* magazine's agenda and contribution to the development of African American "soul food" and the construction of an African American identity that cuts across economic classes. *'Ebony'* magazine and the concept of "soul food" had a political and social agenda: to unify the black community, express black identity and economic progression, commiserate a shared history, inculcate cultural pride and construct a unified and distinct black identity (Henderson 2007). Placing food and recipes at the centre, *'Ebony'* and *'Ebony Jr.'* reconstructed imaginations of blackness, black family life and black identity. These reimaginations included gendered and generational imaginations of the black family (Henderson 2007). As the first black food editor in South Africa, Sitole developed creative, modernised and inspired recipes that were clearly influenced by her training at *Le Cordon Bleu*. Sitole's recipes have been a great influence in the black community and have influenced upcoming young black chefs and the average home cook alike. Using standard ingredients and food already familiar in the black community, Sitole inspired reimaginations of traditional dishes and the average weekday meal. For example, Sitole and *'True Love'* magazine's cookbook, *'Cooking from Cape to Cairo: A Taste of Africa',* features Sitole's take on indigenous dishes on the continent (Sithole and True Love Magazine 1999). The recipes featured in the cookbook demonstrate Sitole's creative hybridisation of cultures, traditions and global culture. Sitole's recipes often involve upscaling and re-coding food items conventionally coded as "black people's food", "staple" or "poor people's food" (for example, maize meal). Sitole's recipes frequently create an "exotic" and interesting dish that gives new symbolic value to common foods or dishes. Her recipes borrow flavours and tastes from other cultures. Sitole would then merge these borrowed tastes or flavours with a simple staple that is commonly found in a black household to create a new and interesting dish—for example, chocolate pudding made

with maize meal. Another signature characteristic of Sitole's recipes is how "simple" and easy her recipes are to replicate. Perhaps due to knowing the stresses black people experience and the unique challenges of being a black woman, Sitole desired to make cooking less of a stress and more of a joy for women. Her ingredients are also relatively cheap, easy to source and staples an individual can easily find in their pantry. Mobility and access continue to be challenging for black people in South Africa; however, most of her ingredients are easy to find in the township. Thus, even mobility-challenged and township-bound people are able to reproduce middle-class tastes. Sitole also used presentation and staging to infuse and communicate African culture and black identity, thereby encoding a distinct ethnic identity in the recipes.

Sitole's influence (along with global culture) can be observed in the general modern lifestyle of both rural and urban black people. For example, Sitole's recipes have influenced meals served at special events and traditional ceremonies both in urban and rural areas. Volunteer cooks at ceremonies create with pride and personalised creativity "modernised" versions of even simple dishes such as *umngqusho* (samp and beans). Thus, standard ingredients found in black homes are turned into prestigious culinary adventures and cooking at home or catering for traditional ceremonies into proud moments of self-expression. Sitole's recipes not only reimagined "traditional" dishes; they inspired women to feel pride and joy over their creations and shaped tastes in the black community. Therefore, these recipes are a form of political work that re-inscript the symbolic value of black dinner tables and pantries. They also reclaim the dignity of the black dinner table and pantry, black tastes and black identity. Sitole has always maintained that her biggest inspiration is the preservation of indigenous culture and foods. This in many ways makes Sitole and '*True Love'* magazine's agenda like that of the political agenda and work of African American "soul food" as well as '*Ebon'y* magazine's contribution to this agenda in the United States (Henderson 2007). The "upscaling" of "black" food and the black dinner table is both a political revolution and a renewal of culture and knowledge within the black community. Often, the "upscaling" is perceived as westernisation, assimilation or code-switching. When a black person demonstrates modern culture, they are immediately perceived to be aspiring to be "white". However, this paper contests that an expanded understanding is needed. This paper argues that black middle-class performance of modern culture is an agential revision and adaptation of established norms within black culture.

347

The process involved in "upscaling black food" replicates Lévi-Strauss's bricolage (Schmidt and De Kloet 2017). Within cultural studies, the concept of bricolage has been used to describe 'the

remixing, reconstructing and re-using of separate artefacts, actions, ideas, signs, symbols and styles in order to create new insights or meanings' (Schmidt and De Kloet 2017: 3). Like Lévi-Strauss's bricoleur, the black community is limited by political and social structures and cultural tools at their disposal for the construction of cultural capital and identity; thus, they must utilise tools that already exist and are available for them to use, including repurposing codes and artefacts that exist in the white community as well as other communities. "Borrowing" from other communities does not by any means mean that practitioners have been "enlightened". Rather, it means that practitioners have undertaken an agential choice and an agential decision on how to incorporate that choice into their lives. While this may not be true for all who follow modern culture, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that practitioners of this practice are not aspiring to "whiten" their identity; rather, they are preoccupied and engaged with cultural diversity in the present and affirming a sense of being black in relation to this diversity. There are several factors that set limitations on black people's agency, and the desire to adapt whiteness to blackness does not hold true for everyone. Numerous examples of dishes, recipes and advertisements support the idea of black cooks and eaters exploring culturally diverse food in ways that do not amount to "claiming whiteness". These practices sometimes consist of engaging in or incorporating something strongly connoted as black or African with ingredients, presentation styles, or adapted dishes that are associated with, for example, north Africa, Mexico or India.

Performance, identity and social media

The evolution and growth of technology as an integral part of life in the second decade of the new millennium have led to social media's growing dominance. Technology and social media have become the norms of an individual's contemporary lifestyle. Black middle-class predilection for popular culture and social media is one of the indicators of this group's evolution alongside global evolution. For this group, social media has become a space for learning and exchange, both from group members and from others. One of the attractions of social media is the perceived agency it allows the user. Sutherland (2019) describes social media as a safe space that liberates black people to enjoy leisure pastimes. The digital food space consists of a range of communities that provide discourses, knowledge and the sharing of food culture. In line with Bourdieu's (1973) field theory, for black people, social media is also a political field where members of the community can vie

for power, recognition and social position. Digital food spaces provide safe spaces for the black middle class to engage in political work revolving around food knowledge and politics, identity politics and the politics of culinary authority and visibility. The autonomy provided by social media has provided ground for the rise of food politics that trouble and question mainstream practices and knowledge. Social media allows the black middle class to communicate and express their successes, legitimise their economic and cultural capital and assert their belonging in the global society, both to the world and to the group. What follows is an analysis and discussion of black middle-class engagements and online practices on social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and X in relation to how black middle-class people navigate food cultures and invest meanings in certain foods and food rituals. The online practices of black middle-class people constitute what could in many ways be described as a form of political agency that aims to configure a distinct, but also hybridised "black" identity. This rebellion against normative (white and western-centric) middle-class taste is sometimes deliberate and is at other times an organic outcome of acquired tastes. Black middle-class tastes are often characterised by an unidentifiable, elusive and intangible sense of creating something "new". These "new" tastes are expressed through hybridised cuisines, food events, dishes, food flavours and foodways. The "new" black middle-class tastes engage in silent warfare against established norms that have often worked to persuade them that their food and cultural practices are "backwards", "unsophisticated" or "crude". The evolving food culture among the black middle class—in all its complexity and diversity—often destabilises and discombobulates established whiteness. Thus, whiteness is placed precariously in what appears to be a stable hierarchy of food standards and taste.

349

Digital expressions of black identity are performed in various ways; for example, social media accounts may include claiming cultural or African identity in captions and presenting food that is associated with an African cultural identity. These African-themed identity performances are staged within a modern aesthetic (see Figure 16.5 for examples). Figure 16.5 demonstrates how existing codes and coded artefacts or aesthetics are repurposed to create new narrations and new meanings. These coded narratives do not only communicate group tastes or African identity, they are also used to communicate personal identity and tastes. Lorna Maseko's post (Figure 16.5), for example, expresses that her taste buds are particular to certain tastes; thus, even common foodstuffs in the black community, such as tripe, must meet her tastes. To give a further indication about her identity and dispositions, the way Maseko prepared her tripe (which is discernible by its presentation) suggests her class position and cultural capital, expressed as knowledge and familiarity with other

food cultures, and therefore, her "cultured" tastes. The Lazy *Makoti's* presentation of soup (Figure 16.5) also communicates a similar message. However, whatever distance from "blackness" these messages potentially create is mitigated by incorporating curated African symbolism. These images use different symbolisms to connect the performances with African identity. For example, Lorna Maseko uses *pap* (a traditional porridge/ polenta) and how it is presented (both are identifiable symbols in southern Africa) to connect her "non-traditional" preparation of tripe to southern African culture, thereby demonstrating she still identifies with her African identity. In contrast, the Lazy *Makoti* uses her body and traditional jewellery (ostensibly connecting her being) to connect her African identity to her cultural capital and tastes, which are symbolised by her soup.

350

Figure 16.5: Digital expressions of black identity on social media platforms like Instagram showcase a fusion of modern aesthetics with African-themed performances
Source: Maseko (2021); Seshoene (2021a, b)

It is not always the case that practitioners of this practice will use coded African symbolism or artefacts to connect African culture or their African identity to their performance. Figure 16.6 below, of Instagrammer Jozi Foodie Fix exemplifies what may perhaps be described as high-level black middle-class cultural capital. Rich tastes, decadent food, travel and cultural exposure are highly emphasised. Economic capital is also encoded in these pictures, which adds credibility to the authenticity of her performance. Unlike Figure 16.5 above, Jozi Foodie Fix does not use African-coded artefacts or captions. She still does, however, communicate her African identity in other, more subtle ways, such as how she wears her hair.

Figure 16.6: Instagrammer Jozi Foodie Fix embodies high-level black middle-class cultural capital through her curated feed, emphasising rich tastes, decadent food and cultural exposure. Source: Jozi Foodie Fix

Jozi Foodie Fix's account is strongly focussed on food. Yet, one is still able to sense her identity. Figure 16.6 (and most of her Instagram account) does not say much about her African identity; other aspects of her identity, such as her blackness and being a mother, have an undertone. Like The Lazy *Makoti*, Jozie Foodie Fix uses her body and tastes to connect herself with global culture. She successfully merges her black identity with a contemporary culture that is often ascribed as "white". Her lack of use of "African symbolisms" may indicate that she views her race and ethnicity as inherent and self-evident, not just because of her physical appearance, but by virtue of her way of being, even in engagements with "whiteness". Thus, Jozie Foodie Fix connects her black identity to middle-classness in a way that involves assimilation into mainstream middle-classness. This is in line with the strategies adopted by Africans in the diaspora described by Henderson (2007), Meghji (2019) and Rollock et al. (2011). Another possible explanation, perhaps one Bourdieu would use, is that Jozie Foodie Fix's expression of self does not use coded artefacts because she relies on her cultural capital to communicate with others and navigate her belonging. Cultural capital performances require a set of markers; thus, relaxed poses suggest this lifestyle is her norm; select food and drinks; gorgeous landscapes; and different exotic spaces are brought together to create the perception of an affluent, cultured, and well-travelled individual. Even her captions and the staging of her body are designed to emphasise her cultural capital, while at the same time relaying her individualised identity. Bourdieu (1973) contends that society is made up of political fields, where members of society acquire and accumulate capital to gain power and position themselves in power positions. The economic and cultural capital coded in Jozie Foodie Fix's performance suggests a large economic and cultural capital endowment. According to Bourdieu's (1973) theory, this large endowment affords Jozie Foodie Fix the power to navigate and position herself in the field freely. In other words, her cultural and economic capital is large enough to give her the power to position herself to belong both in western society and African society without her legitimacy being questioned in either society.

Other ways in which the black middle class has been involved with food and the culinary terrain provided by mass and social media are the explosion and growing visibility of African chefs, self-professed "foodies", food bloggers and vloggers. Black South Africans' interest in and engagement with food can be witnessed in mass media and social media. It is common to find viewers commenting and discussing food with each other on social media platforms after an episode of TV shows, such as '*Date My Family*' and '*Come Dine With Me SA*'. Viewers engage online during and after the shows, discussing the participants and the food, in particular. Luxury lifestyle magazines,

such as *'Visi Magazine', 'The Insider SA'* and *'Taste Magazine'* as well as TV shows, such as *'Siba's Table', 'Masterchef SA'* and *'The Expresso Show',* feature black chefs who share their knowledge, skills and recipes. These features mark the rise of young black celebrity chefs, such as Siba Mtongana, Wandile Mabaso and The Lazy *Makoti*. Black chefs and food gurus have been influential in shaping tastes in the black community and disrupting foodways and mainstream imaginations of "black" food as well as expressions of black culture in contemporary society. The growing influence of black celebrity chefs has disrupted the South African culinary scape, restaurant industry and culinary training in several ways. For instance, Wandile Mabaso's restaurant, *Les Créatifs,* entry into the high-end dining industry has been described as 'creative', 'shaking up the Johannesburg food scene', 'world-class' and 'first of its kind' (Cardova n.d.). *Les Créatifs* is the materialisation of head chef and owner Mabaso's accumulated cultural capital, embodied as skill, knowledge and expertise as well as his cosmopolitan experiences as a black middle-class person and international chef. Smit (2018) describes Siba Mtongana's evident agency and joy of performing "traditional" femininity in Siba's Table as troubling northern feminist views on traditional gender roles of women and the kitchen as being oppressive. Much like *Ebony* magazine did for the African American community with soul food, Siba and her husband, Brian, a prominent feature of her cooking show, demonstrate reimagining's of gendered roles in the modern black family. Siba's performances of modern mother and housewife demonstrate modernised "black" femininity that echoes The Lazy *Makoti*. The Lazy *Makoti's* cookbook, social media presence and cooking classes (among other services she provides) inspire her followers and create a reimagination of how the modern working African woman can balance her working life (in and beyond the home) and her modern lifestyle and tastes with her African identity and cultural heritage. Her recipes include creative and modernised preparations of "traditional" South African cuisine.

353

The work that is performed by these three chefs influences the development of food rituals, specific food tastes and dishes that are "prestigious" but not "white" or "western". Although their work is encoded to appeal to mainstream sensibilities, it is also encoded with a distinctive African identity that hybridises blackness and whiteness, constructing a distinctive Afropolitan identity, as exemplified by *Les Créatifs'* decor and ambience which blends African culture through art with cosmopolitan menu offerings (see Figure 16.7). Figure 16.7 illustrates the various ways that distinct African identity is weaved into global culinary culture through encoding. Following Lévi-Strauss's bricolage theory, these images also illustrate how the black middle class re-uses existing codes and coded artefacts that have at times been used to disempower and discriminate against them.

This re-use and how it serves to re-script, re-empower and re-dignify African identity, black culture and black capital, are very important. For example, the strategic use of certain artefacts, colours, artworks and even certain food items, such as game meat from animals found exclusively in Africa, is arranged to communicate and distinguish African identity. Added together with certain aspects of globalised food culture, both African identity and black capital are revalued and re-coded.
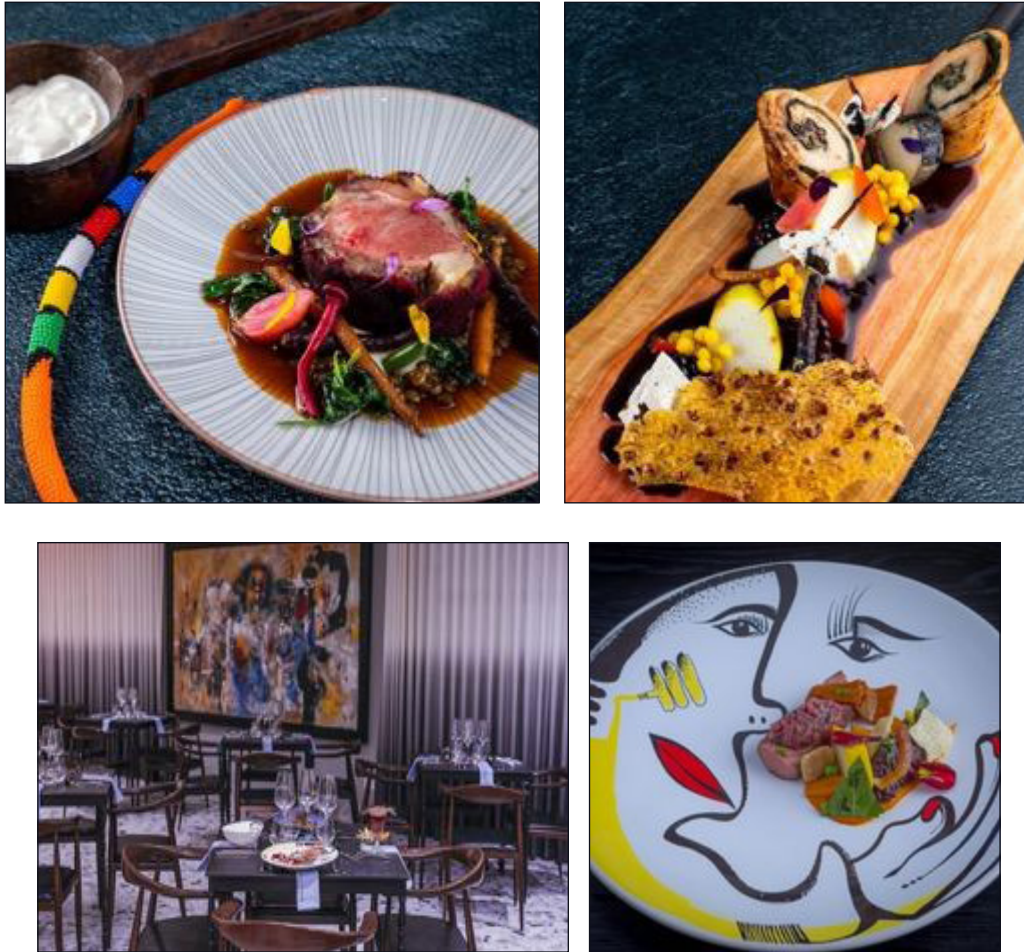
Figure 16.7: The culinary creations of Les Créatifs not only influence food rituals and tastes but also weave a distinctive African identity into global culinary culture. Through a blend of African-inspired decor and cosmopolitan menu offerings, they construct an Afropolitan identity that hybridises blackness and whiteness. Source: *Les Créatifs* (n.d. a, b) (website and Facebook)

Conclusion

Although there is a vast body of discourse on the black middle class and its consumption patterns, there is still little that is understood about this group. This is because most of the discourses on this group are racist echoes of colonial perceptions and readings of Africa, Africans and black culture. Very few academic studies explore black people (of both Africa and the diaspora) as bona fide cultural capital bearers who are creative, industrious and enterprising (Krige 2015; Wallace 2018). However, the problem is not limited to pro-white supremacy and racist discourses. Scholarly practices mean non-western communities are still confined to white hegemonic standards and meanings. For the black community, this has resulted in them always being read in very narrow ways by researchers. The past two decades of the millennium have seen an unapologetically loud and growing demand to decolonise scholarship. Historically marginalised communities have been calling for new epistemologies and expanded readings of cultures and communities that do not subscribe to dominant hegemonic western-centric standards. As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, the black middle class is highly complex, and their consumption, tastes and performances are more nuanced than they may first appear and are traditionally read by researchers. The black middle class is confronted daily by racism and multiple pressures, both from the white gaze and the black glaze. To mitigate these pressures and to navigate the white gaze and black gaze, this group has developed elaborate performative acts anchored on tastes and consumption. Consumption for the black middle class is both an act of leisure and a political statement. As a political statement, black middle-class consumption confronts western-centric claims of dominance through symbolic narratives that assert African identity alongside contemporary global culture, which is often dominated by western-centric culture.

References

Aidoo, A.A. 1987. *The dilemma of a ghost*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.

Bourdieu, P. 1973. Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In: R. Brown (ed.), *Knowledge, education and cultural change*, pp. 71–112. Routledge.

Canham, H. and Williams, R. 2016. Being black, middle class and the object of two gazes. *Ethnicities,* 17(1): 23–46.

Cardova. n.d. *Taste the best of French cuisine in Johannesburg with chef Wandile Mabaso.* [online] The Insider SA. Available at: https://theinsidersa.co.za/taste-the-best-of-french-cuisine-in-johannesburg-with-chef-wandile-mabaso/ [Accessed on 11 October 2021].

Ceisel, C.M. 2018. *Food studies*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.

Choo, H.Y. and Ferree, M.M. 2010. Practising intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory,* 28(2): 129–149.

Dangarembga, T. 1989. *Nervous conditions*. New York: Seal Press.

Gysman, P. 2022. *Foodscapes as identity expression: Food choices and tastes among middle-class blacks in post-apartheid South Africa*. Master's dissertation, University of the Western Cape.

Harper, A.B. 2016. Doing veganism differently: Racialized trauma and the personal journey towards vegan healing. In: *Doing Nutrition Differently*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 133–149.

Hartebeest, C. 2019, October 1. *Magazine legend Dorah Sitole is still cooking*. [online] Food for Mzansi. Available at: https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/magazine-legend-dora-sithole-is-still-cooking/.

Henderson, L. 2007. Ebony Jr! and "soul food": The construction of middle-class African American identity through the use of traditional southern foodways. *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States,* 32(4): 81–97.

Jozi Foodie Fix by Thando on Instagram: 'Vietnam: Singapore: Braamfontein: At home eating: here's to more travel in 2018' (2017) Instagram. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BdCSPPllg6n/?hl=en (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Krige, D. 2015. Growing up and moving up: Metaphors that legitimise upward social mobility in Soweto. *Development Southern Africa,* 32(1): 104–117.

Lamont, M. and Molnár, V. 2001. How blacks use consumption to shape their collective identity. Evidence from marketing specialists. *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 1(1): 31–45.

Les Créatifs (no date a). Available at: https://lescreatifs.co.za/ (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Les Créatifs (no date b). *Facebook*. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/lescreatifsrestaurant/photos_by (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Maseko, L. (2021) Lorna Maseko, Facebook. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/100044565903816/posts/not-your-traditional-way-of-making-tripe-but-definitely-a-much-tastier-way%25EF%25B8%258F-part/330446975117497/ (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Meghji, A. 2019. Encoding and decoding black and white cultural capitals: Black middle class experiences. *Cultural Sociology*, 13(1): 3–19.

Mellet, P.T. 2020. *The lie of 1652: A decolonised history of land*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.

Morolong, D. 2018. *Snaps: The photographs of Daniel "Kgomo" Morolong*. [Photographs].

Ndlovu, T. 2021. Managing sullied pleasure: Dining out while black and middle class in South Africa. *Consumption Markets & Culture,* 25(4): 382–394. doi:10.1080/10253866.2021.1987227.

Parasecoli, F. 2011. Savoring semiotics: Food in intercultural communication. *Social Semiotics,* 21(5): 645–663.

Pasiya, L. (2021) Cape Town restaurant apologises after discriminating against patron for wearing 'inappropriate' top. Independent Online. Available at: https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/food-and-restaurants/cape-town-restaurant-apologises-after-discriminating-against-patron-for-wearing-inappropriate-top-1fae0c5d-0879-4ab9-9bf8-9f9790db05e1 (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Peté, S. and Devenish, A. 2005. Flogging, fear and food: Punishment and race in colonial Natal. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 31(1): 3–21.

Puoane, T., Matwa, P., Bradley, H. and Hughes, G. 2006. *Socio-cultural factors influencing food consumption patterns in the black African population in an urban township in South Africa*. [Article] University of the Western Cape, Research Articles (SoPH). Cape Town.

Rollock, N., Gillborn, D., Vincent, C. and Ball, S. 2011. The public identities of the black middle classes: Managing race in public spaces. *Sociology,* 45(6): 1078–1093.

Schmidt, L. and De Kloet, J. 2017. Bricolage: Role of media. In: *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects.* New York: Wiley.

Seshoene, M. (2021a) The lazy makoti on Instagram: 'gobble gobble some soup. Batho ba #danielfast how's it going?', Instagram. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CKCAnK8ltYo/?hl=en (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Seshoene, M. (2021b) The lazy makoti on Instagram: 'happy #AfricaDay 🖤', Instagram. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CPSPNYrF_OE/?hl=en (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Sethusa, P. (2016) Clifton waiter apologises for '2 blacks' bill, Write. Snap. Click. Available at: https://pheladisethusa.com/2016/12/21/clifton-waiter-apologises-for-2-blacks-bill/ (Accessed on 15 May 2024).

Sitole, D. and True Love Magazine. 1999. *Cooking from Cape to Cairo*. Cape Town Tafelberg Publishers.

Smit, A. 2018. The pleasures of cooking and transnational postfeminist media: Siba's table. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4): 776–779.

Southall, R. 2016. *The new black middle class in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana; Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey.

Stajcic, N. 2013. Understanding culture: Food as a means of communication. *Hemispheres Studies on Cultures and Societies,* 28: 77–86.

Sutherland, T. 2019. Social media and the black travel community: From autonomous space to liberated space. In: *Proceedings of the 52nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.* [online] Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10125/59657

Wallace, D. 2018. Cultural capital as whiteness? Examining logics of ethno-racial representation and resistance. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 39(4): 466–482.

————————————————————————————

359

Chapter 17

Class Act: Gay Culinary Adventures in Pietermaritzburg

By Brian Sibeko

Introduction

South Africa is generally applauded for its efforts to legally protect citizens against unfair discrimination on one or more grounds, including sex, gender and sexual orientation (Nel and Judge 2008). Consequently, LGBT individuals, communities and activism have been prominent in mainstream society. Yet public opinion in South Africa remains divided on LGBT issues, as evidenced by the ongoing battle against violence targeting LGBT people. Violations of LGBT rights, such as hate speech, also occur much too frequently across South African society which renders many in the gay community stigmatised, marginalised and oppressed, despite the constitutional protections afforded to them by the government. This is especially true for gay men and women who do not have class privileges to protect themselves, make choices about where and how to live, or be selective in their entertainment or leisure options. In the face of social marginalisation and denigration, or vulnerability to attacks and homophobia, some gay men and women seek to affirm their values symbolically. This is consistent with Ellemers, Spears and Doosje's (2002) research, which found that people who feel that their group and individual identities are constantly threatened, tend to engage in behavioural responses, including status consumption, to affirm and enhance their identity in society.

361

Status consumption is a phenomenon theorised by Thorstein Veblen, who advanced that many goods and services purchased function as signifiers of social class, thereby affording consumers prestige (McDonnell 2016; Memushi 2013; Veblen 2017). Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999: 41) further suggest that status consumption is 'the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolise status both for the individual and surrounding significant others'. This is especially true in the case of gay men whose 'subculture of consumption can be viewed as an attempt to justify the rights they have lost in their lives and to also signify their identity as members of the gay community

through their economic activities' (Creekmur and Doty as cited in Hsieh and Wu 2011: 391). These economic activities include the consumption of status symbols, such as leisure travel, branded clothing, luxury cars and art while ignoring the consumption of food as a status symbol (Dib and Johnson 2019; Hsieh and Wu 2011; Kates 2002; Rink 2019). In terms of the above, "food" is obviously more than just a source of nutrition. It is also a symbolic product whose preparation, distribution and consumption are socially determined.

Against this background, this chapter narrates one individual's journey, referred to as Max, as he turns to food as a pivotal symbolic resource for defining his status regarding race, class, region, gender performance and sexual orientation. Max's story contributes to the small body of work on consumers in South Africa who are black and gay, since existing literature highlights the experiences of white gay men from the global north who are conspicuous consumers with large amounts of "pink capital".

Max was selected from a larger study on the status consumption of food among black gay men due to his unique social position. Among the ten participants interviewed, Max stood out for actively participating in the status consumption of food to counter prevalent homophobia and to strengthen his identity within the gay community. His motivation stems from feeling further marginalised within his gay social circle, which he attributes to his unemployment and perceived low social status within the group's hierarchy. Max's insights, gathered through observation and a semi-structured interview, were analysed using the social identity and critical consciousness theories.

It is important to acknowledge that individuals' motivations for status consumption are complex and multifaceted, and these theories provide frameworks for analysis rather than definitive explanations. Moreover, the experiences and motivations of black gay men vary, which indicates that not all gay men engage in status consumption for similar reasons. The difference in motivation for status consumption is discussed in this chapter.

An African who is considered un-African: Experiences of being gay in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

Max is 31 years old and identifies as a black and gay Zulu man from Pietermaritzburg. Pietermaritzburg is an emerging city in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province of South Africa. Compared to major

cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg or Pretoria, the city of Pietermaritzburg presents a generative space for examining vulnerability and resilience among LGBT persons. The city reflects and extends the late Zulu King's negative beliefs about sexual minorities. As a public figure who wielded great cultural and political power in the province (KZN) in which Pietermaritzburg is situated, the late King Goodwill Zwelithini's homophobic stance and utterances on LGBT issues continue to inform anti-LGBT societal attitudes in KZN. These heteronormative and patriarchal discourses and practices silence and negate sexual minorities as "un-African" and against religion. This occurs against constitutional protections for sexual orientation, the introduction of same-sex marriage and generally affirming LGBT legislation and policies. While violence (including murder) against black lesbians has been widely reported and condemned, black gay men in this province also experience extreme forms of violence, discrimination, and social stigma. Some have been killed because of their sexual orientation and identities (Makhaye 2021). Max's experiences deepen the understanding of how black gay men navigate the anti-LGBT social norms that increase their vulnerability to homophobic discrimination and violence in Pietermaritzburg. Amid Pietermaritzburg's social hierarchy that subordinates gay men, Max is motivated to purchase and display his food consumption to gain social status and respect. Max always seeks to buy or display his food consumption for the status it confers, despite his social class level.

363

> Sometimes, I go to town with enough money to buy a few clothing items. However, I do not buy what I intend to because I tend to prioritise food experiences. They make me feel unique and differentiate me from my community members who discriminate against me. I like that most of them cannot afford to dine at the restaurants I frequent and the food I eat. This gives me comfort because it feels like I am avenging myself for the treatment they give me. I always post pictures of my restaurant experiences to show them that although I may be gay and taken for granted, I am above them because I can afford what they cannot.

There are similarities between this consumption behaviour explained by Max and the one described by Belk (1988), Eastman et al. (1999) and Mason (1984) who argued that even consumers with a lower social status indulge in status consumption before they have satisfied their basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. These authors further argued that this consumption behaviour is motivated by the social advantage the purchase offers its consumer in the eyes of significant others. For Max, the significant others he is trying to enhance his identity for are not only his community members who discriminate against him based on his sexual orientation. Max also struggles with

being discriminated against by his fellow gay men because he is unemployed and considered not to have the social capital required for one to be accepted in some gay circles that are defined by one's socio-economic status.

The broken rainbow: A black gay man's experience of "community"

One might assume that the discrimination faced by LGBT people from mainstream society motivates them to be a close-knit community. However, this is a fractured community. Some LGBT people experience rejection based on their sexual orientation, class, race, gender expression, markers of masculinity, markers of attractiveness and income. Gay men and lesbian women often seem to be at opposite ends of an awful divide. For example, in 2012, the South African lesbian and feminist group called the One in Nine campaign, disrupted the Johannesburg Gay Pride parade to call for a minute's silence in honour of black lesbians and transsexual persons who have been murdered. They blocked the road, a route for the pride parade, with banners written "No cause to celebrate". Some laid their bodies on the ground to prevent the parade from continuing (McLean 2013; Schutte 2012). This protest highlighted how the Johannesburg Pride had become deeply depoliticised and affected by racist, lesbian-exclusionary, and transphobic gender issues. The pride organisers brawled with the protestors and were caught on camera violently pushing them, threatening to drive over them, and shouting, *'Go back to the location'* (McLean 20132; Schutte 2012), which suggested that the event was exclusive to middle-class and mainly white people who lived in suburbia.

In the face of these deep divides, many socially marginalised LGBT people create different subcultures based on their multiple marginalised experiences, for example, being poor, black, and gay. This can be seen in Max's experience of navigating the gay community as a black gay man who is unemployed. It becomes evident that many of the class and income criteria for categorising gay men within the gay community are integrally connected to attractiveness. For example, the restaurants one frequents and their food consumption habits are motivated mainly by the prestige they afford the consumer in the face of others. This attitude leads to Max being overly preoccupied with the need to compete for status and acceptance within the gay community, which marginalises him because of his socio-economic status. Max is acutely aware of, and often reminded of, his unemployment and the fact that this affects his buying power and social capital, since he cannot define himself as Max, who is employed as X. In his gay circles, middle-class gay men with prestigious jobs are afforded prestige and status and can afford a better quality of life. Moreover,

Max is feminine, and within the gay community to which Max belongs, "effeminate" gay men are considered socially inferior to gay men who perform hegemonic masculinities since the latter are usually regarded as dominant and economically powerful figures in gay partnerships. The cycle of humiliation and social subordination that Max experiences because of his unemployment is evident in the following quote:

> I am unemployed and rely on my parents and partner for money. As a result, I do not have enough money to buy expensive gadgets like iPhones and designer clothes that will make me feel accepted by the crowd. They look down on gay people like me without jobs and cars. This greatly stresses me because it makes me feel useless and lonely.

Max's narrative highlights that the stigma and marginalisation he experiences within the group he appears to belong to is often more acute than the distress he experiences in relation to a broader society, where straight people and homophobes marginalise him because of his sexual orientation. Max experiences such shame and loneliness because he expects to find a sense of solidarity, acceptance and belonging among other men whose racial designation and sexual orientation echo his own. This aligns with Pachankis' (2014) research findings on gay men's mental health. Pachankis (2014) found that the high rates of poor mental health among gay men resulted not so much from discrimination or marginalisation by people outside the gay community, but mainly from experiencing and perceiving prejudice from fellow gay men. Max attributed his poor mental health to how he felt about the gay subculture's obsession with status, competition, and intolerance towards socially diverse gay identities. He also revealed that his intersecting identities of being black, gay and unemployed made him feel he had to fight discrimination on many fronts. Two of the most critical fronts are the discrimination outside the gay community, and the discrimination and rejection from the gay community.

Max has struggled with isolation and loneliness since losing his job, which impacted his social capital and relegated him to a lower social status within his gay community. Consequently, Max now has few close friends since his friendship circle has shrunk, and he also struggles to maintain his romantic relationships because there is a common belief in his community, according to his experience, that suggests that one can only maintain a relationship when they have money. Max believes his trajectory would be different if he still had a job because he could finance his food consumption experiences, which are central to his community's identity. This shows how Max,

although he has parents who provide meals for his sustenance, is more concerned about his food experiences outside his home, because the food serves two functions for him: nourishment and portraying his perceived affluence and prestige.

This mirrors the arguments of Eastman and Liu (2012), Madinga (2016) and Mason (1984) who state that status-conscious consumers derive satisfaction from society's reactions to their possession of status goods, rather than deriving it from the goods' functional utility. This behaviour also aligns with Gysman's (2023) findings, who reports that for individuals obsessed with social status, consumption entails dynamic, innovative, thoughtful, and complicated practices aimed at reconstructing a sense of self, fostering group identity, and cultivating individualised group distinctiveness.

Food porn: A gay pursuit of social status and dignity

'If the casserole is missionary style, food porn takes its devotees into the foodie Kama Sutra. It glistens. It drips. It uses props. It is both lusty and intimate. For those who partake, it is an obsession' (McDonnell 2016: 239). McDonnell (2016) further explains that food porn focusses on how food is portrayed aesthetically through photographs on social media platforms to portray specific messages and social status. The group of gay men with whom Max socialises and generally connects with are status consumers who also engage in food porn since they own other status symbols, such as branded cell phones, branded clothing, and luxury cars. This group always dines at upmarket restaurants that enhance their image and social prestige. Part of their performative claiming of being successful in counteracting their othering as gay is their fixation with photographing themselves in relation to food, and this is consistent with the research conducted by Zhu et al. (2019), who found that when dining out in restaurants, some people take photos of their food and post them on social media platforms–almost like a ritual similar to saying grace before eating.

Gysman (2023) corroborates these discoveries in her research on the interactions of the black South African middle class with social media and digitised food cultures. The study reveals that contemporary members of the black middle class in South Africa employ social media, narratives surrounding food, and messages concerning taste, culinary proficiency, and food knowledge to construct empowering self-perceptions. For example, Instagram posts of photos with the hashtag "food" have increased from 800 000 in March 2013 to almost 250 million in July 2018 (Infogr8 2018; Uno Cookbook 2013). As a result, dining in restaurants has become a tool for self-expression and

communicating with others. Although it is generally argued that people are likely to consume status-signalling products to seek symbolic value (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Yang and Mattila 2014), taking photos and posting photos of dining experiences becomes a tool which projects this intangible experience into the public domain.

Pietermaritzburg has an excellent selection of exclusive restaurants symbolising affluence, wealth, and prosperity. The most popular restaurant is Fire & Vine, which is often frequented by the group to which Max belongs. This restaurant is a "modern classic style" and multi-cultural charm food outlet with a special and unique aura. Their cheapest meal is two rolls of sweet cornbread served with chutney and herb-flavoured butter for R29. At the same time, a person who feels like having their most costly dish from the mains section must be willing to pay R399 for a 350 g sirloin steak or a 320 g lamb rack served with poached apricot, fresh gremolata, red pepper pesto, lamb sauce and potato pavé.

This restaurant is popular among gay men, including members of Max's group, who frequent the establishment weekly. Max mentioned how some of them can sometimes go to the restaurant three days a week for lunch and dinner. I thought this was an exaggeration until Max showed me his friend's social media posts on his phone. From what I observed, they would sometimes have lunch and dinner at this restaurant on two consecutive days, however, I also realised a common trend in their posts. Their food consumption experiences are always combined with the display of other status symbols they own. For example, in the photos, which are heavily edited and modified as though they belong to an international food magazine, their dishes are always strategically positioned on the same table, next to their iPhones, black bank cards and keys for their German sports cars.

At first glance, the photos may appear like ordinary pictures of people enjoying a meal. However, once you take a closer and more analytical look, you can start seeing that the photos convey a message about their social and economic status as well as the kind of dignity they want others to afford them based on these two traits they have portrayed through the photos. This performative claim of gay affluence, success, good taste, cosmopolitanism, and uniqueness signals to the mainstream community, which is perceived as homophobic, that gay people have status and excessive income that affords them a table at these exclusive spaces. These restaurants are considered exclusive because they are not easily accessible to the mainstream community of Pietermaritzburg, which

has high socio-economic vulnerabilities due to the growing population and increasing levels of poverty and unemployment (Nel and Judge 2008). In addition, evidence shows that gay men have higher incomes than heterosexual men. These gay men are cultivating a unique expression of their blackness and masculinity, akin to other black people who share a particular social and political interest in fostering their visibility and social recognition by publicly portraying their tastes, distinctive identities and socially determined values as a group (Gysman 2023).

The cosmopolitan and mainly European food they eat in many ways is a marker of their superior taste, since whiteness is at the hierarchy of food standards and taste (Gysman 2023). It is as though they are refusing the stereotype of being black South Africans who only eat out at chain restaurants such as South Africa's popular *Spur Steak Ranch*. Equally significant is their defiance of a stereotype of black South African masculinity: the figure of the "down-to-earth" man whose favourite food is *braaied* meat, whose favourite drink is a beer and who considers prestigious meals including oysters and champaign as frivolous. By emulating a taste for cosmopolitan foods often enjoyed by elite men in the global north, the group also affirms a particular kind of hegemonic masculinity. This may be "frivolous" and marginal in South Africa, yet it is dominant within a global landscape of identity expression and food taste. By surrounding itself with consumer status objects, the group of gay men cannot be seen mechanically adopting white or western tastes. Instead, their choices are strategic and fully aligned with their social positioning and efforts to re-position themselves socially. Through food, this group refuses its ascribed position as powerless and subordinate; instead, they claim their agency and dignity by affirming tastes culturally superior to those generally associated with being heterosexual black men.

Max's position concerning all these consumption habits is complex. He believes meeting genuine friends who are not fixated on looks, status and money is difficult. Since he does not have the means to afford status symbols such as iPhones and fine dining experiences, Max now avoids making friends with people with a higher social status than himself, since he feels that they always brag about what they have and end up making him feel inferior. Max also struggles to maintain his romantic relationships because he believes one cannot be romantic without money. If he dates someone who has money or can provide for him, his self-esteem makes it challenging to maintain the relationship, since he always feels inferior and emasculated. In a statement that reveals the centrality of food in Max's sense of his eroded social status, he stated:

I used to be taken seriously by my friends when I was still employed because I could afford nice things like the latest fashion and eat at expensive restaurants. My friends and I would have breakfast at a restaurant and spend the whole day there. We would have breakfast, lunch and sometimes dinner at the same restaurant in one day. You will not believe that my friends are now distant because I no longer have money to pay for all these things. They always make excuses when I reach out and no longer invite me when they spend time together. Gays are cruel. They only want you when you have something to offer.

From the comment, '*They only want you when you have something to offer*', it is evident that due to his unemployment status, Max is perceived as being useless without any social capital that can afford him to be included in the gay circle, he used to be part of. Max feels less important and dehumanised by how his group members' behaviour marginalises him. Through his food consumption habits, he has found a mechanism to dissociate himself from this identity of lacking the capital to fit in with his in-group. After all, Max often revealed that he attaches importance to using food and other commodities as a status enhancer.

Edible revenge: Rediscovering agency through food   369

Max mentioned that he was not always unemployed, and like the other gay men who were his friends, he drew comfort and a sense of dignity from being good-looking, well-dressed, reasonably affluent and "eating well". However, he no longer frequents the prestigious Fire & Vine restaurant because he does not feel he is a desirable patron, since he is unemployed and lacks the symbolic resources, such as an iPhone and the latest fashion trends, that the other patrons always display. Max reclaims his sense of self despite his circumstances by opting for alternative restaurants such as Elephant & Co, adjacent to Fire & Vine. Gay men also frequent this restaurant; however, this group of gay men belong to a class significantly lower than those who frequent Fire & Vine. Although the restaurant is not on the same level as Fire & Vine, Max shares that it still affords him some perceived prestige and improves his social standing when he compares himself to those unemployed gay men who cannot afford to dine there. He further explained that he might not be in the upper class of his in-group's social hierarchy, but he is aware that there is a class of black gay men below him, and he uses his food practices to separate himself from them. Max confirmed this superiority by insisting he is "flashy" compared to many unemployed black gay men he perceives as inferior. This is apparent in the quote below:

> *I may not have money for Fire & Vine. However, I can still create an impression that I am also classy by dining at Elephant & Co. because their interior and plating are beautiful, even though their prices are lower and affordable. I know that some gays cannot afford to eat at Fire & Vine and Elephant & Co. So, even though the Fire & Vine gays may reject me, I can also look down on those who cannot afford Elephant & Co. The gays who eat from fast food outlets. It is all about levels.*

From this quote, one can note that for Max, what affords a gay man prestige and status, is having money and the ability to engage in status consumption, especially food status consumption. This boasting about affluence and class superiority—alongside Max's critical remarks about the class arrogance of the wealthy black gay man he knows—might seem contradictory. However, if one considers the charged racist and homophobic context within which black gay men seek visibility, dignity and respect, then Max's anxiety about falling into a class of gay men who only know fast food is understandable.

Max also mentions that he cannot achieve his social prestige and the status he desires if he does not share his food experiences with others and ensure that his food consumption becomes publicly visible. Like the elite class he does not fit in with, Max also posts photos and videos of his food experiences on his Instagram account and has carefully curated an image of himself as a food status consumer who is very discerning about the food he posts. Max is adamant that he only posts when he has a fine dining experience. When asked to elaborate further, he shared that he sometimes eats from fast food outlets like McDonald's and KFC. However, he never takes or posts pictures of those experiences because they do not fit his image of a tasteful and sophisticated gay man who is conscious of his public appearance. Max further mentioned that he must find the interior of these restaurants classy enough to appear on his social media profiles. His reference to the décor and physical appearance of where he eats is unmistakable evidence that food and literal taste are part of a broader repertoire of symbols that, when photographed together with a subject, collectively work to situate that subject socially. Therefore, decor, setting and food all function simultaneously to create a superior social status for Max.

Discussions with Max made it clear that knowledge of what is "tasteful" and "elitist", especially regarding food, is critical to his cultural capital (Bourdieu 2018) and ability to acquire social prestige. Veblen (2017) argues that upper-class members consume luxury products to dissociate themselves

from those they perceive as a lower class. In contrast, those who belong to or identify with the lower level, consume luxury products to imitate or associate themselves with the wealthy class (Han, Nunes and Drèze 2010; Rink 2019).

This is often the case with Max. His socio-economic status does not afford him the prestige enjoyed by black middle-class gay men. However, because of his need for social prestige, he desperately engages in the status consumption of food from restaurants below the elite gay class, yet above the unemployed gay class. Max opts for these restaurants because, although they are not elite enough for those above him, they are still exclusive and inaccessible to those he wants to dissociate from. As a marginalised black gay man within the gay in-group, Max has curated his prestigious image and continues to consume food for status reasons within his financial means. Max believes this behaviour affords him influence in society and fuels his self-esteem. Consequently, this status-seeking behaviour helps Max to lessen the chances of being discriminated against as a social inferior.

Fake it until you make it: Grocery shopping as a communicated message

Max's public use of food to signal his social status continues beyond dining experiences. He also reports that he has a desire to do his grocery shopping at more elitist grocery stores such as Woolworths and Checkers Hypermarket. However, since Max is unemployed and relies on his parents to pay for groceries, he must accept low-end grocery stores such as OK and Shoprite, where they shop. Max shares that whenever he accompanies his parents or is sent to buy groceries, he carries the grocery items in Woolworths shopping bags because they signal status and success. He does not want to be seen in these grocery stores or carrying bags provided by the shops because it would be embarrassing for him. To ensure he does not get embarrassed, Max often buys groceries away from his neighbourhood or shopping malls where he does not have a high chance of being seen by his gay friends. He says he finds solace in knowing that even if they see him carrying groceries from low-end stores, they will be disguised as Woolworths-bought groceries.

Grocery retailer selection has been a subject of investigation across academic fields. Researchers have found that the attributes consumers consider important when selecting a supermarket, influence the images they form regarding the supermarkets (Carpenter and Moore 2006; Mafini and Dhurup 2015; Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou 2009). Studies of supermarket attributes

conducted by De Morais Watanabe, De Oliveira Lima-Filho and Torres (2013) and Ghosh, Tripathi and Kumar (2010), reveal that consumers select a supermarket based on convenience, in-store personnel, in-store atmospherics, and services as well as product and price. Max's narrative does not affirm these findings, focussing on buyers' practical needs. This suggests that much research into food consumption patterns highlights concerns such as efficiency and convenience while neglecting cultural and sociopsychological factors such as Max's social aspiration.

For Max, shopping at Woolworths makes him feel successful, because Woolworths has marketed itself as a South African store with a long history of selling fresh and high-quality foods that tend to be more expensive than those sold at other South African grocery stores. When asked which attributes he likes most about Woolworths, Max mentioned the interior design of the shop, the black and white labelling, which he considers classy, and the fact that they sell fresh and good quality products. The image Max has formed about Woolworths' branding as tasteful and sophisticated, influences his wish to buy groceries there and his performance to others that he does do so.

This aligns with the findings of Dib and Johnson (2019) which suggest that gay men's consumption habits are also influenced by their varying needs for uniqueness. Max's supermarket choices are also influenced by his desire to be unique, and he often curates his foodways to reflect a quirky and highly individualistic self-image. Although Max's buying patterns are aspirational, often emulating what members of a superior class eat and value, he also often seems to want to differentiate himself from others. In Max's circles, those who are unemployed cannot afford groceries from Woolworths. Instead, they are expected to purchase groceries from low-end retailers, such as OK and Shoprite. Although these retailers are within what Max can afford, he strives to be unique from his in-group of unemployed black gay men by curating a public image of an unemployed black gay man who buys his groceries from Woolworths, by disguising his groceries bought from OK and Shoprite in Woolworths shopping bags. This makes him unique and exclusive among his in-group, because although he is considered "poor" and expected to shop at a low-end retailer, his public image proves otherwise.

This performativity affords Max social prestige and respect from the social group above him and the one he belongs to, but wants to differentiate himself from. The Woolworths shopping bags Max uses as a disguise for his groceries offer him a sense of exclusivity, which improves his need to be unique and enhances his self-esteem and self-concept. By demonstrating his uniqueness from

others, Max also registers his freedom to express himself autonomously—irrespective of how others might discriminate against him. This behaviour is consistent with the findings of Lynn and Harris (1997) that suggest that people seek to avoid sharing similarities with others.

Besides the need for uniqueness, Max's consumption habits are influenced by his need to appear successful, despite being unemployed and relying on his family and partner for financial support. Most people regard gay men as educated and monied (Dib and Johnson 2019). Therefore, some gay persons, like Max, affirm the stereotype by searching for luxury restaurants and exclusive food experiences that uphold their "image" of success. Given the fact that this image is not something that gay men enter the world with, the idea is maintained through constant monitoring and adjusting the self through consumption practices (Schembri, Merrilees and Kristiansen 2010), as we have seen with Max's curated self-image that is made public through his Instagram posts. Linked to this need for success, is Max's notion that luxury food consumption is related to his pride. For example, Max experiences a sense of pride from posting pictures of himself dining in a fine restaurant compared to a non-elite restaurant such as McDonald's. Max's feelings of pride are related to his sense of success. Therefore, it can be assumed that his pride in dining at exclusive and elite restaurants is directly linked to his feelings of being more "successful" than those he perceives as subordinate. Both feelings of success and pride help Max reaffirm his identity and social status within the gay community. To some extent, these feelings provide him with the confidence and capital to respond to the homophobia he experiences from heterosexual people as well as the marginalisation and rejection he experiences within the gay community.

373

Conclusion

Max's status consumption of food highlights that in South Africa, particularly in Pietermaritzburg, KZN, LGBT people are still subjected to violence and discrimination when they should be enjoying legal protections. His consumption habits also indicate that the desire to seek status and prestige in society is notable, especially for people who belong to or identify with a marginalised, stigmatised, or low-status group. Notably, Max's experience highlights that even though status consumption is primarily regarded as a mechanism used by people who seek to enhance their prestige and differentiate themselves from others when it occurs in the context of people who feel that their group and individual identities are under constant threat, it becomes a political response to the marginalisation, discrimination and loss of dignity they are subjected to in society.

This also shows us that South Africa still finds it difficult to translate its pro-LGBT laws into reality. Max is still discriminated against in his society for being gay. However, if a discrimination-free society is achieved, the desire to counter homophobia and other prejudices through status consumption may decrease, because social equality would have been ensured. Nonetheless, Max is resilient amid the discrimination and prejudice he encounters from his in-group and the community. Max claims his agency through his food consumption habits, enhancing his social status and self-image.

References

Bearden, W.O. and Etzel, M.J. 1982. Reference group influence on product and brand purchase decisions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2): 183–194.

Belk, R.W. 1988. Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15(2): 139–168.

Bourdieu, P. 2018. The forms of capital. In: *The Sociology of Economic Life,* pp. 78-92. Routledge.

Carpenter, J.M. and Moore, M. 2006. Consumer demographics, store attributes, and retail format choice in the US grocery market. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,* 34(6): 434–452.

De Morais Watanabe, E.A., De Oliveira Lima-Filho, D. and Torres, C.V. 2013. Store image attributes and customer satisfaction in supermarkets in Campo Grande-MS. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, 12(4): 85–107.

Dib, H. and Johnson, L.W. 2019. Gay male consumers seeking identity in luxury consumption: The self-concept. *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management*, 4(2): 25–39.

Eastman, J.K., Goldsmith, R.E. and Flynn, L.R. 1999. Status consumption in consumer behavior: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(3): 41–52.

Eastman, J.K. and Liu, J. 2012. The impact of generational cohorts on status consumption: An exploratory look at generational cohort and demographics on status consumption. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(2): 93–102.

Ellemers, N., Spears, R. and Doosje, B. 2002. Self and social identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1): 161–186.

Ghosh, P., Tripathi, V. and Kumar, A. 2010. Customer expectations of store attributes: A study of organized retail outlets in India. *Journal of Retail and Leisure Property,* 9: 75–87.

Gysman, P. 2023. Black South African middle-class engagements with social media and gigitised food cultures. *Matatu*, 54(1): 61–86.

Han, Y.J., Nunes, J.C. and Drèze, X. 2010. Signalling status with luxury goods: The role of brand prominence. *Journal of Marketing, 74*(4): 15–30.

Hsieh, M.H. and Wu, S.L. 2011. Gay men's identity attempt pathway and its implication on consumption. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(4): 388–416.

Infogr8. 2018. *The art and science of insta-worthy food photography.* Available at: https://infogr8.com/projects/the-art-and-science-ofinsta- worthy-food-photography/ [Accessed on 24 November 2022].

Kates, S.M. 2002. The protean quality of subcultural consumption: An ethnographic account of gay consumers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(3): 383–399.

Lima-Filho, D. and Vaz Torres, C. 2013. Store image attributes and customer satisfaction in supermarkets in Campo Grande-Ms. *BJMkt – Brazilian Journal of Marketing,* 12(4): 85–107.

Lynn, M. and Harris, J. 1997. Individual differences in the pursuit of self-uniqueness through consumption. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* 27(21): 1861–1883.

Madinga, N.W. 2016. *Selected antecedents to approach status consumption of fashion brands among township youth consumers in the Sedibeng District.* Doctoral dissertation, Vaal University of Technology.

Mafini, C. and Dhurup M. 2015. Drivers of customer loyalty in South African retail stores. *Journal of Applied Business Research,* 31(4): 1295–1310.

Makhaye, C. 2021. *LGBTQIA+ people in SA 'under siege.* SowetanLive. 23 April. Available at: https://www. sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-04-23-lgbtqia-people-in-sa-are-under-siege/. [Accessed on 6 July 2023].

Mason, R.S. 1984. Conspicuous consumption: A literature review. *European Journal of Marketing,* 18(3): 26–39.

McDonnell, E.M. 2016. Food porn: The conspicuous consumption of food in the age of digital reproduction. In: *Food, media and contemporary culture,* pp. 239–265. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

McLean, N. 2013. Digital as an enabler: A case study of the Joburg pride 2012. *Feminist Africa,* 18: 25–42.

Memushi, A. 2013. Conspicuous consumption of luxury goods: Literature review of theoretical and empirical evidences. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 4(12): 250–255.

Nel, J.A. and Judge, M. 2008. Exploring homophobic victimisation in Gauteng, South Africa: Issues, impacts and responses. *Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology & Victimology*, 21(3): 19–36.

Pachankis, J.E. 2014. Uncovering clinical principles and techniques to address minority stress, mental health, and related health risks among gay and bisexual men. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 21(4): 313–330.

Rink, B. 2019. Conspicuous queer consumption: Emulation and honour in the pink map. *Conspicuous Consumption in Africa*, pp. 183–199.

Schembri, S., Merrilees, B. and Kristiansen, S. 2010. Brand consumption and narrative of the self. *Psychology & Marketing,* 27(6): 623–637.

Schutte, G. 2012, October 12. *No cause to celebrate a racist pride*. Mail & Guardian. Available at: https:// mg.co.za/article/2012-10-12-00-no-cause-to-celebrate-a-racist-pride/#:~:text=When%20the%20 One%20in%20Nine,of%20defiance%20and%20civil%20disobedience [Accessed on 7 August 2023].

Theodoridis, P.K. and. Chatzipanagiotou, K.C. 2009. Store image attributes and customer satisfaction across different customer profiles within the supermarket sector in Greece. *European Journal of Marketing,* 43(5/6): 708–734.

Uno Cookbook, 2013, March 28. *Best food hashtags explained.* Fine Dining Lovers. Available at: http://www.finedininglovers.com/stories/hashtags-explained/ [Accessed December 2022].

Veblen, T. 2017 *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Routledge.

Yang, W. and Mattila, A.S. 2014. Do affluent customers care when luxury brands go mass? The role of product type and status seeking on luxury brand attitude. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospital Management,* 26(4): 526–543.

Zhu, J., Jiang, L., Dou, W. and Liang, L. 2019. Post, eat, change: The effects of posting food photos on consumers' dining experiences and brand evaluation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 46(1): 101–112.

377

Chapter 18

Kitchen Confessions: A Photo Essay

By Marié-Heleen Coetzee and Nicola Haskins with Priyanka Bandu,
Nikita Dyers, Lebogang Lebethe, Dineo Mapoma and Siyabonga Radebe

Ingredients:
Laughter
Listening
Sharing
Confessions
Compassion
Imagination

This immersive performance-installation, a collaboration between SOA: Drama (University of Pretoria) and the Department of Performing Arts Dance Stream (Tshwane University of Technology) explores the relationship between food, memory and identity. What we eat, how we eat, when we eat and the contexts in which we eat provide insights into individual and cultural identities (Monterrosa et al. 2020).

379

Our remembering is tied to our lived experiences, including food practices. Food preparation and consumption are deeply sensory and embodied acts. Food practices can act as mnemonic devices speaking not only to memory and identity, but also to belonging or non-belonging. The foods people eat likely reflect their cultural background, socio-economic status and religious beliefs, where food plays a role in shaping individual and communal identity (Chee 2024). Autobiographical memory is tied to identity. The connection between food practices and the embodiment of identity, and between commensality (Nyamnjoh 2017) and identity construction makes food practices a performative mode of being in the world. Through acts of commensality, stories are shared, digested and brought into being, which "performs" multiple identities in and through food practices and relational intra-actions in commensal contexts.

Kitchen Confessions explored food as a theatrical device to unearth performers embodied "remembering's" around food and food practices. Marié-Heleen Coetzee and Nicola Haskins co-curated the creative process and performance. Collectively, curators and performers moulded what surfaced in the creative explorations into a physical, visual performance experience. Food was used to stimulate autobiographical memories that tie to performers' sense of identity and belonging to create parallel narratives that tie together memories, stories, interactive dialogue, singing and movement as part of the performance. These narratives were part of autobiographical storying and partly theatricalised to mediate the immediacy of performer's autobiographical stories and create aesthetic distance from the autobiographical dimension.

Whilst the key nodes of narrative and performer-interaction were set, audiences were encouraged to respond and engage with the performers through participatory stimuli to respond to the performance and to share their memories and stories surrounding food. This was an unpredictable element around which performers improvised and tied back what surfaced to the central narrative

nodes. The audience and performers thus, co-created the performance. The performance was perpetually morphing and shifting depending on what stimuli audiences provided. As such, this interdependence of performers and "spect-actors" to shape the performance positioned the performance as perpetually "in process" and incomplete.

Materials

1. Glitterbomb
2. Fairy lights
3. White tablecloth
4. Red and white striped napkins
5. Red plates
6. Gold cutlery
7. Red paper lanterns
   1. Music

382

Laughter, listening, sharing

Confession, compassion, imagination ...

THE MENU:
Pilchard fish cakes
Bone marrow soup with *dombolo* (steamed bread)
Biryani
Dikuku le gemere (scones and ginger beer)
Koesisters (a plaited doughnut dipped in syrup)

384

DIRECTIONS (the how-to)
1. Gatherings:

Welcome to *Kitchen Confessions*, where stories are shared, and memories are simmered ... where every dish tells a story ...

Come in ... explore ... eat ... a kitchen is a confessional of sorts, is it not? Stories are spilt into mixing bowls. Aromatic aromas, sizzling sensations ... memories, motion ...

2. First motions:

We dress you; we share, we move ... we eat together.

Time to confess, to confess, to confess!

Put your taste buds to the test!

3. Something fishy

It has been years since I became a pescetarian. I guess I still wonder how different it would have been …
How many moments were potentially missed?
But, being served first …

4. Bones of contention

Teased. Too skinny. So, I ate and ate and ate …. And then I danced …

5. Bite Back Biryani

A comment that wraps itself around you like a Sari, slowly choking you ... if only she'd hid her disgust like they hid the potatoes in that breyani pot.

388

6. That's how the cookie crumbles

Know your roots. The rhythm of our languages. The vibrant patterns on our clothing, the tales of our ancestors echoing ... Beautiful.
But must I live in a time-capsule? I am a modern, traditional South African girl.

7. Cook sisters!

I was always cooking in the kitchen with my family, but on that day, my sister was shouting ... before I knew it ...

Result:
1. Relationality
2. Mutuality
3. Good-fellowship
4. Imaginings
5. Interdependence
6. Collective creations

8. Conviviality

Through the embodied acts of eating, engaging, and using provocations and invitations in the performer's text, the "spect-actors" offered a "taste" of their performed selves. Sharing stories and confessions became delectable, momentary 'performative acts of self-disclosure' (Lawson 2009), during which "spect-actors" citied titbits of their embodied selves in the process of telling, (re)storying and the (re)embodiment of autobiographical memories related to food and food practices. Through commensality and the stories that emerged, the 'autopoietic feedback loop' between performers and the audience was broadened, shaping 'mutual inter-informing' (Fisher-Lichte 2008: 47) between "spect-actors". The embodied dimensions of this feedback loop delve into affective connections underpinning the moments of selected, performative self-disclosure that surfaced a fleeting recipe for conviviality through commensality. Like the performance, our interpretations, observations, perspectives and perceptions are expressions of our (inter)subjectivity: wondering; incomplete; in process.

References

Chee, S.Y. 2024. Savoring the past, nourishing the present: Uncovering the essence of multicultural mealtime experiences in senior living facilities. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 67(3): 322–348. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2023.2264894 [Accessed on 25 August 2023].

Fischer-Lichte, E. 2008. *The transformative power of performance: A new aesthetics.* Routledge.

Lawson, J. 2009. Food confessions: Disclosing the self through the performance of food. *M/C Journal,* 12(5). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.199 [Accessed on 3 March 2024].

Monterrosa, E.C., Frongillo, E.A., Drewnowski, A., De Pee, S. and Vandevijvere, S. 2020. Sociocultural influences on food choices and implications for sustainable healthy diets. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin,* 41 (2_suppl): 59S–73S. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0379572120975874 [Accessed on 25 August 2023].

Nyamnjoh, F.B. 2017. Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the currency of conviviality. *Journal of Asian and African Studies,* 52(3): 253–270. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909615580867 [Accessed on 1 March 2024].

Chapter 19

A Gelukksdal Funeral

By Limpho Makapela

I had not anticipated a death in the family would bring me closer to my grandmother's origins, which were expressed in many different ways in the kitchen of her home in Vergenoeg, Galeshewe (Kimberley), Northern Cape Province, South Africa. I had set out to enquire into my grandmother's past life, to try and establish what led her to leave Payneville, Springs, in Gauteng, and start a family, a whole new life in the Northern Cape. This essay is a small documentation of the slaughtering of a cow in preparation for the funeral of my grandmother's sister in Geluksdal, Brakpan in Gauteng province, South Africa. I wanted insights into a ritual practice that is common in South Africa when there is a death in a family. Slaughtering plays a critical role in birth, union and death. In Zulu culture, there is '*imbeleko yomntwana* (a thanksgiving ceremony to the newly born), *umshado* (marriage ceremony), *ukwemula* (recognition by the head of the family that his daughter has reached marriageable age), *ukubika inxiwa* (sod-turning ceremony), and, of course, rituals associated with death.'* What does it mean to kill and what does it mean to slaughter? What does it mean for me, as a vegan, to photograph slaughtering and meat consumption, especially when I'm most certainly the only vegan at the funeral? What does it mean to document what western vegans consider to be a violation of animal rights? How can a ritual practice that has been practiced for centuries be reduced to simply an act of killing when it is much more than that? What are the gendered relations, not only in the ritual practice itself, but also in the intimate moments documented in the process of slaughtering cattle? What are the intimacies between man and meat and the intimacies among men engaging in the ritualistic practice of slaughtering?

393

Land and its historical challenges in South Africa.
Displacement.
How do we engage in ritual practice
as the displaced?
Migration in birth.
Migration in union.
Migration in death.
We gather,
to bring together what is sacred.

* Zulu, E. 1991. Animal slaughter is a rite. *Reality,* 23(6), October, 13.

─────────────────────────────

Umqombothi (traditional beer)

Mix 500 g of King Korn *Mtombo* malt with 4 cups of maize meal in a bowl. Add 2 litres of boiling water and stir until you have a smooth paste. Set aside to cool, then cover with a lid and leave in a warm place overnight to begin fermenting. Pour 4 litres of water into a large pot. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat and work in the soured mixture, stirring constantly. Place back on the heat and cook, stirring constantly, until boiling. Continue cooking the mixture for 60 minutes, until thick. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool, then transfer into a large plastic bucket. Add 6 litres of cold water, mix in the other 500 g of King Korn *Mtombo* malt and ¼ cup of brown sugar. Cover with a lid and set aside for between 2 and 3 days to ferment. On the third day, the fermented mixture will have a pungent smell and tiny bubbles will appear on the surface. Pour the beer into a large fine-mesh sieve. Using your hand or a large wooden spoon, press the beer mixture through the sieve to achieve a smooth liquid. Set aside to settle for 30 minutes before serving.

398

Inyama yendlu (the meat of the house)

Cut 1-1.5 kgs of cattle neck meat into large pieces and season generously with salt and pepper on all sides. In a small bowl, combine 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 1 finely chopped onion, 3 minced garlic cloves, 1 tablespoon of ground paprika, 1 teaspoon of ground cumin, 1 teaspoon of ground coriander and 1 teaspoon of dried thyme, to create a marinade. Place the cattle neck meat in a large bowl. Pour the marinade over the meat, ensuring it is well coated. Allow the meat to marinate for at least 1 hour, or preferably overnight in the refrigerator. Remove the cattle neck meat from the marinade, allowing any excess marinade to drip off. Make a fire. When the coals are medium hot, and evenly distributed, place the meat on the braai grid, directly over the hot coals. Cook for about 5-7 minutes per side, or until the meat is nicely charred and cooked to your desired level of doneness. While grilling, baste the meat with any remaining marinade to keep it moist and add extra flavour. Once the meat is cooked, remove it from the braai and allow it to rest for a few minutes. Slice the cattle neck meat against the grain into thin strips. Serve the meat hot, garnished with chopped fresh parsley if desired. It pairs well with traditional South African side dishes like pap (corn meal) or chakalaka (spicy vegetable relish).

402

Liver and onion

Slice and rinse 500 g of liver slices under cold water and pat dry with a paper towel. Cut the liver slices into smaller, bite-sized pieces if desired. In a mixing bowl, combine 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour, 1 teaspoon of ground paprika, 1 teaspoon of ground cumin and 1 teaspoon of ground coriander. Season with salt and pepper. Toss the liver pieces in this mixture until they are well coated. Heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil or butter in a large frying pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 large onions that have been sliced and sauté them until they become soft and caramelised, stirring occasionally. This process may take about 10 minutes. Once the onions are caramelised, remove the onions from the pan and set them aside. In the same pan, add a bit more oil or butter if needed, then add the coated liver pieces. Cook the liver for about 3-5 minutes per side until they are browned on the outside, but still slightly pink in the centre. Be careful not to overcook the liver, as it can become tough. Once the liver is cooked to your desired level of doneness, return the caramelised onions to the pan and stir them together with the liver. Allow the mixture to cook for an additional 1-2 minutes to blend the flavours. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the liver and onions to rest for a few minutes before serving. Serve the traditional liver and onions hot as a main course. It can be accompanied by pap (corn meal) or mashed potatoes, and a side of vegetables or salad.

406

Samp and beans

Rinse 1 cup of dried samp and 1 cup of dried beans (sugar beans, red kidney beans or speckled beans) under cold water, then soak them in water overnight or for at least 6-8 hours. This will help soften them and reduce cooking time. Drain the soaked samp and beans, then rinse them again. In a large pot, heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil over medium heat. Add 1 onion chopped and 2 minced garlic cloves and sauté until the onion becomes translucent and fragrant. Add the drained samp and beans to the pot, along with 2 teaspoons of curry powder, 1 teaspoon of ground coriander, 1 teaspoon of ground cumin, and 1 bay leaf. Stir well to coat the samp, beans and onions in the spice. Pour enough water into the pot to cover the samp and beans by about 5 cm. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot with a lid, and simmer for about 2 to 3 hours, or until the samp and beans are tender. Stir occasionally and add more water if needed to prevent sticking or drying out. The cooking time may vary depending on the type and quality of the samp and beans used. Once the samp and beans are cooked to your desired tenderness, season with salt to taste. Stir well to incorporate the seasoning. Remove the bay leaf from the pot. Serve the samp and beans hot as a side dish or a main course. It pairs well with grilled meats, stews, or vegetables.
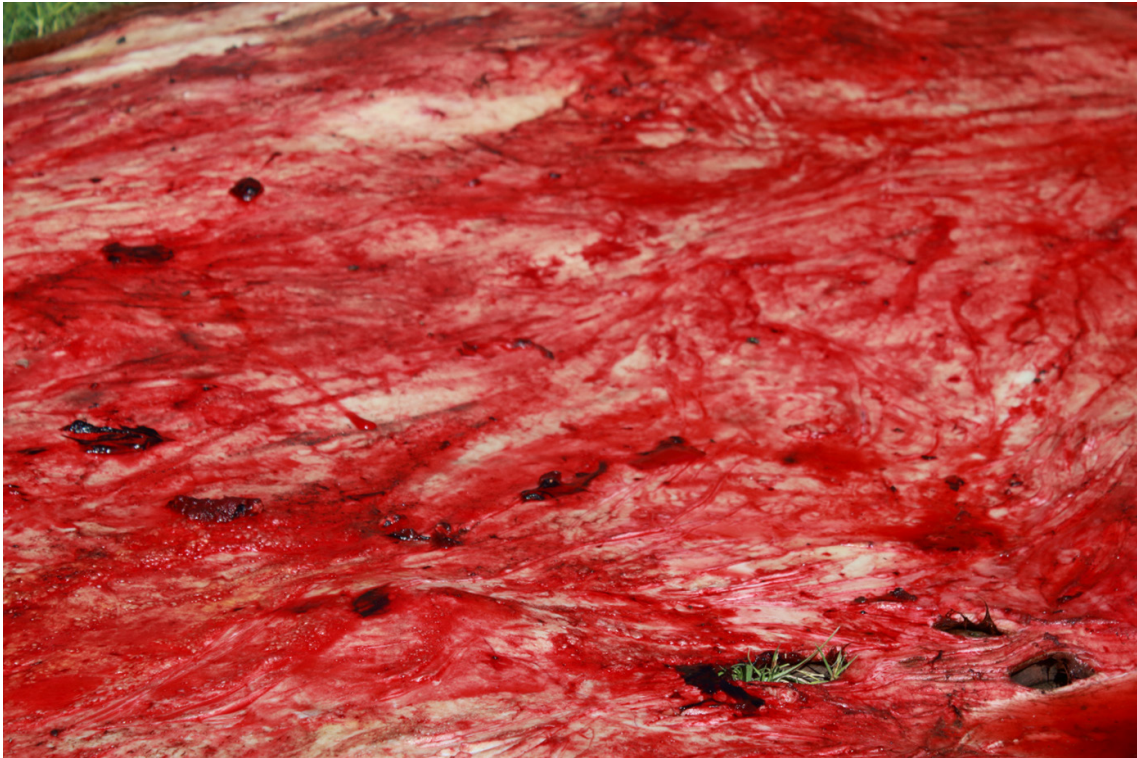
Chakalaka (spicy vegetable relish)

410   Place a deep pan on a stove top on medium heat. Add a nice coating of cooking oil and once warm, add a diced large onion. Sauté, before adding 1 teaspoon of spice of your choosing. Add 6 large grated carrots and begin to sauté until it softens. Add 1 can of chakalaka, 1 can of baked beans, and 1 can of green peas. Allow to simmer, then add 2 tablespoons of fruit chutney or apricot jam

412

List of Contributors

Shireen Abrahams is a Master's candidate in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Priyanka Bandu is a senior student in the Drama and Dance programme at the University of Pretoria

Prof Rory Bester is an Associate Professor in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Christi Bleeker is a Master's candidate in the Tangible Heritage Conservation programme at the University of Pretoria

Rachel C. Botes is a Chef, Qualified Butcher, Researcher of Food History and Culture and a Master's candidate in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria

Prof Joyce Chitja is the Director of the African Centre for Food Security (ACFS) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Prof Marié-Heleen Coetzee is a Professor in the Drama programme at the University of Pretoria

Nina du Preez is a Master's candidate in Heritage and Museum Studies at the University of Pretoria

Karen Dudley is a South African Chef, Food Writer and Restaurateur

Nikita Dyers is a senior student in the Dance programme at Tshwane University of Technology

Pamela Gysman is a Master's candidate in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Dr Nicola Haskins is a Lecturer in the Performing Arts Dance programme at the Tshwane University of Technology

Lebogang Lebethe is a senior student in the Drama programme at the Tshwane University of Technology

Prof Desiree Lewis is a Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape and the lead Principal Investigator on the Andrew W Mellon funded Critical Food Studies: Transdisciplinary Humanities Approaches programme

Limpho Makapela is a Master's candidate in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Dineo Mapoma is a senior student in the Drama programme at the Tshwane University of Technology

Michelle Masuku is a PhD candidate in the Department of Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Nomkhosi Mhlanga is a Master's candidate in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Prof Relebohile Moletsane is the JL Dube Chair in Rural Education in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a co-Principal Investigator on the Andrew W Mellon funded Critical Food Studies: Transdisciplinary Humanities Approaches programme

Amber Poggenpoel is a Master's candidate in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape

Siyabonga Radebe is a senior student in the Drama programme at the University of Pretoria

Prof Vasu Reddy is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Research and Internationalisation at the University of the Free State, a Research Associate at the University of Pretoria and a co-Principal Investigator on the Andrew W Mellon funded Critical Food Studies: Transdisciplinary Humanities Approaches programme

Brian Sibeko is a Master's candidate in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Ammaarah Seboa is a Master's candidate in the Department of Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape

Nkululeko Shabalala is a Master's candidate in the Department of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Ani Steele is a Food and Cultural Scholar based in Colorado, USA

Nthabeleng Tamako is a Master's candidate in the School of Agriculture, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dr Heather A. Thuynsma is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria and a Senior Research Fellow on the Andrew W Mellon funded Critical Food Studies: Transdisciplinary Humanities Approaches programme

Ayanda Tshazi is a PhD candidate in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Gabe Vermeulen is a Master's candidate in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria

Dr Dominique Wnuczek-Lobaczewski is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Heritage and Museum Studies at the University of Pretoria

Dr Balungile Zondi is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow and Critical Food Studies Emerging Researcher at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――

Index

421

423

J

K

427

N

O

————

Thinking Through Food in South Africa:
Identities, Embodiment and Representation

What is the Critical Food Studies Programme?

This programme grew out of the smaller Food Politics and Cultures Project and has been active since 2019. Funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, this transdisciplinary programme involves close collaboration between the Universities of the Western Cape, KwaZulu- Natal and Pretoria. It aims to drive a field of critical food studies that straddles a range of humanities disciplines, both in South Africa, continentally and globally. The focus includes postgraduate studies and mentoring, seminars and conferences, academic and accessible online publications (such as this one), performance and visual art productions as well as broader public engagements.

When we sit at individual or communal tables, we consider each other and our senses before taking a single bite. We think about what brought us to the table, who we are eating with, what meal will be served and possibly even where the food is from. South Africa is home to diverse cultures, histories, food heritages, culinary landscapes, food-growing and food-buying environments that collectively spice the food eaten and enjoyed by individuals and groups in the country. Food is sustenance, an access point, a historical and cultural marker and so much more. *Thinking Through Food in South Africa: Identities, Embodiment and Representation* explores the ways in which individuals define themselves and their role in society through food. This includes its role in school-based historical curriculum, alternative food networks, community-supported agriculture, intergenerational rituals and exchanges and its influence on economics, politics, migration and social cohesion.

More than a study of ingredients, this book holds and guides a multi-layered conversation about food as home, practice and community.

Janaka B. Lewis, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina, Charlotte
College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences (CHESS)