The historical consciousness of first year education students as it relates to the past

BY

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

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Ciara Wilson once said, “Education is everything – it is your power and your way in life to do what you want to do.” As the first person in my family to obtain a tertiary education, I know first-hand that your education is your power, and it is the one thing that can never be taken away from you in your life. Throughout this process I have become stronger, and I feel more empowered and capable of reaching the goals I have set in my life. I see myself as more capable and believe in my abilities more than I ever have. This process may be the hardest that I have ever encountered but I know that I am stronger at the end of it.

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ABSTRACT

Older generations have often looked down on their younger counter parts believing that they have little awareness of the sacrifices made by those coming before them and that they have no awareness of the past and no drive to learn about it. However, are these youths really as unaware as the older generations like to think? A country like South Africa has a unique past that was characterised by gross human rights violations under the apartheid regime, specifically during the second half of the 20th century. These born-frees may not have been directly exposed to apartheid but because democratic South Africa is still in its infancy the legacy of those times still impacts them greatly. This qualitative study was informed by the interpretivist paradigm and was underpinned by a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology. This case study made use of the sense of the past of the first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education in 2017. A secondary data analysis of two questions from a twelve-question, open-ended written survey collected in 2017 was used to explore the first-year, Faculty of Education students' historical consciousness as it relates to the past. Convenience sampling was used during the data collection during 2017 when the 700 surveys were collected. After the electronic transcription of these responses. I selected 150 responses from two questions, totalling 300 responses that were analysed. An inductive data analysis method and open coding was used which revealed emergent and dominant themes that were not predetermined. A majority of the responses tended towards negative themes while only some found the past to be better than the present. My study showed that the first-year, Faculty of Education students have a historical consciousness of the past that is orientated from a presentist position. The historical consciousness of these first-year students was dominated by race and used the last forty years of the recent past in its construction. The historical consciousness of these youths was personalised and diversified by a variety of themes and was based on emotional views more than historically factual ones. Furthermore, I illustrate that these future teachers are trapped in the legacy of the past but strive to achieve a bright future so that they can move forward from the past and the effects by which they are burdened.

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I, Brenda Gouws, declare that I have edited the following manuscript prior to submission for examination:

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This study deals with the historical consciousness of first-year, Faculty of Education, students at the University of Pretoria. The study is part of a bigger project on youth and history. In the last two decades there has been significant international research into the meanings and uses of the past among various peoples (Clark & Peck, 2019: 1). We know very little about how young people view historical images and how they come to understand the past (Nafziger, 2020: 41). Many studies have been written about the historical consciousness of school-going learners. Scholars in the fields of history education in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom have increased their efforts in the last 20 years to understand how students make sense of history and how they engage in historical inquiry (Trofanenko, 2008: 583). Several pilot studies have examined the development of historical consciousness of children, adolescents and adults (Mazabow, 2003: 20). These were informed by Jorn Rüsen's work which he conducted in Europe and Asia (Mazabow, 2003: 20). While some studies have been conducted in South Africa, fewer studies exist than those that have been conducted internationally. The existing South African studies that have been conducted will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2. Thus, there is a need to better understand first-year students and their historical consciousness relating to the past, specifically those enrolled at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. This study is important because these students will ultimately move into classrooms across South Africa, playing a sizeable role in the construction of the historical consciousness of the learners that they teach. There is a deep need to understand more about the extent to which young people relate their view of the present, their expectations for the future and how they consciously refer to the past (Lee, 2004: 16).

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of my study in which I aim to gain an understanding of historical consciousness of first-year, Faculty of Education, university students as it relates to the past. In the background and context, I will describe the key aspects of the past to give a clear backdrop and contemporary setting of South Africa that would have influenced the development of the historical consciousness of the first-year students under study. My rationale and motivation for carrying out the study will

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follow. This will be done so as to illustrate my positionality as a researcher. Thereafter I will discuss the focus and purpose of the study and the research questions that I will attempt to answer. Additionally, I will give a brief overview of the key concepts that will be used in the study and provide a forward-looking overview of the chapters to follow. The chapter will then be concluded.

1.2 Background and Context

The contemporary background to this study is the legacy of apartheid. Prior to 1994 South Africa was an apartheid state which was legally structured using “race” as a discriminating factor. This resulted in gross social and economic inequalities (Puttick, 2011: 1) between Black and White people, based on racial oppression. South Africans have attempted to confront the ghosts of apartheid but they still deal with the anguish, guilt, humiliation and distress of this time period (Bam, 2000: np). Many remnants of the apartheid past are still manifested in society and undeniably impact on the lives and identities of South Africans (Puttick, 2011: 3), including the students who participated in this study. While apartheid ended in 1994, and political and social transformations were taking place, many South Africans questioned how racial categories such as Black and White, and the associated experiences of life, changed or stayed the same (Walker, 2005: 42).

Many still found themselves creating their identities on the basis of race. People in this time of reconciliation, began to refer to our country as the “new South Africa”, so as to distinguish between the bad old days and the brave new world that was being built (Van Beek, 2000: 339). In contrast to the harsh inequality which characterised South Africa’s past the post-1994 African National Congress (ANC) government’s vision of nationhood and citizenship has been constructed around sentiments of equality, human rights and democracy (Puttick, 2011: 2).

One example of this is access to higher education at South African universities (Hugo, 1998: 5). Promises of access to higher education, for people of all races, have been made since the creation of the Freedom Charter. This was done with a promise made of “opening of the gates of learning and culture” (Hugo, 1998: 6). University access has been made to represent a “glittering mansion” that will transform and give people access to opportunities that would serve to enhance their lives (Hugo, 1998: 6).

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Students during this time believed that they had the power of the state behind them in aiding transformation (Hugo, 1998: 14). According to the *Education White Paper*, Whites-only universities were to transform and become more inclusive, but this formal discourse was only implemented on the surface (Walker, 2005: 47-48). Consequently, tensions among students, on a day-to-day basis seemed more difficult to deal with as conflicts emerged (Walker, 2005: 48). In the case of the University of Pretoria, being considered a previously White institution like the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University (Taipe, 2019: 30), the University of Pretoria was formally declared an "open" university in 1989, so as to provide equity, access, equal opportunity and diversity (Taipe, 2019: 30-31). While on paper this may seem like progress, as discussed later in this chapter, the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests indicate that to a large extent not enough has been done.

The higher education sector in South Africa reflects that there has been some evolution from the old order, but it has not produced sufficient changes for transformation to have taken place (Muswede, 2017: 202). While suffering with numerous infrastructure deficiencies, many universities are not providing equitable access across the race groups (Muswede, 2017: 202). By not making access more equal there is a limited chance for righting the inequalities of apartheid and making the changes that were promised. Change takes time but the slow evolution of the higher education sector, in particular, only makes this process more tedious and at times it may seem as if change is occurring slowly. In a nutshell our democratic system has delivered political freedom to Black South Africans, but the economic legacy of apartheid as endured.

It is fair to say that South Africa is still reeling from the effects of apartheid. Our legacy is characterised by a violent past and the racialised and ethnic identities created by the oppressive apartheid regime (Weldon, 2006: 57). Societies that experience acts of gross human rights violations, such as South Africa, will attempt to transform and move forward in trying to establish how they can prevent the repetition of such events (Weldon, 2006: 56). Events that so drastically violate human rights leave a scar on society. It is often the youth, who grow up in this time of post-conflict reconciliation, that are burdened by the effects of these events and the years spent trying to make it right. One could theorise that the historical legacy of apartheid is the current tensions and conflicts within society. Poverty, inequality and joblessness amongst other issues

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manifest as this legacy and cause tensions (Mncube, 2019: np). When the collective memory of a society is traumatic, there is the possibility of tension between those who the traumatic past should be remembered and those who feel it is better to forget (Weldon, 2006: 58). The notion of traumatic memory is particularly relevant to South Africa. As a country, South Africa is still coming to terms with a violent past and still struggles with the tensions between remembering and forgetting that go with it (Weldon, 2006: 58).

Contemporary university students, like the first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria who participated in this study, have grown up in an era known as “post-apartheid”. This is still a pervasive phrase that labels the present not only in terms of the past but more significantly as a past that has yet to be overcome (Waetjen, 2013: 151). There is a lot of pressure in wider society to overcome issues that were apparent in the years directly after apartheid that still dominate in society, today. Due to the fact that these issues are still so prevalent, the shadow of apartheid still thematically applies to our society today. In my opinion, it feels as if society is stuck in the past and is preventing any change, no matter how small, from happening.

In the current context of South Africa, the born-free members of the youth, typically aged between 15 and 24 years are deemed to be the most vulnerable members of the labour force (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2019b: np). This has been exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID19. The unemployment rate for this age group is above 50 per cent (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2019b: np). As of a 2019 survey, the South African population has reached 58.8 million people, with the youth making up 30 per cent (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2019a: np). Based on previous surveys, Statics South Africa (2019b: np) claims that education is still the key to improving prospects of this age group.

The born-frees are also aware of the benefits that a tertiary education can bring to their lives. Higher education is one of the more powerful aspects of transformation that could exact the most change in our post-apartheid society. It was after the elections of 1994 that many Black students were excited at the prospect of being able to have access to tertiary education and receive the benefits of such access. According to Taipe (2019: 24) , certain students have the opinion that the role of a university is to be a provider of free education based on the premise that education is considered a

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human right. There is also the opinion that a university could be considered a business which leads to economic exclusion of students from quality education based on their economic situation (Taipe, 2019: 24). This is directly linked to the issue that sparked the student protests and is an issue of resentment.

To try and create a more unified South Africa and combat the memories of the violent past, the idea of the rainbow nation was constructed. After the first democratic elections in 1994, post-apartheid South Africa was named the “rainbow nation” by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with the idea being to inspire hope and unity (Sall, 2018: 2). The idea of this ideology is to acknowledge diversity and embrace differences (Mafoko, 2017: np). It was believed that after the dismantling of political apartheid, South Africa would become a nation filled with acceptance, forgiveness, reconciliation and nation building (Mafoko, 2017: np).The constitution of 1996 drew inspiration from the idea of the “rainbow nation” and the Freedom Charter and as a consequence promotes diversity in an advanced way, especially in comparison to most developed countries at that time. While our constitution is written to seem progressive, it has not been able to make an impact on the deep roots of the historic injustices of apartheid (Sall, 2018: 2). In a nutshell, not enough has changed and as a result the born free generation are those most negatively impacted. They have sat in history classrooms that have only served to breed animosity (Mafoko, 2017: np) and are now moving into higher education institutions that are slow to reform. We live in a nation that has been free for over 20 years, but only in the last five years has the education system begun the process of decolonisation (Mafoko, 2017: np). Within the last five years, better integration has occurred but university student engagements are still impacted by their racial, cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds (Gachago & Ngoasheng, 2016: np). Social justice in higher education has not been achieved and it needs to be prioritised (Sall, 2018: 7).

For the born-free generation, these new realities have generated their own historical, imaginary and problematic memory (Waetjen, 2013: 151).The legacy of apartheid does not merely refer to the material conditions and social relations of the present which emerge from the past (Waetjen, 2013: 151), it also refers to history and the manner in which it ultimately provides the fuel that a government needs to promote nationalism (Lévesque, Létourneau & Gani, 2013: 159). It seems accurate that the post-apartheid government would focus on the “rainbow nation” narrative, in order to

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do this. The legacy of apartheid also resides in the way this immediate past is conceptualised and taught in classrooms across the country (Waetjen, 2013: 151-152). South African society has conceptualised the legacy of apartheid in such a way that it makes that whole time period and its associations problematic. This conceptualisation seems to have had a lot of negative results.

The pressures placed on South African youth in post-apartheid society, in light of the above, has been extensive. The current younger generation have been expected to bear the brunt of the consequences of the failure of post-apartheid transformations. The pressure of society makes it seem as if they have been expected to take up social transformation themselves to undo the legacy of apartheid in a single generation (Swanson, 2013: 200). At the same time, they have had to bear the burden of economic hardship borne out of post-apartheid economic circumstances, and specifically the trials of a conflict-ridden developing economy in a post-colonised African context. This includes the more recent economic consequences such as the 2008 global economic crisis, as well as the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The youth must carry the torch of reimagining and creating possibilities for a transformed, democratic and non-racial South Africa (Swanson, 2013: 203). In short it seems as if the youth of today are expected to lead the “rainbow nation” but without any support from those in power. It becomes difficult to carry such a burden as a generational group – to be expected to forgive the past while little has been done to right the wrongs and live the same hardships as their older family members.

While the ideal society of present day South Africa should be one that lives out the vision of the rainbow nation, there has been recent growth in the body of literature that demonstrates the existence of a racially unequal status quo in this era of “de jure” rather than de facto equality (Teeger, 2015: 1175). Hence the idea was coined that we are living in an era of racism without racists. It is in this era in which inequality is maintained through the declaration of so-called colour-blind ideologies (Teeger, 2015: 1178), like the idea of the “rainbow nation” that has been perpetuated since 1994. In this regard, individuals will construct arguments that are blind to the continued effects of a historical narrative that includes racial oppression and the realities of contemporary racial discrimination. This result is called *laissez faire* racism, whereby racial inequality is maintained through punitively race-neutral market dynamics (Teeger, 2015: 1178). These actions actively oppose race-conscious policies aimed

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at redressing inequalities, allowing the status quo to continue (Teeger, 2015: 1178). This is often seen in individuals who state that because apartheid has been abolished there cannot be racism. Individuals perpetuate inequality by continuing to insert these thoughts into society. In this regard, ideologies such as the “rainbow nation” merely serves to defend White privilege and reinforces blindness to the gaps that still exit in South African society (Sall, 2018: 7).

On 4 June, 2015 the Department of Basic Education (DBE) appointed the History Ministerial Task Team (van Eeden & Warnich, 2018: 18-19). This team was given a mandate that instructed a need for research to be conducted on how other countries have dealt with the introduction of compulsory History; and to make recommendations to the Minister of Basic Education based on these findings (van Eeden & Warnich, 2018: 19). The report based on these findings was published in February 2018 (van Eeden & Warnich, 2018: 18). It was found that twenty years after the end of apartheid there is a battle against indifference, due to the fact that we are so caught up in the present (Wassermann, J., 2018: 8). In spite of the above the “democrats”, those in government and positions of power, were shocked at the lack of historical consciousness amongst the youth (Ndlovu *et al.*, 2018: 7). There is the sense that those in power, the ANC government, see the younger generation as ungrateful for South African and African history (Ndlovu *et al.*, 2018: 8). School history and the way that it has dealt with apartheid has perpetuated and reinforced historical memory of oppression instead of reshaping it (Wassermann, J., 2018: 12). These conclusions seem to ignore the fact that young people in South Africa are still burdened by the past. They live in a society still affected by the legacy of apartheid, colonialism, contemporary political issues and by their personal and individual pasts. The initial ANC reaction was to reprimand the youth for being unpatriotic, ungrateful and lacking knowledge on the triumphalist views held by the ANC in its struggles against apartheid (Wassermann, J., 2018: 12). Thus it can be seen that the recommendation of compulsory history teaching by the Ministerial Task Team would be used as a tool to re-educate the born-frees on “where they come from” and the debts that they owe to the struggle (Wassermann, J., 2018: 13).

The youth rebellion that called for the abolishment of university fees was sparked when the teaching of apartheid in school history was underplayed, a new historical memory of this topic was not formed and instead it caused a reaction (Wassermann, J., 2018:

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12-14) that was seen in the form of student protests. Rebellion by youth is not uncommon, as witnessed in South Africa. Students have rebelled against apartheid education legislation since 1976 and those protests have continued for more than 20 years since the dismantling of apartheid. In 2015, higher education facilities were challenged with the #FeesMustFall movement. The protests began as a result of the continual unaddressed issues, such as the increased cost to study at universities (Davids & Waghid, 2016: np). While no country in the world has enough funding to support a system of mass higher education, university administrators tend to focus more time on attracting and admitting students to earn money rather than managing students who have enrolled and providing them with adequate funding (Taipe, 2019: 16-17). The protesters were mostly youth attending higher education institutions. These youths were made up of students from different socio-economic and socio-political backgrounds and race groups.

As the protests gained momentum, there came a deeper need by those protesting to address the inequalities that apartheid and post-apartheid decisions had entrenched (Davids & Waghid, 2016: np). While these protests took place, many could not help but make a direct comparison to the student protests of the Soweto Uprising in 1976. It was during these protests that the younger generation had to stand against policies that enforced learning in Afrikaans and the general state of education for Black students. Sophie Tema, an activist during the 1976 protests, reflected on youth involvement and stated that elders were standing and looking on. She said to herself that it was high time that something was done about the situation in this country. But the following day, it hit her hard that it had to be done by children" (ENCA, 2015: np). Therefore, there was the clear need to rebel against the inequality of the system. Students did this by engaging in rebellious behaviour similar to their predecessors in the student uprisings 40 years prior. Student protests that took place during the #FeesMustFall movement had radical results – some are tangible, while others are less so. At Rhodes University a statue of colonial powerhouse Cecil J. Rhodes was demolished, the University of Stellenbosch was linguistically "opened" and the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg has claimed it was decolonised (ENCA, 2015: np).

According to Newham and Roberts (2019: np), young people represent a potentially powerful political force in South Africa. With voting numbers from these age groups

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having drastically decreased for the 2019 presidential election, one has to question why. One opinion has it that the youth have become disinterested in the party politics of their county. Available evidence suggests this is untrue. This occurrence is not isolated to South African youth only but internationally the trend shows declining levels of trust in political leaders due to the fact that they seem out of touch with what concerns the youth (Newham & Roberts, 2019: np). In short, new and alternate political avenues are sought. To the born-free youth, the older generation appear apathetic and politically unaware. When looking past the animosity of the older generation to the born frees, it is possible to see that large numbers of university students do engage in political activities, mainly through organisations on university campuses (Eichen, 2018: np). These trends of disdain and born free political involvement are evident within South Africa. Many of the youth in our country are still faced with problems related to the dismantling of apartheid that were promised during the initial years of democracy. These struggles, coupled with what seems to be the assumption from the older generation who are still in power, show a lack of understanding and gratefulness for history, and this creates a society in which our youth do not have a voice and are not being heard.

The students, especially the **B**lack students, are consequently angry and frustrated with the older generation, those in power and the past that they represent. They feel that they have been “trapped” in our post-apartheid society that has not levelled the playing field enough. There is a large dissatisfaction with the management of the Education sector in South Africa. It is believed that this sector should be addressed more centrally, especially considering the controversial history (Hugo, 1998: 1). According to Mpatlanyane, higher education institutions have failed to fulfil their promises in democracy (2018: 14).

A more recent impact on the youth, including university students, across the world and in South Africa, has been the COVID-19 pandemic. The higher education sector was not spared from the wrath of this virus. Each staff member and student at an institution of higher education has been affected by the spread of this virus, to varying degrees. Most higher education institutions scrambled to put online learning practices into place. The #FeesMustFall protests of 2015 may have prepared some faculties or universities hardest hit by earlier student protests for this transformation, but the total shutdown of almost all sectors of society presented unique challenges. In a country

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where a large percentage of students depend on financial assistance, data costs are high, a mobile connection might not be readily available and where a laptop computer is seen as a luxury, it is not surprising that contact universities faced push-back from students (Hedding *et al.*, 2020: 1). Students argued that they could not be expected to continue with online learning without universities providing the necessary resources (Hedding *et al.*, 2020: 1). With a minority of students being equipped to follow the online learning programme and with many living in rural areas, where there is a struggle for consistent electricity and poor network coverage, they found the situation unsustainable (Molosankwe, 2020: np). The COVID-19 pandemic only serves to reinforce that the gap left after apartheid ended, is still very much present in our current higher education context. Universities also struggled with courses like those in the Faculty of Education that require compulsory experience training where, students go to schools for their teaching practice modules. Not enough change has taken place to close the gap that exists.

Considering the background and context to this study as outlined it is clear that historical consciousness as it relates to the past of the "born-free" generation is complex and manifests outwardly during this contentious time in post-apartheid South African higher education history.

1.3 Rationale and Motivation

Personally, this study affects me because I am also classified as "born-free". I was born after 1994 and did not experience apartheid directly but have been exposed to the effects of its legacy. I am a 25-year-old White South African female. I grew up in a middle-class family that valued education highly. My parents have and still are sacrificing in order for me to obtain an education. I am the first in my family to gain entrance to a university and to obtain the quality of education that I have. On a personal level, I see that by being able to attend private schooling during high school, obtaining university education and pursuing degrees and a career in research is a privilege that needs to be understood in the context of a bigger youth consciousness. Growing up as a middle-class White woman, with two siblings meant that from a young age money was always a struggle. My father, a middle-aged, Afrikaans, White male was often passed up for jobs. As I grew up, my parents would always make sure that

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as children we understood the sacrifices made for us to go to school. Basic education may be a right in South Africa, but it was a privilege in my house. I am aware that my experiences in higher education and being exposed to learning in the manner I have been has been a privilege.

I am both an insider and an outsider in this study. I come from a similar background from some of the participants in that I was exposed to the legacy of apartheid, and I have been exposed to different narratives of apartheid. There is a generational gap between me and the first-year students who participated in this study. In 2017, when they were beginning their academic careers, I was in my fourth year of study. I am also removed from the group as I am the researcher, I am an individual studying in higher education, and I am part of the working world.

Over the course of my life, I have been exposed to many different historical narratives, both official and unofficial in nature. Having taken History as a subject up to Grade 12 and as an undergraduate at the University of Pretoria I am well aware of the narrative and the stance that policy makers have taken on the topics covered in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS History). In addition, at home I was exposed to dual narratives in terms of unofficial history. My parents grew up under apartheid and my male grandparents were involved in apartheid law enforcement as part of compulsory military conscription. Over the course of my life, they have told me their histories. They often spoke of how different South Africa looked compared to today and of their treatment of and views on people from other race groups. This is juxtaposed by the fact that when I was a young child I was also raised by a black lady, who had been employed by grandmother to help raise my mother. As I got older, she would tell me of her experiences as a Black woman during apartheid. Having received multiple perspectives, with each person giving their unique stance on those past events, I believe this is why I am able to approach my studies from a relatively even-handed perspective. I am aware that I sit in a position of privilege regarding this. Unlike in my case, most of my generation have probably not been exposed to the variety of narratives that I have. My historical consciousness, related to the past, has developed differently from others of my generation because of the varied and individual nature of my exposures to the past. Thus, I am interested in learning about and understanding the differences in the historical consciousness of fellow born frees as it relates to the past and to see which perspectives have influenced them

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Professionally, a study like this is important and resonates deeply within me. Since 2019, I have been working with the youth. I started teaching at a local, former White, now predominately Black, high school full time and then became a private tutor. As a result, I have been exposed to youth at various ages, from 14 years of age and into their early twenties. After meeting and talking to so many fellow young people, both learners and students training to be teachers, I have developed a curiosity to find out more about the historical consciousness related to the past of others. It is evident when talking to young people that there is a consciousness regarding history and the past. As a teacher, I also understand that I play a role in the historical consciousness about the past that my students will construct. Like the Faculty of Education first-year students, I am studying, but also gradually moving into the workplace. Likewise, they will assist in constructing the historical consciousness of school learners. Hence it is necessary to understand their historical consciousness as it relates to the past and why it developed in the way it did.

Conceptually I want to develop a more in-depth understanding of the first year-students, enrolled in the Faculty of Education, and the development of their historical consciousness as it related to the past. There needs to be more insight into what constitutes the youth and future teachers' pasts and how they use their historical consciousness. There also needs to be a deeper understanding of first-year students and why their historical consciousness related to the past has been constructed in the manner that it has.

From a scholarly perspective, I want a study of this nature to contribute to the understanding of the born-free generation and how history education (both official and unofficial) has impacted them. This study distinctly focuses on first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. This study will have an impact on education students because it gives insight into this group of youth's historical consciousness related to the past. Due to the fact they are going to be the future teachers and will influence, in turn, the development of their learners' historical consciousness. How these first-years view the past is critical because it gives me a deeper understanding of how they developed their historical consciousness.

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1.4 Focus and Purpose of the study

The focus of my study is to understand the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria as it relates to the past. The distinct focus on the past is integral as it gives insight into how these first-year students developed their historical consciousness.

The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of first-year, Faculty of Education students and their historical consciousness. Little is known about the historical consciousness related to the past of Faculty of Education students. This study aims to contribute to the depth of understanding that exists of historical consciousness related to the past, of first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education in 2017.

1.5 Research Questions

To better understand the historical consciousness of the 2017, Faculty of Education students the following questions were posed:

- What is the historical consciousness of first year university students, in the Faculty of Education, as it relates to the past?
- Why do these students have the historical consciousness related to the past that they do?

1.6 Overview of the Literature

To identify the gap in the body of knowledge that the study is dealing with, the existing literature on the topic needs to be reviewed. Literature has been gathered and synthesised so as to develop an understanding of the research that has already been conducted on this topic. The literature review process aims to develop a comprehensive conceptualisation of what historical consciousness entails, how historical consciousness is formed, the benefits it holds for the individuals that develop an in-depth historical consciousness as well as some of the practical uses thereof, for example identity formation. Lastly, the literature review looks at results from studies conducted in various countries, including South Africa with regard to university students and their historical consciousness. This chapter of the study aids in making it clear that not enough research has been conducted and thus there is a gap regarding

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the understanding of South African, Faculty of Education, university students and their historical consciousness related to the past.

1.7 Overview of Research Design and Methodology

In Chapter 3, I will discuss my methodological choices for this study and provide a justification for these choices. I will begin this chapter by unpacking the research design, research paradigm and then ontological and epistemological assumptions made. I will discuss in detail how it came to be that the first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria were used in the sample for the study. I will explain how the data was collected by means of an open-ended survey in 2017 and I will detail with the analysis methods that I employed, namely an inductive, thematic data analysis method. Each of the sections will detail how these choices and methods apply specifically to the study and will give advantages to these selections. Lastly I will address issues relating to trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a methodological reflection.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

To understand the historical consciousness of the first-year, Faculty of Education students of 2017, there needs to be a clear definition of the relevant terms so as to understand what was being looked for and also the context that the majority of these students fitted into.

1.8.1 Historical consciousness

This phenomenon covers every form of thinking about the past (Clark & Peck, 2019: 2). Historical consciousness allows individuals to interpret the present and have expectations for the future based on past experience (Holmberg, 2016: 11). Historical consciousness is developed not only through academic means but through one's interaction with past events. It is an awareness of the importance of the past (Trofanenko, 2008: 583) and then attaching meaning to it (Bjerg, Lenz & Thorstensen, 2011: 19). Historical consciousness binds people to the historical and cultural contexts that shape their sense of time and collective memory (Clark & Peck, 2019: 2). It is developed when an individual moves from remembering to transmitting the past into how the present is seen (Schieder, 1978: 1). Each individual will have been exposed

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to different narratives and varying opinions throughout their lives. Varied exposure means that each individual will have a personalised historical consciousness. Collective and individual consciousness overlap since it is possible for members of the same group to share ideas and opinions (Holmberg, 2016: 12). It is used to describe humanity's changing interest in the past and also how people learn and engage with historical knowledge over time (Clark & Peck, 2019: 2)

1.8.2 The past and history

The past and history are different phenomena (Adjepong, 2020: 16). The term "history" has two distinct meanings. The first refers to everything that has actually happened (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 12). This version includes all the experiences of people since time began. The second, which will be adopted in this study, refers to an account of all that has passed (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 12).

This takes the form of articles, books, and lectures. It is based on scattered records as evidence so that humans have contact with the past. History is, therefore, the portion of the past that has been selected, analysed and written about (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 12). History is also that which is inferred by the evidence left behind (Waters, 1955: 261). This means that there is a big gap between what has actually occurred, the accounts created and the physical remnants that have been left. History needs to be accepted as a human concept that is open to different understandings of how the past is interpreted and used (Nordgren, 2016: 482).

As detailed in the image below, the past goes through roughly eight steps before it is set forth by the historian, as history. At each of these steps it is possible to see that some of the past is lost (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 12). With what is left, there is no guarantee that what remains is important, the largest, most representative, or the most enduring parts of the past (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 14). In reality, the majority of the past has vanished and cannot be recovered (Adjepong, 2020: 16). History then becomes the aspects of the past that are accepted as being significant, which are then evidenced, recorded and handed down (Adjepong, 2020: 16). History can no longer be identified with the past, it is conceived as a process that encompasses the past, present and future (Mazabow, 2003: 157)

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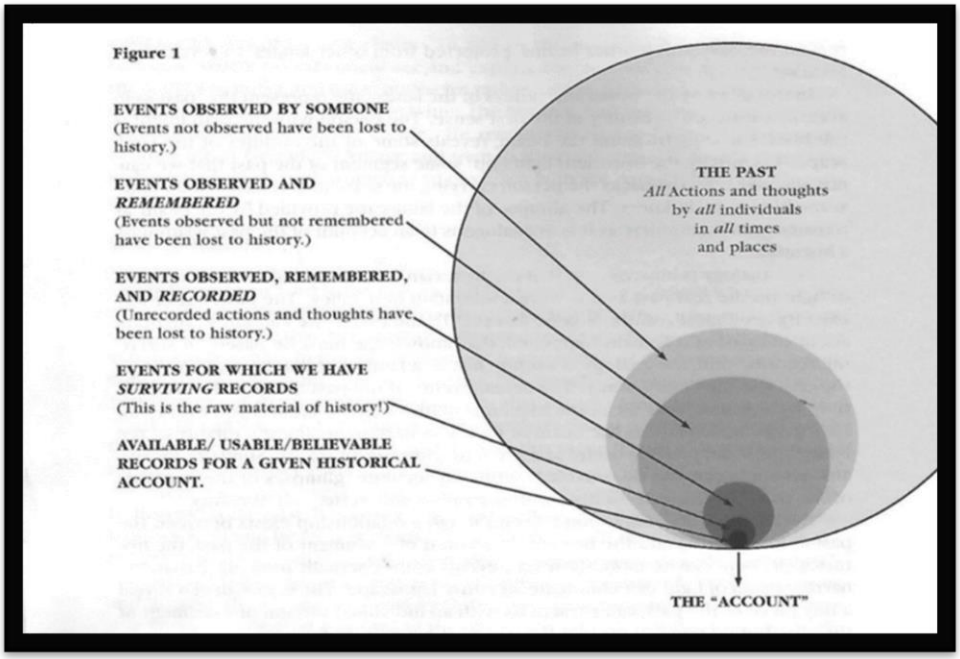

Figure 1: An image that describes the process of manufacturing the past into history (Furayet al, 2000: 12).

Increasingly history and its place in shaping identity in the past and the future is considered an essential prerequisite for understanding the present – which implies a sense of historical consciousness. As the study is focused on the historical consciousness of the sample group based on the past, this distinction is important and as the researcher I need to take this into account. While all the students might not have been exposed to school history in the same manner, they will have had experiences based on the past that they have been told of and experiences of their own past. This can be seen as the interplay between unofficial history that has developed the historical consciousness of these students.

1.8.3 First-year university students

In this study, the focus is on first-year, Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria. The vast majority of first-year undergraduate students are undergoing a transition at this time of their lives, moving from childhood to adulthood, where they are learning independence (Richardson & Coates, 2010: 2). Individuals entering higher education, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds, often have to adapt to changed ways of learning in order to get the greatest benefit from their courses (Christie *et al.*, 2007: 4). Most of these students have just completed their final

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year in high school and have started their studies. They come from far and wide to study at tertiary institutions and from a variety of backgrounds. They enter a new environment where there may be differences in learning approaches, teaching styles and where the academic group can affect the learning process of the individuals within itself (Christie *et al.*, 2007: 4). These students will also have had varying exposures to history, both official and unofficial, and thus will have differently developed forms of historical consciousness. South African university students feel as though they are a part of a society that is going to change their lives for the better. Because these students have had varying exposures to the past, there is also the possibility that they have inaccurate and oversimplified accounts of the past. While these accounts are skewed they are still the accounts that have been used to construct that individual's historical consciousness and so they need to be considered. As a location, a university is a context that deals in transitions (Richardson & Coates, 2010: 2). The university provides a social context in which students are able to engage with new people and are faced with intellectual stimuli that challenge them to reconsider their worldviews and their place within the world (Richardson & Coates, 2010: 2-3).

1.9 Conclusion

It is clear that internationally and nationally there has been too little focus on university students and how they have used the past (official and unofficial) to form their historical consciousness. In this, there is a lack of understanding of what historical consciousness such students have, especially as it relates to the past. The youth of South Africa are still burdened by the traumatic and violent past and are under pressure to contribute to the transformation of society to change the inequalities that have remained since the dawn of democracy in 1994. However, there is also a lot of resentment building in the youth and this study can give more understanding to what new historical consciousness about the past these future educators are going to bring once they move into classrooms across the country.

In this chapter, I have described the backdrop and contemporary context of my study. I have given a detailed rationale and motivation for undertaking a study of this nature. The focus and purpose of the study have been declared. I have stated the research questions that I will attempt to answer in Chapter 4. I have also provided an overview

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of what is to come in Chapters 2 and 3. In the next chapter, I am going to analyse the available literature on the topic so as to further understand what makes up historical consciousness and what results from various studies that have taken place locally and internationally.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this second chapter is to review the academic literature in order to situate the study and find a basis for the findings that occur from the data analysis in Chapter 4. A literature review is essential to refine the research topic and the research questions. In doing so, the significance for the study is established. There needs to be a direct focus on literature that aligns closely to the topic and the concepts involved. In this regard, this literature review will deal with historical consciousness, the past and university students and the intersections thereof.

In this literature review, I will discuss what a literature review is, the methods I used to find the literature for this review, how the literature was analysed and organised, how historical consciousness is understood, how it developed, the impact of historical consciousness on people, studies conducted on university students and their historical consciousness and the results of studies on South African students.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 What is a literature review and why is it needed?

McCombes (2020: np) defines a literature review as an evaluation of scholarly resources on a specific topic. A literature review is a way of gaining an overview of the literature that exists (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 28). It is a method of critically evaluating and clarifying previous research (Coffta, 2020: np). It is also a way of acknowledging previous researchers work on the topic (Coffta, 2020: np) and, at the same time, it provides a synthesis of work done previously (Knopf, 2006: 127). A literature review can be seen as an essential blue-print that the researcher bases her study on (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 62). When compiling a literature review the researcher will find relevant publications, critically analyse them and then explain overall what was found in relation to the study undertaken (McCombes, 2020: np). The literature review needs to be in-depth and exhaustive (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 62).

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The literature review process serves to acknowledge previously done research, to establish what scholarly conclusions have been drawn, and to ensure that there is no repetition in the research (Coffta, 2020: np). It is also used to identify the theories and methods used in existing research and identify the gaps that exist in the body of research (McCombes, 2020: np). According to Knopf, the literature review part of the research process aids in placing the work of the researcher into context within the larger body of knowledge (2006: 127). The purpose of a literature review is also to create a dialogue and engage with what others have published on the topic being studied. In reviewing the literature, the researcher can become aware of ideas that exist on the topic. The researcher is then able to identify where the study that the researcher wants to conduct would fit into the academic scholarship as it exists – in other words – a niche for her research. Reading deeply on what already exists on the topic is crucial as replications of studies that have already been done do not aid in further understanding.

2.2.2 Methodology for gathering the literature

To gather the literature for this dissertation, I used a variety of methods. I began by conducting a "dirty" search on Google using the phrases "historical consciousness", "historical consciousness and the past", "studies on youth and historical consciousness", "historical consciousness South African studies" and "historical consciousness and university students". I made use of *Google Scholar* and databases for academic articles from journals that deal with the past, history and education, such as *Youth and History*, *Russian Social Science Review* and the journal for the *International Society for History Didactics*. I also received recommendations from my supervisor and was given a few books which I made use of. Once the literature was collected, I read and reread the material to be able to create themes as my preferred way of organising the literature review. I then began to categorise the sources into those themes. After organising the literature, I began with each theme and started to read the sources critically. As I read, I made notes of important statements and arguments for each source. After writing down what I thought was useful to my study, I went back and assigned a colour to a particular theme and highlighted the statements associated with that theme. I then wrote out the literature review in a heading format with the highlighted points. After doing this, I organised the literature statements so

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that they flowed in a logical order. One struggle that I faced in this literature review process was that it was difficult to obtain relevant work in English, especially by one of the opinion leaders on this topic, Jorn Rüsen. Rüsen is a German scholar, hence I struggled to find relevant work that was published in English. To combat this issue, I found academic articles in English that had quoted his work directly. There were also collaborations between German scholars and those who published in English and so I found other academic articles from these collaborations.

2.2.3 What is historical consciousness?

While a definition of this term has been provided in Chapter 1, I feel that it is necessary to unpack it further here. As this is the main theoretical aspect of this study I feel that it is necessary to understand the concept in a broader manner, including the varying perspectives that exist. In order to understand historical consciousness, there needs to be an understanding of how it is defined.

Consciousness is defined as the human experience of the world through their consciousness (Thorp, 2014a: 9). Consciousness and memory can only be realised by an individual who acts, is aware and remembers (Funkenstein, 1989: 6). Remembering is a mental act, which makes it completely personal. Historical consciousness should be understood as the process by which individuals make sense of the past. Historical consciousness might be the only means by which to access the social consciousness of people and to uncover what hidden desires, hopes, animosities and grudges might reside there (Van Beek, 2000: 341). By doing so, one might get closer to an understanding of the social and political behaviour of groups and individuals (Van Beek, 2000: 341). According to Clark, a person's historical consciousness is one of the sharpest and clearest expressions of who they are (2019: 2).

Sociologists perceive historical consciousness differently from historians, history methodologists, historiographers, history teachers or theorists and between and amongst themselves (Van Beek, 2000: 341). According to Van Beek (2000: 341), what is not disputed is that historical consciousness exists and that it is important to study. Various definitions of historical consciousness exist but one aspect that a large number of these definitions agree upon is that this phenomenon is linked to time, most

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commonly the past, and it is placed at the centre of individual and collective identity (Van Beek, 2000: 341).

The earliest traces of historical consciousness can be dated to about three centuries ago (Kwang-Su, 1999: 11). According to Kwang-Su, evidence of historical consciousness can be found in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries respectively, each representing an epoch for the rationalisation of historical thought (1999: 11). Historical consciousness as a concept stems from the concept of collective memory (Nafziger, 2020: 30). This can be traced back to the French sociologist Maruchic Halbwach, who conceptualised historical consciousness as a connection between past, present and future (Nafziger, 2020: 30). Twenty years ago the concept of historical consciousness was not recognised in British discussions on history education (Ahonen, 2005: 697). In the 1980s, historical consciousness became a meta-concept (Haue, 2008:50), due to the fact that the term is a compound of the words “history” and “consciousness” (Kwang-Su, 1999: 6) . It was formally added into the directory for history teaching in 1987. Key questions that are at the core of historical consciousness are: “What does the past mean to us?” and “Why do we constantly draw on history in our present-day lives?” (Clark, 2014: 88). While there are many differences across authors about the specific aspects that make up historical consciousness, many sources acknowledge that it involves using the past to orientate the way that people move into their future. Historical consciousness can thus be seen as a process that directs an individual’s life in a presentist context based on their past.

Kwang-Su offers three varying perspectives of historical consciousness: the European, the Asian and the African perspectives. The European perspective on historical consciousness focuses on intellectual, cultural and philosophical elements related to historical thinking (Kwang-Su, 1999: 12). The Asian perspective is that historical consciousness is a simple consciousness regarding the past that formulates in the mind of the individual through psychological processes (Kwang-Su, 1999: 13). The African perspective focuses on the everyday use of historical consciousness to develop skills, such as an understanding of the historical background of contemporary problems (Kwang-Su, 1999: 15).

Rüsen states that historical consciousness is a rational way of using history (Ahonen, 2005:700). By developing and growing a historical consciousness, a person can

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expand their temporal self (Ahonen, 2005: 7). From my understanding the temporal self is that which guides our behaviour in the present. Thus, historical consciousness informs the individuals behaviour. Rüsen also mentions historical identity. This occurs when humans orientate themselves in time and are able to relate their lives to the past and the future (Duraisingh, 2017: 175), as was done in this study.

There are four types of historical consciousness according to Sexias. The first is the traditional type. This type supports the continuity of set moral responsibilities without acknowledging considerable change over time (Sexias, 2004: 22). The second is the exemplary type. This type draws on particular historical figures and events from the past as a basis for cultural universality. These sources apply across time. An example is the use of the celebratory history of heroes to inspire strong character in the present (Sexias, 2004: 22). The third is the critical type. This type tends to turn to the past in order to break from it, as in, for example, women's history that helps to undo the pasts oppressive gender relations (Sexias, 2004: 22). The fourth is the genetic type. It can acknowledge the ongoing legacy of the past, at the same time it comprehends that present circumstances have radically changed (Sexias, 2004: 22). Elements of all four types are operatively intermixed in the procedure that gives practical life a historical orientation in time (Sexias, 2004: 23).

According to Duraisingh, historical consciousness is about situating where the individual is, in the current context and directing where they are going within an idea of time that expands beyond their personal life experience (Duraisingh, 2017: 175). It includes every form of thinking about the past (Clark, 2014: 88). This alludes to a topic to be discussed later, namely that one can contemplate and think about the past in any way that still contributes to the development of historical consciousness. Each individual uses their current or contemporary context and relationship with their version of history to understand how their current context has come to be. This then influences the direction their future will be moving in. It seems, therefore, as though historical consciousness gives people direction and the ability to change their futures because of the way they see the past and because they know how they want their future to look.

Karlsson, however, presents a different perspective that provides for five versions of historical consciousness. First, he proposes that historical consciousness is a

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compass that aids us to orientate ourselves and create meaning in our lives (Thorp, 2017a: 2). The second defines historical consciousness as the relationship between our perceptions of the past, our understanding of the present and outlook of the future (Thorp, 2017a: 2). It is the relationship between how we perceive and approach what is the past, present and future. The third postulates that human-kind and all social institutions and forms of social interaction exist in time because they have a past, present and future (Thorp, 2017a: 2). Historical consciousness is, therefore, the knowledge that everything is historical and exists in time. Fourthly, historical consciousness is equated with the presence of the past, present and future – it is the presence of time as a whole in an individual's perceptions (Thorp, 2017a: 2). Lastly, it deals with all mental operations that create historical meaning (Thorp, 2017a: 2). Historical consciousness is, thus, in the view of Thorp, what we use to create meaning in history.

A different perspective considers historical consciousness a framework by which we as individuals perceive the relationships between the past, present and future on an emotional and cognitive level (Nordgren, 2016: 481). Historical consciousness as a concept does not only include humanity's capacity for critical historicism but there also needs to be an interest in the past (Clark, 2014: 89). It involves learnt skills and innate recollections (Clark, 2014: 89). Thus, as stated above, historical consciousness is not only about skills, but also about how an individual recalls the past and the interest they have in doing so. What can definitely be said about historical consciousness is that it is not about obtaining a certain level of historical literacy and understanding (Clark & Grever, 2018: 88). It rather supposes a state of mind in individuals that refers to their orientation in time and feeling a sense of belonging to a distinct community (Clark & Grever, 2018: 177).

Historical consciousness also implies the permanent presence of the awareness that mankind and all social institutions exist in time (Thorp, 2017a: 7). It is the awareness that the past is the present in representations and conceptions (Thorp, 2017a:7). Historical consciousness can also be an analytical tool that enables us to uncover new aspects of history, apply different perspectives and ask different questions (Thorp, 2017a: 3). In 2017 German researchers Köbl and Straub criticised historical consciousness as being treated as "something innately human and anthropologically

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universal", when it should instead be approached as a historically situated, culture-specific ability (Thorp: 5)

It is also necessary to point out that an individual's historical consciousness is culturally based and is a determined mental awareness of how a string of historical events of the past have conditioned the current position of an individual as part of a larger group (Du Pisani, 2007:9). This mental awareness involves a consciousness of a perspective on time and chronology, an ability to periodise the past, an ability to recognise change and transition, an ability to establish cause and effect, and a sense of development (Du Pisani, 2007:9).

Rüsen argues that there has been a historical shift from traditional consciousness to a more rational one but also that different understandings of history to a large extent coexist and influence one another since they correspond to different needs of orientation (Nordgren, 2016: 487). Rüsen stated that history is an interpretation of time and that the experience of the differences between past and present is bridged by narrating the idea of a temporal connection between them (Nordgren, 2016: 488).

According to Taylor and Young, historical consciousness can be seen as the process by which certain events and their stories do or do not enter collective memory as public history and family stories (Taylor & Young, 2003:4). A child's historical consciousness will, therefore, for example, be conditioned by the environment they grew up in (Thorp, 2017b:5). Historical consciousness that is imbedded in the collective memory is inextricably linked with political and social action in any society (Taylor & Young, 2003: 4). Historical consciousness, as a consequence, relates to and expresses itself in different domains, such as in school education, historical scholarship, public history, media, family and community history, heritage and museums (Grever, 2018: 227). Historical consciousness is clearly not limited to the nation state or the Western World (Grever, 2018: 227), but is universal in nature.

2.2.4 How historical consciousness is formed

The key factor in historical consciousness is the meaning-making process when the individual interacts with the past. According to Pihlainen, historical consciousness is strongly shaped by the needs and priorities of the present and so this directs attention to specific instances of the past (2014:12). There is a component of knowledge in

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historical consciousness, but this does not determine the level of historical consciousness, that is, advanced historical knowledge does not imply an advanced historical consciousness (Holmberg, 2016:11). Historical consciousness is unique to each individual (Holmberg, 2016: 12).

The process of becoming historically conscious involves everyone in society and there is something like a collective historical consciousness (Van Dooren & Van Dycke, 2008:135). For communities historical consciousness is intimately bound up with collective memory (Duraisingh, 2017:175). This includes the selection of which public events are commemorated or remembered and how a community's origins are explained. It is not limited to how much history individuals know, even though a certain level of historical knowledge or experience is a pre-requisite. The extent of this knowledge is not important but rather the framework and effective principles operative in making sense of the past is (Duraisingh, 2017:175).

Historical consciousness implies an awareness of the fundamental historical character of human behaviour, knowledge, institutions, events and developments in the world including one's own position (Grever, 2018:225). It involves verbally expressed cognitive dealings with the past and embodied expressions of how people experience, use and perform the past (Grever, 2018:226). Historical consciousness is, therefore, a certain form of rational construction of reality in this idealised sense that gives expression to certain values and normative standards of a culture that dominates (Kölbl & Straub, 2001:9). Historical consciousness means an interaction between making sense of the past and constructing expectations for the future (Ahonen, 2005:699).

The theory of historical consciousness is based on an individual's point of view that consists of "longing for history" or a "need for history" of a historical understanding (Erdmann, 2008:33). This longing for history or the need for history is mostly based on a past event or on an internalised secondary experience through stories with the people and events that a person identifies with (Erdmann, 2008:33). According to Kwang-Su, perceptions of historical consciousness are culturally determined (1999: 12). Historical consciousness is, therefore, based on the social point of view that becomes manifest in historical culture (Erdmann, 2008: 34). An individual's historical consciousness depends on a person's own capabilities to adjust data confronted with

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his inner picture of history and the correct view on the world when necessary (Van Dooren & Van Dycke, 2008:135).

In a country where unofficial history plays a major role in the life and identity of society, the applicability of this affecting the youth is a possibility. According to Angier (2017: 170), the lived experiences of people are as powerful as the official curriculum in shaping historical consciousness. This further reinforces my earlier point that historical consciousness is developed. According to Duraisingh (2017: 176), historical consciousness is actively constructed by the individual and cannot be passively owned and received, as a person's context and situation changes so the historical consciousness becomes subject to change.

Historical consciousness is a product of moral sensibility as much as knowledge or epistemological sophistication (Reich, 2017: 21). When that moral sensibility is shocked, the narratives that orient us in time and space are disrupted, making a change in consciousness more possible. Consequently, humans have attempted to create a continuity of historical consciousness by erecting monuments. However, historical consciousness had been found to be easily malleable and these monuments become out of date long before they turn to dust (Reich, 2017: 21).

According to Ahonen (2005: 698), school education, historical scholarship and public history are equal shapers of historical consciousness. Historical education has been about developing the role of fundamental concepts, such as being able to internalise, organise and give sense to both individual and collective experiences (Schmidt, 2013: 22). Since members of the same group share ideas and opinions and they are likely to have similar feelings and attitudes towards common issues and problems, one can justifiably conclude that individual and collective identities overlap and that this overlap is proportional to the degree of the emotional and/or intellectual attachment of the individual to a particular group (Van Beek, 2000: 343).

According to Clark and Peck (2019: 6), research has confirmed that there is a distinct lack of community engagement with official narratives and history education but that peoples own stories and experiences generate strong connections with the past. This reveals the power of collective and transgenerational memory in communities (Clark & Peck, 2019: 6). This orientation is based on the human aptitude to think back and

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forth in time. Time is not regarded as a technical measure but as a substance loaded with human-given meanings and moral issues (Ahonen, 2005: 699).

Rüsen has identified experience, interpretation and orientation as some of the key elements of historical consciousness (Du Pisani, 2007: 10). Additionally, memory is an important element so that history is remembered in a subjective manner (Habel, 2008: 2). An example of this is author Alex Haley's famous work, *Roots*, which enabled the historical consciousness of slavery as fundamental to United States history to evolve (Habel, 2008: 5). Haley's slave-founded ancestry produces a historical consciousness which enables a personal relationship with that particular part of the past, and encourages reinterpretation (Habel, 2008: 5). It is through an understanding of how time and history transcends one's individual life span that activates the development of historical consciousness (Thorp, 2017a: 4). Each individual, group, culture, nation and state has a vision of the past which is not possible without historical consciousness (Du Pisani, 2007:9).

According to Thorp (Thorp, 2014b: 21), historical consciousness can be developed in three ways. First, it occurs when individuals are exposed to history either multi-chronologically or multi-perspectively. The second is when individuals apply genetic-genealogical perspectives to history. The final manner is by having individuals apply historical thinking. A further claim is that a personal or private encounter is essential in the development of a historical consciousness (Thorp, 2014b: 21). In this regard, informal sources of historical sources might enlighten the changes in how young and new generations deal with the past (Grever, 2018: 227). Furthermore, young people consider genealogy and family history to be important sources of knowledge about the past (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 397).

Many students develop a sense of the past in a personal, unstructured and constructivist fashion, as well as in the formalised setting of a school. The past is encountered frequently outside of school – in their family, in their community and in various cultural interactions with film, media and through visits to museums (Taylor & Young, 2003:4). Young people have multiple sources of history outside of the formal context of the classroom or school (Nafziger, 2020: 41). They hear stories from their parents; they travel to landmarks, and they celebrate historical holidays. These are all a part of what informs their knowledge of culture and history (Nafziger, 2020: 41).

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Inside the more formal and structured setting of the classroom the past is again encountered and sometimes it is fascinating and engaging but in others it may be dull, disconnected and/or irrelevant (Taylor & Young, 2003:4). It is school students that have the capacity and opportunity to cultivate their critical and analytical skills in a systematic fashion when developing their individual sense of historical consciousness. The development of historical consciousness is inextricable from social reasoning development, specifically when it relates to moral reasoning which has tenets in empathy and perspective taking (Taylor & Young, 2003: 4).

Historical consciousness is also activated by borderline events or paradigmatic changes (Thorp, 2017a:3). An example of this would be the fall of communism in Russia or the end of the Cold War changes such as these would prompt people to re-negotiate and re-evaluate their notion of and their relationship to history and this engages their historical consciousness (Thorp, 2017a: 3). Historical consciousness is formed in everyday contact with the outside world from all the pieces of information that come to us in a narrative and thus already interpreted way (Thorp, 2017a: 135). Through this we connect history to our lives and develop our historical consciousness (Thorp, 2017b:1). Others have argued that a historical consciousness should be regarded as a cultural or a cognitive achievement (Thorp, 2017b: 2). It should be seen as something that we come to acquire (Thorp, 2017b: 2).

2.2.5 The impact of historical consciousness on people's lives

There has been a great deal of interest in exploring the manner in which young people use the past to give their lives direction (Duraisingh, 2017: 174). Around the 1990s, academic historians and opinion leaders started to use the concept "historical consciousness" to lament the lack of historical knowledge among young people in society (Clark & Grever, 2018: 177). Historical consciousness of young people was found to entail the totality of young people's knowledge and understanding of the past and their ability to interpret the past in the context of the present, to self-identify and to give them direction in how to move forward into the future (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 393).

It seems that through the interplay of official and unofficial history, members of society are constructing their historical consciousness (Angier, 2017: 155). In the construction

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of historical consciousness, it appears that the contexts that lie beyond the classroom and school curriculum, also powerfully shape the historical understanding of young people. This appears especially in ethnically diverse or post-conflict societies where multiple, complex, and competing versions of the past co-exist (Angier, 2017: 156). In this regard, the post-apartheid South African context is one that fits this description. In the study, *Australians and the Past* the research confirmed that ordinary people lacked a distinct engagement with formal history narratives (Clark, 2014: 90). Participants from this study and two other studies, that were extremely similar, found that their own stories and experiences generated extraordinarily strong connections with the past (Clark, 2014: 90), revealing how the unofficial history narrative has more power than the official narrative covered in schools.

This is also true in the South African context. Learners often come to class with their own versions of the history of certain topics, particularly apartheid, and those are often the narratives that are the most important to them and that they would also pass down to future generations. Historical consciousness can then be seen as a process whereby individuals connect their own narrative to a larger story and develop a "past-mindedness" (Clark, 2014: 93) or an awareness of events that have occurred and their implication for the future.

Many have the opinion that the youth have little knowledge of history and thus they cannot really possess a historical consciousness. This idea will be discussed further in this literature review. Historical consciousness of young people is intricately linked to a single social cultural context and territory of residence (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 399). This shows that the context or setting that people are in influences how their historical consciousness grows. Through historical consciousness, one experiences the past and receives life orientation. The development of a comprehensive historical consciousness plays a role in the education of people to fulfil their role as citizens in any society (Du Pisani, 2007: 10).

Historical consciousness has an effect on people. Those who have developed it have an awareness of the subjectivity of history (Grever, 2018: 227). This can be seen in conversations where different perspectives and stories show how people make sense of the past and it is through this that we are able to see the intersections between public and private encounters with the past that reveal the tensions between the

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intimate and the official (Clark & Grever, 2018: 227). Many inform their historical consciousness based on their understanding of historical events and events from their past. When these narratives differ, there is a necessary process that needs to occur, where the individual has to re-evaluate and consolidate their understanding. Historical consciousness allows for individuals to move forward in their lives in a historically informed manner due to the fact that they lament the gap separating past and present (Kölbl & Straub, 2001: 7). This concept is like the remembered past in that it is a historical phenomenon and a psychological one like memory (Clark & Grever, 2018: 178).

After apartheid was dismantled Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and their sense of historical consciousness was framed differently from how it had been expressed over the previous three centuries (Tempelhoff, 2003: i). In the new South Africa, it has been subjected to deconstruction by events and developments that have followed since the release of Nelson Mandela (Tempelhoff, 2003: i). It is really important that all South Africans, including ordinary and professional historians contemplate the past so as to feel a part of South African society (Tempelhoff, 2003: ii). A key aspect to developing and growing one's historical consciousness is to have an ethical relationship with the past and to live in relation to it so as to acknowledge the moral claim that it has to our present context (Chinnery, 2013: 253). Historical consciousness is developed through critical thinking and engagement with the past. The past does not have to be the outlined by the history curriculum in schools, it can also be the associations that individuals have had with the past, and which is derived from their personal meaning thereof.

In developing a historical consciousness people emerge as individuals and as a part of the world (Kölbl & Straub, 2001: 488). Past events bond people to their communities and contexts. Past events are highlighted as being a part of their cultural heritage which needs to be preserved and so emotional ties are created to the place and community (Nordgren, 2016: 488). This demonstrates that public uses of history differ from that of the history taught in a school curriculum. In school history, the logic used to explain school history is that the past is a foreign country (Nordgren, 2016: 497). In this regard, learners are taught to distance themselves from the past and there is no connection between the learner and history. Many a time learners, engage with the content in a detached and unmeaningful way. History that forms a part of culture is a

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part of everyday life and it shapes those learners and their perceptions (Nordgren, 2016: 497).

History and historical consciousness also serve a civic function. They allow learners to see the diversity of human experience and to understand more about themselves as individuals within society as a whole (Hunt, 2011: 259). History is able to help individuals connect with their community and place. In turn this connection is what aids individuals in developing and growing their historical consciousness. According to Ahonen, historical consciousness is a vital asset for orientating life and how you see the world (Ahonen, 2005: 698). Cultivation of a historical consciousness aims at a structural change in consciousness (Ahonen, 2005: 700).

An individual's life can consequently become trans-generational (Ahonen, 2005: 700). Historical consciousness influences the behaviour of the individual and the group in the present (Du Pisani, 2007: 9). It gives meaning to the past in such a way that it orientates society (Du Pisani, 2007: 10). Historical consciousness provides a crucial link between the past, present and future in a way that helps a person to interpret the present through the past and thereby develop a future orientation and it plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of both the individual and the group (Du Pisani, 2007: 10).

Historical consciousness helps to shape moral values and this serves as a moral force in determining human behaviour (Du Pisani, 2007: 10-11). Once an individual has developed their historical consciousness this developed person will be able to perform three main functions. The first is that they develop insight into and an understanding of the historical background of contemporary problems and phenomena (Du Pisani, 2007: 13). The second is that they develop an open-mindedness regarding issues and a critical appreciation of the value and role of historical heritage and tradition (Du Pisani, 2007: 13). The third is that they acquire knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness and interdependence of human relations on the micro and macro level in order to develop a national and international vision (Du Pisani, 2007: 13). An approach that uses historical consciousness has the potential to restore the dignity of history as a subject and cultivate an ability in learners to overcome impediments which obstruct their attainment of an authentic knowledge and understanding of the past (Du Pisani,

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2007: 13). According to Rüsen identity is a product of historical consciousness (Lee, 2004: 37)

History should, according to thinkers such as Habermas, be used as a form of emancipation to make people aware of the shackles that history has put on them (Thorp, 2014a: 16). Behind the position that history emancipates and frees individuals is the assumption that traditions and cultures that are being handed down through history have a limiting effect on human beings (Thorp, 2014a: 16). In this regard historical consciousness is a temporary outcome of a changing state of mind that is concerned with an orientation in time regarding human beings who are involved in transforming the "overlapping mnemonic communities" (Thorp, 2014a: 225)

Another application of historical consciousness is that it helps us to understand that we are both created by history and are creators of history (Thorp, 2017a: 2). Through historical consciousness we gain an insight into the fact we are part of social and cultural communities with historical dimensions and we have a role to play in these communities (Thorp, 2017a: 2). According to Thorp (2017a: 2), historical consciousness enables us to situate ourselves in an extended temporal flow that gives meaning to our lives. We understand we are part of a dimension of time that extends our present experiences and lifespans, thanks to historical consciousness (Thorp, 2017a: 2-3). This the basis of orientation, sense-making and identity construction (Thorp, 2017a: 3).

It is also argued that historical consciousness provides us with agency by making us aware of the fact that we are both created by and creators of history – it essentially acts as a catalyst of agency (Thorp, 2017a: 3). The third function is that historical consciousness is an ability to articulate ourselves to give a meaningful temporal direction in time, which means it functions as a way of making us articulate historical narratives (Thorp, 2017a: 3). It functions as a means of confirming and justifying present knowledge and social relationships. Through historical consciousness we are given a means to argue for and justify why knowledge we have and the relationships we adhere to have come to be the way they are (Thorp, 2017a: 3). Without historic memory, human beings cannot account to themselves for who they are, they have no context for action, and can project no future plans (Springborg, 2003: 56).

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Individuals who possess a historical consciousness have an idea of who they are within their changing world, from the origins of their ancestors to the future of their descendants – practical orientation and identity building are decisive functions of historical consciousness. Identity formation within the narrative self-constitution view is temporality (Thorp, 2014a:11). It is essential that individuals perceive understand that "What I did yesterday affects who I am today and who I am and what I do today will affect who I will be tomorrow." Identity should be historically contextualised to avoid becoming essentialist: an awareness of the fact that the categories I perceive to be relevant for my identity formation are historically contingent. This enables individuals to become fully aware of the scope of their identity constitution. I argue that it makes historical consciousness a central component of identity (Thorp, 2014a:11).

2.2.6 Historical consciousness and the past

In studying historical consciousness, it is possible to understand how people use the past (Clark & Peck, 2019: 2). The past can never be brought back as a physical reality but it does exist as a mental consciousness (Kwang-Su, 1999: 6). Berger (2015: 1) has stated that the past is seen as a foreign country – "they do things differently there". This statement indicates a mental and physical distancing from the events of the past. What historical consciousness does is create a problem where it is difficult to understand a time and a world very different from our own (Sexias, 2004: 865). Students may view the past as a closed entity (Nafziger, 2020: 31), implying that the past is retrospectively viewed from the contemporary position at a certain point in time (Kwang-Su, 1999: 14).

Historical consciousness has the purpose of connecting present society with the past and the future (Kwang-Su, 1999: 14). As individuals we exist in historical time as much as the remnants of the past (Sexias, 2004: 865). People make historical interpretations by shifting from the moment they live in, to positioning themselves in the flow of time, just as it is done for these remnants (Sexias, 2004: 865). Historical consciousness is a tool that is used to create ties from the past to the present in such a manner that it provides a perspective of how the future will look (Nafziger, 2020: 30). Rüsen discusses how the past is used as a reference point so that the future can be examined and understood (Nafziger, 2020: 30).

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The past remains a space in which societies dispute possible memories about themselves and project their collective futures (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 176). People in all societies seem to turn to the past not for the sake of what has already come to pass but for that which has yet to come (Nordgren, 2019: 781). Historical consciousness gives the past the ability to be tied to the present so that it can have a perspective of the future (Mazabow, 2003: 7).

There is no concrete position from which to write the narrative of the past that leads to a multiplicity of individual and collective narratives (Sexias, 2004: 865). Telling these narratives potentially invokes debts onto the current generation from their collective forebears while marking the injustices that are perpetuated by or on others that are outside of the group (Nafziger, 2020: 34). This common past is preserved through institutions, traditions and symbols (Nafziger, 2020: 33). It becomes the crucial elements in the construction of collective identities in the present (Nafziger, 2020: 33-34). The narrative provides a larger justificatory context for collective actions to current challenges (Nafziger, 2020: 34). This links historical consciousness to specific social and behavioural patterns which creates a direct link from the past to the present (Nafziger, 2020: 36). Recalling one's memories of the past is a dynamic process during which retrieval cues and new information can distort how the past is reconstructed (Vilche-Monter, 2015: 2). Memory has been used to describe the contents of the past as it becomes part of the process that brings the past directly into contact with the present (Weldon, 2006: 57). De Bruijn has a differing opinion which holds that the past can be seen as a foreign country "that attracts increasing attention from tourists" (De Bruijn, 2014: 23). Heritage can be seen as a way for people to deal with the past in a presentist manner – history and heritage are known for selecting, altering and inventing the past for their representations (De Bruijn, 2014: 23). This concept was unpacked in my theoretical framework in Chapter 1.

The past has created a new function is society known as historical trauma. A recent development in the present day context is that there has been a surge in the demand for reparations and apologies that started in the mid-1980s (Sexias, 2004: 866). This surge has been linked to the concern of coming to terms with the past and is a defensive response (Sexias, 2004: 866). It usually is sparked as a response to disorientation caused by the collapse of what has been perceived as a common destiny. This leads individuals to look back at the past and to uncover the mysteries it

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holds so as to compensate for the shortcomings of the present (Sexias, 2004: 866). Historical trauma is defined as cumulative trauma over both the life span and across generations that results from massive cataclysmic events (Nafziger, 2020: 38). An important element of the theory of the historical trauma response is its generational transmission. Trauma is passed from generation to generation (Nafziger, 2020: 39).

Nafziger defines historical trauma as a combination of accumulative stress, cultural bereavement, genocide and racism that has been generalised, internalised and institutionalised (Nafziger, 2020: 39). Such trauma is cumulative and unresolved as well as both historic and ongoing (Nafziger, 2020: 39). While painful parts of the past are not spoken out loud, they reveal themselves in other forms in society (Nafziger, 2020: 35).

South Africa is clearly still struggling with the effects of the trauma experienced with apartheid and its legacies. In Chapter 4, I will unpack whether or not this is evident in the analysis of the historical consciousness of the past of the first-year students.

2.2.7 Results from studies

Not enough is known about what historical consciousness exists within youth who are at tertiary education age. Some studies have been done in the recent past to uncover more of an understanding on this group and their historical consciousness. Below I will discuss varying studies that have been conducted and the results that they yielded. Nafziger created a comprehensive analysis on European studies and found that in a broad sense these studies make linkages between historical consciousness, national identity and the social behaviours of ethnic minorities (Nafziger, 2020: 32). A study conducted across Europe between 1995 and 1996 came to the conclusion that historical consciousness among the youth differed significantly by country and historical context, therefore leading to the suggestion that further investigation was needed into minority and marginalised populations (Nafziger, 2020: 30 - 31).

2.2.7.1 Studies regarding school children

A study was conducted by the Swedish School Inspectorate (Thorp, 2017b: 1-2) in 2016 on Swedish school children (Thorp, 2017b: 9). The study interviewed 13, seven -year-old learners to investigate the historical consciousness of young children (Thorp, 2017b: 9). Research involving children and historical consciousness emphasises the ability to connect with the past, present and future – it is viewed as incremental to the

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historical consciousness of a child (Thorp, 2017b: 4). This conclusion can be related to university students, as they would have undergone a similar process at a similar age. These students will have been interacting with the past from a young age so as to develop their historical consciousness into their student years.

In 2009 a study was conducted in Latin America that made use of 67, seventh grade, students (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 175). These learners were taking a Latin American History course. The purpose was to investigate how this aided in the construction of Latin American historical knowledge and the relations that it established with the learners historical consciousness (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 175). The study made use of a written narrative task that interrelated with the past, present and future of Latin America (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 178). One of the conclusions drawn was that all 67 students had access to information and they were able to consume media by access to the internet (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 182- 183). The content used to write these narratives is considered manifestations of historical consciousness (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 184). The most frequently mentioned themes included:

(1) Violent European occupation
(2) Latin America is underdeveloped/ developing
(3) Technology
(4) Arrival of Europeans (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 184-185).

These and the other themes can be directly correlated to the course that the students were enrolled in (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 185). These narratives indicated that for the students the colonisation process in Latin America was extremely violent and has left marks in the present (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 185).

2.2.7.2 International studies regarding university students

A notable study was conducted in Russia in 2001. The study was done to establish if World War II was a key marker in ensuring the wholeness of historical consciousness and the continuity of national identity. The study made use of a questionnaire that was comprised of 52 questions. Four-hundred-and-forty-six students from various Russian universities participated (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 393). The study concluded that the role of contemporary history was large as its significance had

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been transformed in status by young people (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 397). However, the conclusion was also drawn that a historical indifference and a neutral position in relation to the past had been revealed (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 398). The historical consciousness of this youth was orientated towards the present, with interest in current events being focused mainly on their country (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 397). This is quite natural and has been found to be the case in other countries too (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017: 397).

2.2.7.3 Regional studies regarding university students

First, a survey conducted in 1999 involved first-year history students from seven South African universities (Van Beek: 344). The study used 223 respondents from all major ethnic communities, using an open-ended survey (Van Beek, 2000: 344). Students completed eight questions to elicit students' opinions and feelings. Responses showed that contemporary South African history remains in the foreground and that apartheid still features prominently in their historical consciousness (Van Beek, 2000: 347). It was also found that emotionally charged attitudes towards the past have been replaced by more detached critical judgements (Van Beek, 2000: 347). Students were found to link the past to the present more than they mourned the past, desired a different past or wished they could change the course of history (Van Beek, 2000: 347). According to Van Beek, the overwhelming impression was not one of pent up anger but that there was a wish to remember the disturbing past so that they could learn from it and move on (Van Beek, 2000: 351).

Secondly, another study that was published in 1999 by Kwang-Su was conducted using undergraduate and post-graduate students in history departments from many residential universities across the country (Kwang-Su, 1999: 101). Ninety-three surveys were completed across four universities (Kwang-Su, 1999: 103). A survey was used to investigate the historical interests and basic historical consciousness of areas of history (Kwang-Su, 1999: 109). One of the conclusions drawn from this study found that the political transition of 1994 was considered a major climax in South African history (Kwang-Su, 1999: 249). The White domination of the past was found to have left a legacy of deep divisions (Kwang-Su, 1999: 250). There was also concern about a strong consciousness of class and racial inequality (Kwang-Su, 1999: 250).

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However there was still a cautious optimism for the prospects of the country moving into the future (Kwang-Su, 1999: 249).

Another study that was undertaken on South African students by Du Pisani was published in 2007. This study revealed serious gaps among history students at South African universities (Du Pisani, 2007: 11). The study came to two major conclusions. The first, was that learners had a superficial interest in history and were limited to the few topics that they were familiar with (Du Pisani, 2007: 11). The second, was that the resources that they drew their historical knowledge from were limited to the information they received from teachers, parents, a narrow range of textbooks and the popular media (Du Pisani, 2007: 11). These results imply that history teaching in South Africa seems to be missing its goals and that the functions of historical consciousness in terms of temporal orientation, identity formation and moral education may be severely impeded in the case of many or even the majority of learners at South African schools and universities (Du Pisani, 2007: 11) .

Fourthly, a 2013 study that took place at the university of Kwa-Zulu Natal made use of students in a bridging programme in the humanities and social sciences. The researcher collected data over her two years of co-ordinating the module. The term legacy is particularly important in understanding South Africa and the born-frees born into it. The legacy of apartheid has had an effect on the children of this generation in more than just a material way. As a concept, legacy refers to more than just the material and social relations of the present, that refer to the past of the context (Waetjen, 2013: 151). Legacy also resides in the conceptualisation of the past and in the historical agency that exists in the public discourse (Waetjen, 2013: 151-152). Waetjen argues (2013: 155) that it is possible to see the historical consciousness of young people by analysing the way they speak about the past. In a study conducted by Waetjen, she found that the students expressed a sense that history had failed them, both as a field of study and as a force that binds itself to the lives of disadvantaged South Africans (2013: 155). Another result of the study was that students referred to the history of apartheid as “the problem of our history” when prompted with persistent social problems in South Africa relating to poverty (Waetjen, 2013: 155).

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The use of the term “our history” also reveals that the students found that there was still error in the present (Waetjen, 2013: 155). This phrase indicates an understanding of legacy. Students were aware that the challenges that they were facing were caused by issues preceding their birth (Waetjen, 2013: 156). For these student’s history had negative connotations and associations. It was seen as a cruel and pervasive agent that continues to plague South Africa (Waetjen, 2013: 156). It became a force that was the cause of personal and social ills (Waetjen, 2013: 156). With a statement of that nature it becomes clear that the students in the study were explaining that the effects are on a national scale (Waetjen, 2013: 155). The students participating in the Waetjen study showed clear insights about the past and the connection of those events to the future. The study contributes further to understanding the phenomenon of historical consciousness amongst this age group. This study resulted in identifying individuals who had developed historical consciousness, as discussed above.

Fifthly, a study conducted by Angier, which was published in 2017, made use of students who were enrolled in a compulsory first-year, first semester, course that related to history and economic history (Angier: 158). Three-hundred-and-eighty-six students participated in the study. They were tasked with completing a biographical survey that considered gender, race, school, level of history at school, year of matriculation (Angier, 2017: 158) and a chronological narrative of South African history from the individual’s perspective (Angier, 2017: 160). From the narratives that were written there was little indication that the students were exposed to robust debates regarding South African history (Angier, 2017: 160). It is widely held that “kids don’t know history”- at least in the specific historical detail that politicians and other concerned adults seem to expect of them (Angier, 2017: 165). The narratives were simple and linear in nature, with White students starting further back in history and Black students starting in the more recent past (Angier, 2017: 160). Overall, the study found that despite curriculum changes Black students continued to feel excluded from South Africa’s history as it was presented in the official school curriculum (Angier, 2017: 166).

Lastly, a study was published in 2018 by Wassermann. The study made use of 31 first-year history education students (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 32). The aim was to understand first-year students personal narratives on what they viewed South Africa to be (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 2). Students were asked to compile a narrative in which

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they detailed how they perceived the history narrative of South Africa (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 2). The narratives seemed to be free of specifics but according to Wassermann, this does not mean that the students did not know history but rather that they had a more personal version outside of the prescribed CAPS curriculum (2018: 7). The narratives tended to focus on apartheid and in this instance detailed accounts were given (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 6). The study made the finding that ideas of race, ethnicity and other histories were deeply embedded in young South Africans (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 7)

2.3 Conclusion

The literature review found that historical consciousness is found in individuals who choose to interact with the past – official or unofficial. The literature also revealed that historical consciousness cannot be prescribed to individuals. Developing one's historical consciousness will depend on the interaction the individual has with their past and the past. Many studies have been conducted on understanding historical consciousness in a broad sense for many years. This is due to the fact that it has been used in educational terminology since the 1960s. It is also clear from the research that there is quite a significant gap in the body of knowledge regarding the historical consciousness of university students. The purpose of this study is to lessen this gap and gain further understanding in this regard. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the paradigmatic and methodological aspects of the study, as well as provide motivation for those choices.

In Chapter 3, I will also define and justify the approaches and methodological choices made to conduct the study. First, I will consider the research design and then the research process followed in order to collect data. I will begin this chapter by unpacking the qualitative research approach. I will then discuss the interpretivist research paradigm. The study will make use of a case study research design. Furthermore, I will discuss in detail the selection of the sample, explaining how the data was collected and the analysis methods that I employed. The study makes use of a secondary data analysis method. The original data was collected in 2017 by means of an open-ended survey. I will make use of an inductive data analysis method of open-coding to analyse the data. Each of the sections will detail how these choices and methods apply

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specifically to the study. Lastly the chapter will address issues relating to trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a methodological reflection.

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Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to define and justify the approaches and methodological choices made to conduct the study. First, I consider the research design and then the research methodology process for collecting and analysing the data. I begin this chapter by unpacking the research design, the research paradigm and then the research used. This will include an overview of the ontological and epistemological assumptions made and then discuss the selection of the sample, explaining how the data was collected and the analysis methods that I employed. Each of the sections will detail how these choices and methods apply specifically to the study. Lastly, the chapter will address issues relating to trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a methodological reflection.

This study makes use of a qualitative research approach, an interpretivist paradigm and a case study research design. Secondary data analysis is used to generate data. The data was originally collected in 2017 through an open-ended survey as part of a larger project on Youth and Education. An inductive data analysis method of open-coding will be used to analyse the data.

3.2 Research Design

The research design details the techniques and methods that I employed to generate and analyse the data so as to generate findings. A research design consists of a research approach, in this study a qualitative approach, a research paradigm, in this study an interpretivist research paradigm, as well as the ontological and epistemological assumptions, in regard to this study, a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology.

3.2.1 Research approach

A research approach is premised on types of scientific reasoning that are used to acquire knowledge (Sefotho, 2018: 26). A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The term qualitative essentially carries the distinction of being non-

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quantitative (Castellan, 2010: 5), which implies that meaning is made from data through words and not numerical values.

Qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is a subjectively constructed version of reality that is widely distributed across a community of "knowers" each having their own personal interpretations of reality and each being equally valid in their own right (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 59). This research approach assumes that social reality is constructed, for example by the participants of this study (Castellan, 2010: 4). Qualitative researchers are concerned with how individuals perceive their world and the interactions that take place in (Castellan, 2010: 4). A qualitative research method is used to understand the beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions of people (Pathak, Jena & Kalra, 2013: np).

At its core, the purpose of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations (De Franzo, 2011: np). A qualitative study will typically explore knowledge constructions and boundaries on the terms of the knowers and the language accessible to them (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 59).Typical research using this approach will generate non-numerical data (Pathak, Jena & Kalra, 2013: np). Qualitative research relies on linguistic rather than numerical data and will employ meaning-based rather than statistical-based forms of data analysis (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 53).

According to Hammarberg (2016), a qualitative research approach is used to propose answers to questions that deal with experience, meaning and perspective. Qualitative data is a source of data that is well grounded and rich in descriptions of processes in identifiable local contexts (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Data that is generated in a qualitative research approach is best coded and analysed using visual and cognitive attributes of the researcher (Crossman, 2020: np).

The main aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the historical consciousness of first-year students enrolled at the faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, which is why I believe the choice of a qualitative research approach is a relevant fit to the study. A qualitative researcher will be most interested in how humans (first-year students in this study) arrange themselves and their settings (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 53). There is a focus on how these humans make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so forth.

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There is great emphasis placed on understanding phenomena in their own right (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 53). The phenomenon in this instance was historical consciousness as it relates to the past. According to Hammarberg (2016), a qualitative study will make use of the interpretation of textual, verbal or visual data. This study did so by analysing written survey responses from the participating students and so I feel I have made an appropriate choice by using this approach. The data analysis process will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

In most cases, qualitative analysis methods do not use large sets of data to draw samples (McLeod, 2019: np). To keep the generated data meaningful, it is necessary to focus on one source of data. In the case of this study, I selected only two question's responses to analyse namely the questions dealing directly with historical consciousness of the past.

3.2.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm is defined by Sefotho (2018: 21) as signifying a model or framework with a distinct "set of concepts that includes theories, research methods, hypothesises and standards for scientific practice". It can be seen as a worldview that defines the researchers outlook on what is acceptable in the research process and how it needs to be carried out (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 22). It becomes the lens that the researcher uses to interpret reality (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 52). In this study I used the interpretivist paradigm to interpret and gain an understanding of the historical consciousness related to the past of the first-year students enrolled in the Faculty of Education.

Interpretivism is based on the assumption that truth and reality are created and not discovered (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 55). According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016: 55), it is not possible to know reality because it is always facilitated by our senses such as sight, touch, taste, feeling and hearing. In general, the interpretivist paradigm perceives reality as subjective and is based on meanings and understandings. These are, in turn, based on social constructs and an individual's experiences. An interpretivist position is founded on the theoretical belief that reality is fluid (Cohen, 2006: np). This is why every aspect of life is negotiated within cultures, social settings, and relationships with other people (Cohen, 2006: np). Thus, interpretivist research is

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meaning-centred (Scauso, 2020: np). Originally this paradigm was rooted in the fact that methods used to understand knowledge related to humans and the social sciences could not be the same as methods used in the physical sciences (Pham, 2018: 3). This is because the human interpretation of the world impacts on their actions (Pham, 2018: 3), while the physical sciences are more focused on a "cause and effect" interpretation of the world. The assumptions of interpretivism are that reality is socially constructed and so multiple versions of it exist. The goal of Interpretivist research is to gain understanding of the phenomenon being examined (Dudovskiy, 2019: np).

Interpretivist research is concerned with understanding human behaviour from the participants perspective (McLeod, 2019: np). There is an attempt at making sense of or interpreting phenomena based on the meanings that people bring to them (McLeod, 2019: np). In this understanding we gain insight into the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures (McLeod, 2019: np). This perspective tends to lead researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity in a unique context rather than trying to generalise the phenomenon to the whole population (Pham, 2018: 3).

As stated before, the interpretivist paradigm was used in this study. I used it because the purpose of the study was to understand the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students as it related to the past. In using this paradigm, meaning needed to be made from the data generated, the facts do not speak for themselves (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 23). Interpretivism, in my opinion, provides for the subjective experiences that are going to make up the grounding for the historical consciousness of the first-year students.

Historical consciousness is very subjective in nature, and, in the case of the study, the participants constructed it from their own perceptions and experiences of the past. There are, in essence, "multiple realities" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 26) when describing the historical consciousness of these first-year students. Interpretivist studies aim to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign them (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 61) and this is essentially the basis of this study. I also found that this paradigm gave me the freedom to derive the meaning from the data during the data analysis phase rather than having the results be explicit beforehand. According to Sefotho (2018: 26), there needs to be an acknowledgment of the tight

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connection that exists between the interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research approach, as these two aspects work together. One cannot be used without the other.

Results from this type of research (interpretivist) are often affected by the researcher's interpretation, belief system, ways of thinking or cultural preferences that are common causes of bias (Pham, 2018), thus my positionality was stated in Chapter 1, the form of my rationale and motivation for the study. To remedy an issue like this, I have to keep my historical consciousness of the past separate from the data. I cannot allow my personal views to affect the interpretation or selection of the data, when writing Chapter 4.

3.2.3 Ontological and epistemological assumptions

Ontology and epistemology form the foundations of the research being done (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 51). Edirisingha (2012: np) defines ontology as the nature of reality. It is the ontological question that leads a researcher to inquire what kind of reality exists either a singular, verifiable reality and truth or a reality like historical consciousness that is socially constructed with multiple versions (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 51-52). In the most basic way, it describes what can be known (Berryman, 2019: 272). Ontology is seen as the philosophical stance in which the researcher declares their stance on reality (Sefotho, 2018: 22). An ontological assumption is also used to raise questions about the nature of realty and the nature of humans in the world (Levers, 2013: 2).

Epistemology, in turn, refers to the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process used to acquire that knowledge (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 52). It is seen as the science on the acquisition of knowledge about the reality the researcher perceives (Sefotho, 2018: 23). It is the epistemological question that leads a researcher to debate the desirability of objectivity, subjectivity, causality, validity and generalisability (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016: 53). Epistemological assumptions are about how the researcher goes about uncovering knowledge and learning about reality (Edirisingha, 2012). The purpose of an epistemology is to focus on the sources of knowledge (Sefotho, 2018: 23). It is used to describe ways of knowing how we know what we know and who can be considered a knower (Berryman, 2019: 272).

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This interpretivist study is underpinned by a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology.

The first philosophical assumption that I am going to discuss is the ontology of the study. In the context of this study the relativist ontological assumption is used. Relativism is based on the assumption that "human experience is reality and that reality is human experience" (Levers, 2013: 2). It assumes that multiple socially constructed realities exist, rather than one objective reality (Guba, 1992: 18). The purpose of a relativist ontology is to understand subjective experiences of reality and the multiple truths that emerge from these experiences (Levers, 2013: 2), like that of the first-year students who participated in this study. This does not deny that there can be objective facts in the natural world (Yu, 2016: 323), but that human experience cannot be generalised to fit one outcome. As this study makes use of the relativist ontological assumption, it investigates meaning that can be attached to a construct and explain their perceptions of the phenomenon in question (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 77), in this case the first-year Faculty of Education students. In this study, based on a relativist ontology, each participant has their own views of historical consciousness relating to the past. Due to its subjective nature, there is not one standard definition that can be applied across all individuals. This study aimed to uncover what the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students have and to see if there were trends and common themes in how their historical consciousness was formed.

This study makes use of a subjectivist epistemological assumption. This epistemological stance was created as an anti-positivist stance. This stance was created as a rejection of the standard methods usually adopted in the natural sciences (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 33). Subjectivity holds that knowledge is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity (Levers, 2013: 3). The purpose of this assumption is to develop understanding, increase sensitisation from ethical and moral issues to personal and political emancipation (Levers, 2013: 3). Moon and Blackman (2017: np) have stated that a subjectivist epistemology is to find the expressions of reality through a range of symbolic and language systems and this study deals with the subjective perceptions of first-year students regarding historical consciousness relating to the past. Each participant had their own subjective view of the past that affected the development of their historical consciousness. Their

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perceptions, backgrounds, identity, understandings of the past were all personalised and influenced the development of their historical consciousness. These students, having just completed their National Senior Certificate examinations came from varying levels of historical exposure and from across the country. Due to these differences, each individual's historical consciousness of the past developed differently. This kind of epistemology as explained is needed in this case, as the experiences of the individual were the foundation for understanding the historical consciousness of the students involved in this study.

3.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology of a study is used to detail the methods used by the researcher to select, collect and process the data collected. A research methodology consists of a research method in this study, a case study research methodology and research methods that include secondary data analysis of an open-ended survey.

3.3.1 Research methodology

Methodology is described as the explanation of the approaches, methods and procedures that have been used in a study, with justification of how they have been used (Austin & Sutton, 2014). The methodology is the lens used by the researcher to make theoretical and practical decisions about their study (Harrison *et al.*, 2017). This study makes use of a case study research methodology, which generates an in-depth and multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue (Crowe *et al.*, 2011). It refers to a systematic study of one particular case in its context (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 42). Case studies are intended to better understand the case (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 82) which refers to a specific group, phenomenon or context.

All case study research begins with the desire to derive in-depth understanding from a small number of cases (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 83). It is evident that a case is generally a bounded entity, for example a person, organisation, behavioural condition, event or other social phenomenon (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 81).This research methodology is best used for observing the phenomenon when it is unique to a small geographical area or a small number of subjects (Idowu, 2016: 184). In this study, the case being

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studied is the historical consciousness of the first-year Faculty of Education students, on the Groenkloof campus at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of a case study research methodology is to explain or describe a phenomenon in an everyday context (Crowe *et al.*, 2011). It has the potential to offer detailed explanations (Idowu, 2016: 184). The researcher will use this design to capture the reality of the participants' lived experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 42). This methodology enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context (Zainal, 2007:1). The defining feature of a case study is that it explores a phenomenon that it has a definable boundary (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 75).

Many studies have been conducted in the last 20 years on historical consciousness, with the focus being on school children. At this time, there is far less understanding of the historical consciousness of the past, regarding university students. The aim of this study is to look at historical consciousness at one university to add to the body of knowledge on this topic, so that further research can be done at other universities on other students. This study uses the experiences of first-year students regarding their views of the past in the context of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, specifically on the Groenkloof Campus. This is to gain an understanding of the historical consciousness of the past that existed in 2017 when the survey used in this study was conducted. The context that shaped the historical consciousness of these students was detailed in the previous chapter. The case study focused on the 2017 group of first-year students who were enrolled with the Faculty of Education, at the University of Pretoria, on the education campus. As of 2020, these students will be in the final year of their studies. The criterion is met for a case study because the 2017 first-year students enrolled in the Faculty of Education is a bounded group in a bounded location. As stated in Chapter 2, all individuals possess a historical consciousness of the past to varying degrees and so I am able to confirm that they were all affected by the phenomenon of historical consciousness relating to the past. The case focused on a specific time frame related to one geographical area, using only responses from students who were first-years in 2017 and who studied on the Groenkloof Education campus.

One advantage of using a case study research methodology is that it allows for the researcher to create a holistic picture of a phenomenon. It explains the relationship

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between parts of the whole rather than pieces of information about various components (Idowu, 2016: 184). Another advantage to using a case study design is that it generates claims that can be validated in future studies (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 42). As mentioned previously, there are few studies that have been done to understand the historical consciousness of university students, especially in South Africa. This study could easily be replicated by another researcher so that they could generate further data on the topic.

There are also however, some potential limitations to using a case study methodology. According to Willis, an issue of this research methodology is the lack of generalisability of the results from the study (2014: 5). The case being is specific to one group, context or phenomenon, so the findings are not transferrable to other cases (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 43). In this regard, I believe that while the case may be too specific to transfer, not enough research has been conducted at this time. Other researchers could in the future apply the same methods detailed in this chapter, to apply to a case in their specific contexts and geographical areas the results of which would then be able to be compared to those generated in this study. This study serves as a contribution to enable others to prove that the results from this study are either just a single occurrence or that there are similarities across other university students in different contexts and geographical areas within South Africa.

3.3.2 Research methods

The term methods refers to the procedures and techniques that researchers employ to collect and analyse data (Harrison *et al.*, 2017). This study makes use of secondary data analysis for data generation Chivaka (2018: 1) defines secondary data analysis as the analysis of data by anyone other than those responsible for its original commissioning, usually for a different purpose. Secondary analysis is an experiential practice that applies the same basic research principles as studies utilising primary data (Johnston, 2014: 619). This study forms part of a large-scale project that deals with youth in education with a focus on first-year students. The data was collected by Professors Wassermann and Vandeyar in 2017 in a project that related to youth and education.

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The research method used to obtain the existing data took the form of an open-ended survey. A written survey is a method used in case study research in order to collect data (Teegavarapu, Summers & Mocko, 2008: 3). Surveys are often seen in quantitative research; however, it has been used in this study despite the study using a qualitative approach. The temporal connection between the past, present and future is made linguistically as historical consciousness has a narrative structure and is expressed through historical narratives (Van Beek, 2000: 342). Historical consciousness cannot be analysed directly, a researcher can only draw conclusions from outward manifestations of historical consciousness by studying the way in which individuals and groups act, behave or verbalise their attitudes and convictions (Van Beek, 2000: 343). The advantages of this choice will be detailed later in this section. In this study the survey made use of open-ended questions that would produce independent answers from the participants.

Open-ended questions were used so that the participants could express themselves freely on the topic that the question(s) were based on. Respondents used their own terminology and constructed their response as they wished (Fauvelle, 2019: np). The survey consisted of 12 questions. The questions relevant to this study were number six and seven, which dealt specifically with historical consciousness related to the past:

Question 6: Tell me how do you think the past and present of South African differ from each other?

Question 7: Tell me how do you think the past and present of South African are similar?

These questions asked for the participants to give their subjective views on the past, using the present as their point of reference. I believe that this data yielded personal insight into the views of the participants regarding the past and led me to make deductions about the historical consciousness of the first-year students. The data also provided some indication of why the first-year students developed their historical consciousness in the manner that they did.

Giving participants the freedom to generate their own responses meant that they had the possibility to be more candid about their views on the past, which in the end led to richer data. An advantage to using open-ended questions is that bias is eliminated from the researcher (Farrel, 2016: np) because then the participants are not choosing

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from options that are given to them but rather they are able to give a personalised answer to the questions. Written surveys are cost effective (Teegavarapu, Summers & Mocko, 2008: 3), so using them in secondary data analysis the study does not incur costs in order to generate data.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process whereby the researcher selects participants from the population of interest (Trochim, 2020: np). The researcher targets a specific group, knowing that the group does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself (Creswell *et al.*, 2016:60-61). Sampling occurs when the researcher examines a small portion of the population to gather findings to make statements that can apply to the broader group (Salkind, 2020: np). Sampling for a case study consists of finding cases and then selecting the sample from within that specific context, group or geographical area (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 75).

As this study makes use of a case study research design, it becomes evident that the sample case in this study was all first-year students, enrolled at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, Groenkloof campus. The group was defined by the boundary of the one faculty, on one campus at one particular university. Due to the research design the entire population is a part of the sample.

This study made use of the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is choosing the sample based on the ease with which the researcher has access to them (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 197). Convenience sampling involves obtaining participants who meet a certain criteria (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016: 2). Sampling for a study using a case study research design consists of finding the case and selecting a sample from the case that is situated in its context (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 75). The purpose of sampling in research is to study the sample so that we may generalise our results back to the population from which they were chosen (Trochim, 2020: np).

Convenience sampling was employed in the data collection process in that the first-year students were easily available on the Groenkloof campus, at the University of Pretoria. These students fitted the criteria for participants in the study and thus could be approached in an easy manner, to have them complete the survey. The inclusion criteria for the participants entailed them being enrolled at the University of Pretoria

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within the Faculty of Education in 2017. While everyone may possess a historical consciousness to some extent anyone who did not meet these criteria were excluded from the data collection.

An advantage of convenience sampling is that it is affordable and subjects are readily available (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016: 3). In this case, the first-year education students who were used for the original data collection were easily accessible as they were all on the Groenkloof campus and available to take part in the survey. A disadvantage to this method of sampling is that it is often associated with achieving breadth of understanding rather than depth (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016: 3). As this study is focused on gaining a deeper understanding of historical consciousness, I have had to ensure that the data analysis process focused on achieving deeper understanding. This was not problematic as the phenomenon of historical consciousness is subjective in nature and the study only focused on the one group of first-year students from 2017.

3.5 Data Collection and Data analysis

Data analysis takes place once data is collected. The next step is to start understanding and drawing possible conclusions from it (Bhatia, 2018: np). Data analysis is a process that relies on methods and techniques of taking raw data and finding relevant insights (Durcevic, 2020: np). After the data collection had taken place in 2017, it was then electronically transcribed, so it was in an electronic format. To maintain the authenticity of the data and to keep it raw, it was transcribed in its original state – the data included all grammatical errors and omissions that were present and none of the data was rephrased.

For the purpose of this study, I chose to analyse 150 of the 700 collected surveys from the 2 questions that dealt with the past. This meant that a total of 300 responses were analysed. This was done to make the study more manageable as this is only a thesis study. In order to properly connect the past to the present and the future there needs to be a linguistic element, like a historical narrative that connects all three and establishes historical consciousness (Van Beek, 2000: 342). The narrative format is a linguistic form that allows the historical consciousness to synthesise the dimensions of time with the values and experiences of the individual (Kwang-Su, 1999: 22). As

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referred to in Chapter 2 the study conducted by Pirola da Conceição and de Fátima Sabino Dias found that the content used to write the narratives of their study were considered manifestations of historical consciousness (Pirola da Conceição and De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 184). Waetjen concurs that it is possible to see the historical consciousness of young people by analysing the way they speak about the past (Waetjen, 2013: 155).

In this study, the linguistic element I used was the survey responses from questions 6 and 7, as mentioned previously.

For data analysis, the 300 responses were chosen at random, before I began the analysis process. Upon receiving the document with the transcribed data, I chose a response at random and counted out 150 responses. This was done for both Questions 6 and 7 were being used for the purpose of analysis. I chose the responses randomly without reading them so as to avoid forming a bias and possible exclude those that I disagreed with. I made use of an inductive data analysis method as the data was in a written format. An inductive approach uses a detailed reading of raw data to take note of what concepts or themes arise and then interpretations can be made by the researcher (Thomas, 2006: 238). The aim of using such an approach is to allow findings to emerge from the frequent and dominant themes that are inherent in the raw data without restraints from structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006: 238).

I believed that by choosing 150 of the responses, from two separate questions on the survey, I would be able to generate trackable and realistic findings related to this group of participants and their historical consciousness. I would not be overwhelmed and would be able to analyse the responses in an in-depth manner so that I could derive meaningful understanding of the historical consciousness and make some assumptions as to why it developed the way that it did.

To analyse, I made use of an open coding technique. Coding refers to grouping and assigning values to responses from the survey (Bhatia, 2018: np). Open coding involves labelling concepts, defining and developing categories based on the properties of the data (Khandkar, 2016: 1). It is a technique that describes and conceptualises the data (Turner, 2020: np). The purpose of coding the data in this way is that it helps to build theories (Khandkar, 2016: 5), rather than proving or disproving existing ones.

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I used a technique like this because it allowed me to form my own codes and themes to categorise the data so that I was able to discover meaning more easily. This enabled me to easily surmise and conclude the views that participants had of the past which ultimately led to understanding their historical consciousness in this regard. I was able to analyse the presence of meaning by making inferences about the data based on trends and patterns found during the analysis process.

I made use of a thematic analysis method (McLeod, 2019: np). Open coding uses a thematic system. The meaning in the data was not predetermined and emerged as the data was analysed. Having a set manner with which to analyse the responses would have made the analysis process more difficult, if a response could not fit into the predetermined themes.

I began my analysis of the data by reading through the responses. I did these four to five times before I started to note that there were common themes in the responses. I then reframed these responses in a separate document, so that they were framed only at the past. After doing this, I reread all the data and then developed a coding system by assigning colours to different themes/categories and began colour coding the responses. This meant that most of the responses were assigned multiple themes/categories. It was from these trends and patterns based on the participants' views of the past, that I was able to make some inferences regarding their historical consciousness. Their views on the past indicated their historical consciousness. Some examples of the themes that emerged, dealt with concepts such as resentment of the past, approval of the past, the past as continuity and the past as change. These and others that were noted will be discussed at length in the Chapter 4.

It is necessary to be aware that some participants may have skewed and oversimplified their views of the past. This cannot be ignored. These views, while they may be factually incorrect in a positivist sense, still speak to the historical consciousness of the individual who gave the response. The responses were not analysed based on historical accuracy but rather on the personalisation of the past. As mentioned in Chapter 2, academic historical knowledge is not a foundational requirement for an individual to develop their historical consciousness. Understanding the manner in which these students viewed the past gave great insight into the

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historical consciousness that they had and also provided insight into why it developed in this way.

In using the data analysis methods as discussed, I realise that there are certain disadvantages. When an inductive analysis method is used, there is no clear theoretical base on which to analyse your findings. The only issue that I found with this method is that I as the researcher needed to be sure to develop a strong conceptual base to analyse the data. I believe that having a background in history education allowed for me to historically situate the responses given in the study. Some of the thematic codes were based on second-order procedural concepts used to understand history, which is content that I covered in my undergraduate degree, in my History Methodology module (JMH 300 and JMH 454). One issue that also can be found with the open-coding technique is that it can be time-consuming and tedious (Khandkar, 2016: 9). To try and streamline the process of analysis I developed my thematic codes before I started the process of colour coding the responses while I read through the data the first few times.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined as the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods that are used to ensure the quality of a study (Connelly, 2016: np). It refers to the methods used to collect, sort and classify data (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 140). Trustworthiness is used in interpretivist research, instead of triangulation which is applicable to positivist research. According to Connelly (2016: np), the purpose of trustworthiness in studies is to establish the protocols and procedures that are necessary for researchers and their studies to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. Trustworthiness is used to ensure that the research reflects the reality of the participant's (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 188).

One principle that ensures trustworthiness in a study is credibility. A method of doing this is by using a mechanical means to record the data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 188). Another would be for two researchers to reinforce the integrity of any aspect of the research process, by adding multiple perspectives to reinforce confidence in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 188).

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A second principle is transferability. This principle does not involve the research being able to make generalised claims but rather aims to have elements included in the study that connect to the body of research (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 124). To do this, the researcher must provide a detailed description of the context, the participants and the research design so that the reader can decide on if the study is transferable (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 124). The readers can decide this by analysing those aspects and making connections between the data and local and wider community behaviours and practices (Creswell *et al.*, 2016: 124). It can also be ensured by engaging persistently with the data so as not to only derive shallow findings (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 189-190). It is also imperative that the researcher should be transparent in the processes that they follow (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 190).

In relation to this study, the original data from the survey was electronically transcribed. In the transcription process, the data was kept in its original state by keeping all spelling, grammatical errors, and omissions in the electronic version. The original surveys collected in 2017 were also stored safely and can be compared to the electronic version should credibility ever be called into question. Credibility has further been ensured by having one of the original researchers included in a supervisory role. Professor Wassermann, being one of the researchers for the original project and as supervisor for this study assisted in ensuring that the data was used correctly and appropriately.

To ensure transferability in the study, I provided a lengthy description of the research context, the methods used throughout the study and the findings so as to allow for readers of the study to judge if the results could be transferred to their specific context. Because the data is subjective in nature, there is a need to make sure that the study remains credible. The original methods used to collect the data can be replicated very easily. The data collected in replication studies would also be authentic in that the sample group that would be used would be rather large and, as stated above, the students from a similar group could come from different backgrounds and contexts and so the data will be varied.

Ensuring credibility is more difficult. As so few studies have been conducted on first-year, Faculty of Education students it becomes difficult to link findings to today's context. Credibility can be ensured for the study to a certain extent because

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participants come from varying backgrounds and have a variety of perspectives of the past. The findings in the study become credible if similar patterns emerge from these participants. The data has already been electronically transcribed but because the data needed to be authentic, no corrections or alternations were made to the data through this process. Having the data remain raw is key to keeping the data authentic. As stated above, communities share ideas and values and so it can be said that any results found with this sample could be found if the study is replicated. The study focuses on a phenomenon that is not only applicable to university students, but all individuals who have also developed a historical consciousness. That being said, with the phenomenon affecting all individuals and the methods that were used to collect and analyse data being provided, other researchers could replicate the study and add further results to the body of knowledge.

3.7 Ethics

Ethical considerations or ethics are viewed as a code of professional conduct (Resnik, 2015: np). Ethics is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophical inquiry of moral life (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011: 4). It is the norm for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Resnik, 2015: np). Essentially it has to do with researcher behaviour that is considered right or wrong (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 65).

Three principles underpin ethical conduct. The first is that of non-maleficence, which refers to “doing no harm” to the participants involved in the research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 66). Another principle is the beneficence of research. This ensures that the study must have some benefit either to the participants or to other researchers (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 67). The third principle is that of autonomy. This principle refers directly to the participants and their consent to taking part in the study, on a voluntary basis (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 66).

The purpose of ethics is that the participants welfare is ensured (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 150) and that researchers are accountable to the public (Resnik, 2015: np). It promotes the accuracy, honesty and truthfulness in the conduct of a researchers and their projects (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 151). Ethics is used as a method for guaranteeing respect for the dignity and rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality

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and self-determination (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 152). Ethical considerations also make certain that researchers do not make up data in their publications and that they indicate the limitations that exist in their study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 67).

In the initial phase of data collection in 2017, ethical clearance was provided by the University of Pretoria. All participants were made aware that they were able to leave at any time and they were not coerced into participating. In my use of the data that was collected, I also had to apply for ethical clearance to make use of the data. My reference for the ethical clearance is EDU116/19.

In using this data, I was aware that I also needed to maintain ethical practices. While the raw data included only the student numbers of those who participated, I retained the anonymity of the participants. In Chapter 4 I will only make use of some of the statements from the participants in order to demonstrate my results. I will not use any identifying factors as then privacy would be breached. When presenting the student responses, I will leave out the student numbers of the respondents and will only include a number that I have given them from 1-150. This study also complies with the principle of beneficence, as it contributes to the wider research community. Other researchers could replicate the methods and gain further insight into the historical consciousness of other first-year students in other faculties or universities.

There is an ethical limitation in using students from the researchers own university as participants as it can be seen as a form of coercion (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017:155). Consent to participate in this regard needed to include the right of participants to choose if they wanted to participate or withdraw at any point (Athanasou *et al.*, 2017: 155). It is key that all participants do so on a voluntary basis (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017: 66). At the date of collection for the data, ethical clearance was provided, and all ethical procedures were followed, as mentioned above.

The interpretation of multiple realities has been developed thus, interpretivist researchers should try and understand the “diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures” and try to avoid the bias in studying the events of people with their own interpretations (Pham, 2018). As I was not able to identify the participants in the data set, my own bias did not become a part of the data analysis process with regard to choosing responses to analyse. I also chose the 150

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survey responses at random, before data analysis took place. This was to ensure that I did not exclude responses that I disagreed with.

3.8 Methodological reflection

Reflection is a process that involves experience and uncertainty (Beauchamp, 2006: 9). The process involves key elements such as topics or questions that have emerged as significant, and then creating a dialogue with one's own thoughts (Beauchamp, 2006: 9). It is a monitor for self-growth that accelerates the learning process that an individual goes through (Wang, 2015: 1). It is a technique of thinking about experiences and using them as learning opportunities (Procee, 2006: 237). This process engages individuals in exploring their experiences to lead them to new understandings as they move forward (van der Loo, Krahmer & van Amelsvoort, 2019) in the research process.

The purpose is to ground the research in self-awareness (Procee, 2006: 237) so that the researcher can have a sense of ownership for their practice (Wong, 2016: 2). The basis of reflection is to transform raw experience into meaning-filled theory that is based on experiences (Beauchamp, 2006: 9). Although the reflection process is time consuming it is beneficial in that it increases a researchers effectiveness (Wang, 2015: 1) as they engage in future research endeavours.

The overall aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the historical consciousness of university students, related to the past. The study also aims to define why the historical consciousness developed in the manner that it has. This study is part of a bigger project on Youth and History.

The aspects of the methodology that are well suited to the study are that it is situated in a qualitative research approach and an interpretivist paradigm. The study focuses on the subjective phenomenon that is historical consciousness, related to the past. There is no set theoretical descriptions for what historical consciousness can or cannot include or what experiences affect or arrest its development. The past is viewed subjectively by each individual and so it is important that this study was rooted in the belief that multiple realities and views exist.

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The aspect of the methodology that would be the easiest to replicate would be the survey, with the questions that are asked specifically about the past. Those questions are easy to replicate and issue to participants in future research. Another aspect of the methodology that is easy to duplicate would be the convenience sampling that made use of the first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education, on the Groenkloof campus at the University of Pretoria. Students who meet those criteria are easily available, making the replication of the original data collection method straightforward. Also, I would have the data electronically transcribed in its original condition as this makes the analysis process easier and more time effective.

In choosing a case study research design I realise that there could be some limitations. The study only made use of first-year students for the academic year of 2017. In so doing, the data was not able to show if the historical consciousness portrayed by these participants was an isolated occurrence or if it were just one example that has been chosen, that could exist across multiple contexts, such as other universities or other faculties within the University of Pretoria. The results that this study generated could be specific to this group only, making replication in other contexts more difficult.

Another aspect that made verifying the data difficult was the amount of time that had elapsed between the collection of the data and the publication of this study. The first-year students of 2017 would be in their final year of studies in 2020. Also, with the onset of lockdown due to the spread of the COVID-19 I was unable to set up focus groups or an interview process where further corroborating data could be collected and included. With the analysis I found that the data collected from the survey's yielded rich data that would be sufficient in a master's study of this nature. If I were to go through this process again and not have challenges of access to the students, I would have collected further data to verify the findings of the data from the survey.

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter gives details as to the research design and methodology used in this study. The study made use of a qualitative research approach, an interpretivist research paradigm, with a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology. I also make use of a case study research methodology and data was collected by means of an open-ended survey. This was completed by the students

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enrolled at the Faculty of Education in 2017 on the Groenkloof campus at the University of Pretoria. The study used secondary data analysis to propose answers to the research questions set out in Chapter 1. Furthermore, I have detailed the methods of open-coding using a thematic system to analyse the responses of the first-year students, as mentioned above, to understand their historical consciousness. In Chapter 4 I will make use of a thematic inductive data analysis method to generate results and formulate answers.

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Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the previous chapter was to clarify how I conducted my research from the way in which the data was gathered to the steps that I took to analyse the data within the themes that I generated during the analysis process. Chapter 4 takes a closer look at the results that were generated from that analysis process of Questions 6 and 7 that were selected from a larger study dealing with the youth and history. These results enabled me to generate findings in order to propose answers to the research questions, namely: (1) What is the historical consciousness of first-year university students, in the Faculty of Education as it relates to the past? and (2) Why do these students have the historical consciousness related to the past that they do? The results from the analysis of responses from Questions 6 and 7 were organised thematically to best propose findings to the questions indicated.

The responses were often assigned to multiple themes/categories. It was from the trends and patterns based on the participants' views of the past that I am able to make inferences regarding their historical consciousness. Their views on the past indicate their historical consciousness. The themes were generated from recurring references to certain concepts or to events in the past or present. Examples of these themes are positive improvements in technology, improvements in education, the past as continuity, the past as change, apartheid and others which will be discussed throughout the chapter.

4.2 Data analysis

For the data analysis process, I made use of Question 6 and 7 from the 2017 survey. While the data was collected in 2017, the data cannot be considered outdated because my study began in early 2019. Question 6 asked, "Tell me how do you think the past and present of South African differ from each other?" and Question 7 asked, "Tell me how do you think the past and present of South African are similar?". I analysed the responses to both questions using the same themes, as both questions elicited responses that fitted into the themes that I had generated. In a large number of responses there was applicability to multiple themes. I indicate this by mentioning that

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certain themes are present a certain number of times. This does not mean that the whole response was part of that theme but that a specific section of it could be a part of a theme. This meant that majority of the responses were thematically diverse.

I made use of 150 responses from each question, that is 300 responses in total. The first theme that I will address is the responses that did not have data. Although as mentioned most responses could be categorised across multiple themes, for the sake of the data analysis I will provide excepts from the few responses that only indicate to one theme. I will discuss responses from the broad theme first and then begin to unpack the sub-themes that are related to it. After clarifying responses with no data, I will unpack the themes that followed, keeping like themes together where possible.

4.3 Theme 1: No response

Of the 300 total responses, 11 participants did not provide data. This makes up approximately 3,6 per cent of the total responses. From Question 6, there were four participants who did not respond. From Question 7, there were seven participants who did not provide responses. Of the total number of responses, this represents quite a small number of non-responses. There are a number of reasons why respondents do not answer survey questions. According to Ellis (2015: np), one reason for non-response is that the participant is aware and able to answer the question but they are unwilling, unmotivated or refuse to answer. Another reason might be that the participant did not get to that point in the survey in the allotted time given to complete it. A third possible reason for non-response could also be that the question was seen by the participant but that they chose to skip over it (Ellis, 2015). In relation to the questions themselves, one has to consider why so many of the respondents provided answers to these two questions and yet these respondents did not. This could be an indication that these respondents did not interact with the past and that could also be why they chose not to give a response.

4.4 Theme 2: Inequality and discrimination of the past

This theme deals with responses which indicate that the past was a time of drastic inequality and discrimination. Responses for this theme indicate that the past was characterised by inequality, lack of expression, a lack of democracy, no diversity,

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fewer opportunities in general for people of colour, lack of choice, unequal human rights , language barriers, fewer opportunities, and a lack of platforms for people to air their grievances. In short, the past was rife with discrimination. There is also an indication of a power struggle in the past, some responses indicated this included race, gender or both.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of inequality and discrimination in the past was present 108 times. This theme represents 36,0 per cent of all responses. Respondents expressed that they believed the past to be a time that was rigid, lacked opportunity for expression and people were not as outspoken as in present times. Before 1994, there was a major disparity between the races in terms of their opportunities. In this regard, respondent 008 explained that they felt that in the past South Africans were afforded less civil liberties such as freedom and freedom of expression. S/he also stated that people of colour had less opportunities in the past. Respondent 023 concurred claiming that in the past opportunities were given to certain individuals from particular backgrounds rather than being available to all. There is no indication by the respondent of what particular background individuals had to have in order to have received these benefits although it can be inferred from previous knowledge that it was White people. Respondent 010 took the view that South Africa was less outspoken in the past, which relates directly to freedom of expression. The past is often seen as a time of rigidity and unwillingness to alter thoughts and behaviour despite the looming modern times. Respondent 043's outlook of the past indicated that people were less willing to change than they are now.

For this major theme respondents indicated that they viewed the past as a time of unequal rights and distinctly lacking in platforms for people to voice their grievances. The analysis of the responses for the theme, including those above, of inequality and discrimination of the past found that certain sub-themes emerged as well. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

4.4.1 Race and gender

Race was used during apartheid to stratify society. While political apartheid was dismantled more than 20 years ago, in the few years since then race is still a factor that stratifies our society today. It seems that people have used race as a factor to identify and distinguish themselves from others. Respondents in this study felt that the

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past was a time of inequality based on an individual's race. These inequalities were not detailed, but the respondents justified their responses, saying that it was based on race and/or gender. According to Respondent 141 there was unequal access to resources in South Africa based on race and gender. Respondent 200 echoed this sentiment stating, "There is a lot of racism and sexism", while Respondent 174 understood that there were still people who do not have the privilege to do things because of their skin colour. While this discrimination seems to characterise the past, it seems to still characterise the present to some extent. This is given credence by Respondent 154 who found that the present had more discrimination of races than the past, however the respondent did not indicate the race group(s) discriminated against or how the discrimination plays out. The present is often made to seem like a place where individuals are free to fight against that which they believe to be unjust, unlike in the past. This is a view held by Respondent 150 who offered up the alternative view that in the past the government was a system that does not give a platform to dedicated people regardless of race and/or gender.

4.4.2 Judgement

Respondents felt that the past was characterised by judgement and a lack of open-mindedness. Most of these responses did not indicate how this judgement came about and what it entailed but there were some respondents who did, and this will be discussed in this section. Respondent 016 expressed the sentiment that in the past people were less accepted and judged. In turn, Respondent 040 expressed the view that people in the past were less open minded to new and different things, an outlook that was echoed in the opinion of Respondent 044 who stated that people were less open to differences and change in the past. In addition, the judgements made by respondent 125, hinted at a uni-cultural past by indicating that the past was less diverse and accepting of different types of people and cultures. Respondent 155 took an alternate view in which she saw inequality and judgement as a constant of any context. The respondent goes on to express that personally she faced judgement for being a Black, Afrikaans-speaking woman who was seen as conforming to be liked, not from White Afrikaans-speaking people but from fellow Black people. Her assessment was that the past is very much still a part of the present.

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4.4.3 Lack of empowerment and opportunity

Respondents also held the opinion that the past had a distinct lack of opportunities for people, including empowerment of minority groups. In some cases, the responses indicated for whom and what the nature of the opportunity was that they were being denied. Respondent 023 held the view that the past mostly gave the opportunities to the privileged because not just anyone from any background could become anything they wanted to be. This concurred with Respondent 029's interpretation that in the past in South Africa not everyone had the opportunity to do what they wanted, and this was due to the political system. While these responses were vague and touched on the issue of race indirectly, it was still possible to imply this meaning from the tone. From the perspective of Respondent 227, we can understand that s/he felt that people were not being given opportunities such as not everyone having access to basic education. Respondent 050, who took a clearer stance, was of the opinion that the past found South Africa as a divided nation characterised by a lack of women's rights and no democracy.

4.4.4 Government

The responses from the participating first-year students are categorised by a focus on the role of government in the inequality that pervaded the past. The government of the past was seen as responsible for enacting the bad aspects of the past. The government was given the responsibility for having created that which is seen as negative in the past. There does seem to be some indication that while the past government was seen negatively, there are still negative aspects that have been carried forward into the present government. Respondent 193 interpreted the situation to be that from the past into the present certain government people were still unwilling to listen. Respondent 256 had a somewhat similar view as s/he expressed that there were still unreasonable political wars that took place in South Africa. In this case, Respondent 256 did not express the nature of the political war nor how that manifested in society. Past political wars are inferred to be those which took place between the apartheid government and rebel groups such as the ANC. Respondent 222 took a different perspective and stated that corruption, among other things, is still present.

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Respondent 245 stated in vague terms that generally characterised the views that the government was benefiting selfishly. The respondent did not go into detail about the benefits, but it is clear from their tone and word choice what the sentiment behind the response was. While these benefits were not discussed it was clear that there was some resentment among participating students over the fact that those in government were receiving benefits over others.

4.5 Theme 3: Apartheid and segregation

This theme deals with responses that explicitly mentioned apartheid and/or segregation that took place in the past. While these terms may seem interchangeable, for the purpose of this analysis in this theme, responses either referred to apartheid directly or to oppression and racial tensions or the unfair treatment of Black people in South Africa's past. Responses also mentioned racial discrimination, division and separation.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of apartheid and segregation was present 69 times. This theme represents 23,0 per cent of the responses in some capacity. Below I discuss some of the responses from the theme of apartheid and segregation before I examine the sub-themes that emerged in detail below. Responses under this theme indicate that while racism is a characteristic of the past, it also manifests itself in the present. Respondent 189 assessed that racism was an issue in the past as well as in the present. While Respondent 276 viewed the past as a place that put one type of human over another through race and that in the past this was done by putting White people first over Black people. Respondent 159 took an alternative view in which s/he stated that past South Africa had a lot of discrimination with people being unfairly treated because of their skin colour. S/he stated that this has continued into the present but that it is just not frowned upon anymore. This comment seems out of the typical way of thinking. Most of the respondents saw racism as worse in the present than in the past. Respondent 159 had an interesting take on the matter, stating that according to their understanding racism was not frowned upon now when compared to racism of the past. Respondent 183 echoed this sentiment having stated that apartheid never really fell away, it only switched racial sides.

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The analysis of the responses for the theme, including those above, of apartheid and segregation, found that certain sub-themes emerged as well. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

4.5.1 Racial prejudice and violence

Respondents felt that the past was a time of racism and racial prejudice and that sometimes it was associated with physical and psychological violence. In some instances, according to the respondents, this situation has been perpetuated into the present. In some cases, respondents indicated that the racial prejudice was between White and Black race groups, but they remained vague as to how it was or is enacted. Respondent 216 linked the past and the present in a seeming continuation that stated that there are still prejudices, judgements and hatred and that violence and corruption characterised both the past and present. Respondent 195 had a similar sentiment believing that violent protests still occur in the present and that while apartheid is over there is still racism in South Africa from many people. However, Respondent 195 did not indicate to whom the racism was being directed and who was being racist. Respondent 249 took an interesting perspective in which they stated that from the past to the present both Black and White people experience racism. In addition, s/he stated that people were also still struggling with inner conflict connected to their racial identity. This could be directly proportional to the classification of races that occurred under the apartheid regime; those ideas have bled into our current context and how people now build their racial identity. This is in spite of the fact that race should not play a role since apartheid has been dismantled for more than two decades. Respondent 283 gave a more direct view that expressed that Black people were marginalised and systematically excluded and that this is currently still true.

4.5.2 Racial conflict

Some of the respondents held the view that the past and present consisted of animosity that presented itself in the form of racial conflict. There does not seem to be a clear indication of how this conflict was manifested, only that it seemed to be an underlying discomfort that existed in the past and the present. The over-arching view seems to be that although measures were put into place in the early years of the

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dismantling of apartheid, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), there was an underlying feeling of tension and conflict among the different race groups. Respondent 129 indicated South Africa of the past was obviously full of division and animosity .S/he also indicated that it was their assessment that South Africa was not united socially. The idea of the obvious division is a direct reference, in my view, to the apartheid era. This is supported by Respondent 246 who suggested that some conflict with races has not yet been solved. While these responses indicated tension; between the past and the present, Respondent 245 observed that there is still anger amongst people. While anger seems like an escalation when compared to the other responses, it is clear that overall certain respondents noticed a negative social energy amongst different race groups. These responses also indicated that racial tension was a factor in the past but that it had still carried through to the present and could be manifested as anger and division. Respondent 250 took a slightly different view in that they saw this racial divide as existing between older generations and not necessarily between the students who participated in the study. It is clear that the respondents were not blind to the impact that apartheid had on older generations, and to an extent themselves as they were able to recognise the psychological impact and residual tension that was a result of the past.

4.5.3 Apartheid

A portion of the respondents indicated that a major aspect of the past, in contrast to the present, was that the apartheid regime was in place. Responses in this sub-theme clearly named either apartheid or a form of segregation as what distinguished the past from the present. It was the assessment by Respondent 101 that the past, which s/he classified as more than 70 years ago, was a product of a prejudiced government that appealed to the ideas or a mostly ignorant and conservative nationalist group. It is interesting that the respondent linked the start of apartheid with the winning of the 1948 elections by the National Party. S/he detailed that prejudice was not seen as detrimental to the country's well-being. In this regard, Respondent 124 held the view that more physical separation occurred in the past within institutions like schools, the corporate sector and health. However, Respondent 183 provided an alternate interpretation, similar to a number of other students, that expressed that apartheid did not fall way but that it had merely switched racial sides. While this response does not

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indicate how this switch occurred one can only presume that the respondent was indicating that Black and White racial groups had merely switched positions in terms on the unequal power balance that was seen during apartheid.

4.6 Theme 4: Negative outlook on technology

This somewhat surprising theme deals mainly with a negative outlook towards technology in the past. This theme was linked to ideas of under-development and a negative view of technology. Responses also mentioned the underdeveloped resources and infrastructure of the past, a lack of openness and communication between people, the under-development of the country economically, scarcity of resources, a big income gap, a high level of poverty and the lack of access to information overall.

Of the 300 responses the theme of negative outlook on technology was present 67 times. This theme represents 22,3 per cent of the responses in some capacity. Below are some of the most telling responses from the theme of a negative outlook on technology, which I will discuss before examining the sub-themes that emerged.

There was a strong indication with these responses that South Africa had not had the same exposure to technology. Respondent 003 stated that the past was “not evolved” due to being behind in the digital world. Respondent 015 indicated that South Africa of the past did not have access to the same level of technology that we have in the present and that this impacted the limited access to information and meant that there was no way to facilitate e-learning. Respondent 062 expressed a similar sentiment that the past had less technology, and that people did not connect on a social level. Respondent 087 took the stance that the past was not as developed as the present in terms of technology and that meant that life was somewhat harder because of outdated technology. Respondents clearly correlated the advances that had been made in technology with the technology that was available in the past, although there were only a few who detailed how technology has changed as in the case of Respondent 015.

In my analysis of the responses on the theme of a negative outlook on technology. Including those above, I found that certain sub-themes emerged as well. The respondents perceive poverty and underdevelopment as being the key to what held

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people back in the past. This belief indicates that, to a large extent, people would have been able to achieve better and more if technology had been more advanced as well as if the country was more economically developed. These ideas were not fully explained. The sub-themes that I discovered were:

4.6.1 Lack of technological development

Some of the respondents indicated that the past was characterised by its lack of technology, mostly in comparison to how much technology and access is available in at that time. In this regard, Respondent 003's evaluation was that the past was not as evolved because it was "behind in the digital world". Respondent 015 had a similar sentiment and expressed the view that in the past, South Africa did not have the technology available that gave students the ability to access information and "to know what is going on around them". It was also likewise stated that there was no opportunity for e-learning in the past. Respondent 062 also stated that the past had less technology and that socialising among different people did not occur. I have taken this to mean little socialising occurred across race groups in the past. With prior knowledge on how apartheid legislation separated race groups this opinion seems valid. Elaboration in some responses indicated that socialising outside one's race group could lead to increased exposure to knowledge and events. An explanation of this view lies with Respondent 012 who discussed that technology had not only changed but that technology brings changes between generations.

4.6.2 Underdevelopment of the state

The respondents expressed the sentiment that the country had not developed and/or evolved. There was the indication that there was a clear understanding of where South Africa as a country had fallen short regarding economic and resource development. Most of the responses did not give examples of how this was expressed but some did. For example, Respondent 030 assessed that South Africa was less evolved and less equitable in the past, hinted at political aspects such as those that led South Africa to be less open to change. Respondent 117 had a similar view that the past was not advanced and was equipped with fewer resources. Respondent 170 took a slightly alternate view that the country needed to build a self-sustaining economy. The

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respondents did not seem to make the correlation between lack of resources and development and the sanctions that South Africa experienced during the apartheid years. Respondents also did not explicitly imply the cause of the lack of economic development and whether that was caused in the past or the present.

4.6.3 Poverty

Respondents indicated that while poverty was a major aspect of the past, it had carried forward to the present. There seemed to be the realisation by respondents that poverty and violence may have been a part of the past but that little had occurred to change these circumstances. Respondent 006 explained that in the past South Africa was characterised by a scarcity of resources, poverty and violence and that people did not have the choice of if they could choose to live above the poverty line or not. This may refer to the apartheid regime that dictated skilled and unskilled jobs amongst race groups but without further detail from the respondent it is difficult to speculate. However, Respondent 152 stated that most South African rural areas were developed compared to the past. This seems to be an isolated opinion as Respondent 204 claimed that Black people in our country still struggle with financial issues. This elaborates on what was expressed by Respondent 224 that poverty and unemployment rates in South Africa remain a problem from the past and that too many people are jobless.

4.6.4 Social and cultural barriers

The past was characterised by the respondents as being filled with barriers that prevented people from interacting. There was a lack of opportunity to forge relationships across race groups without discrimination taking place. According to Respondent 098, the past provided less opportunity to build relationships. Respondent 104 held a similar view that people of different races could not be friends or involved in relationships. Respondent 104 went on to refer to the apartheid regime's racial classification laws by stating that mixed race individuals could often be classified in a manner that took them away from their families. However, in what is a recurring theme that links the past and present, Respondent 247 claimed that the past and present both have cultural barriers. Respondent 158 took the unconventional view that people lacked agency in both past and present times and that they were influenced by the

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media so that people's decisions were influenced by what they saw advertised. Respondent 158 also made mention of the fact that South Africa faced discrimination but claimed that the situation would never be solved. While it is difficult to say what the cultural barriers were as they have not been elaborated on by this respondent, I assume that it is linked to the fact that relationships across race groups were discouraged during the apartheid years. This assumption is made based on the other responses that provided this reason in some form.

4.7 Theme 5: Positive outlook on technology.

Theme 5 mainly dealt with a positive outlook towards technology in the past. Responses were linked to development and there was a positive view on technology. There was an indication that due to a lack of technology there was an opportunity for fewer distractions between people and therefore more opportunities to communicate with others. Responses also included that the country was more developed and there was less poverty in the past.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of a positive outlook on technology was present eight times. This theme represents 2,6 per cent of the total responses. Below are some of the responses from the theme of a positive outlook on technology before I discuss the sub-themes that emerged. Respondent 143 stated that the past was a time when technology was not a huge factor in our lives. Respondent 127 echoed this sentiment agreeing that technology had changed the country, because in the past people would talk more and living was slower. The idea of a simpler life in the past was often connected to the differences in technology from the present and the past. However, Respondent 013 assessed that the past had a lot less distractions and that there was less pressure for competition of survival for basic needs. It is unclear what competition of basic needs existed, but this can presumably be linked to the impact of poverty in society today.

In my analysis of the responses for the theme, including those above of a positive outlook on technology, I found that certain sub-themes emerged as well. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

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4.7.1 Developed country

This sub-theme took the position that the past was a time of more economic development in spite of the racial inequalities of the past. Respondent 191 took the stance that we were constantly progressing but that there has always been an underlying struggle for power. It is unclear if this struggle was racial, political, or generational and to whom the "we" was referring. Respondent 166 had a different viewpoint, namely that people still had access to education and resources while some people were still acting in past ways about many things. There seemed to be the idea that while many of aspects of South Africa had moved forward there were still those who lived as though they were in the past. Respondent 068 held the interpretation that the past did not have as wide a range of opportunities because there were less opportunities presented to the youth and there was less social development but that there was more economic development. The ability to make the distinction of the past being both good and bad was one that was not present in many of the responses and so it was interesting to see that the respondent was able to separate these two aspects by using these two examples.

4.7.2 Better social interaction

Most respondents viewed social interaction as being more positive because people were not bombarded by technology as less technology existed in the past . Respondent 148 stated that the past was a time with less technology, which meant that students were able to focus more closely on personal relationships and learning without "modern day distractions". This was echoed in Respondent 021's view that the past was moving at a slower pace, which gave people the opportunity to interact physically. Respondent 021 elaborated that there was less continuous misunderstanding and disruption. There was a recognition by some that the technological generation had been impacted by all the varying forms of technology both positively and negatively in regard to their lives.

4.8 Theme 6: Negative outlook on education

This theme unpacked the respondents negative outlook to education in the past. Respondents indicated that education was more negative in the past: no money being

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was available, standards of education were lower, less people were literate, education was segregated, education was not viewed as being important and limited options were available for studying.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of a negative outlook on education was present 52 times. This theme was present in 17,3 per cent of responses. Below are some of the most illuminating responses from the theme of negative outlook on education before I discuss the sub-themes that emerged. Respondent 002 somewhat erroneously, indicated that in the past there was no importance attached to going to school because most South Africans had no passion for being educated and people were only working at the farms. This sentiment is concurred with in some degree by Respondent 011 who stated that the past was a time when there were not so many things to study in South Africa. There seems to be an indication from respondents that schooling and gaining an education was an aspect of life that only became important in the present: the past seemed to be a time when Black people worked but were seemingly not as concerned with obtaining an education. There may also be reference to Black education during apartheid when the respondents referred to those who worked on the farms. Another issue that was brought up by the respondents was linked to language in schools. Respondent 031 was of the opinion that language was an issue in schools. They believed that as learners were taught in one language, Afrikaans, in the mid-1970s, there was a lack of diversity in the medium of instruction in schools. Respondent 007 stated that there were limited opportunities and career choices in the past

Through my analysis of the responses, I identified various themes and sub-themes regarding the respondents' negative outlook on education. The respondents indicated that the cost of education was so high that the opportunity to obtain an education was low, especially for Black students in the past. It was also indicated that they believed the quality of education was poorer in the past. Some also expressed that Black students received poor quality education and referred specifically to Bantu Education. I found that certain sub-themes were expressed:

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4.8.1 Importance of education

Education seemed to be a divisive topic between the respondents. Respondent 288 took the stance that in both the past and present education was not taken as a number one priority in the country. This view differed somewhat from the views expressed overall in the main theme, as opposed to the main focus which was on cost and quality of education rather than importance. Respondent 002 had a similar opinion in that s/he believed that in the past there was no emphasis placed on the importance of going to school, because most people were working on farms and had no passion for being educated. It can be inferred here that the respondent was talking about the circumstances of Black people and the lack of opportunity given to Black learners to be educated, instead of them focusing on being labourers. It could have referred to the idea that in the past one could acquire menial jobs without an education. Respondent 165 took the stance that education had not changed from the past because many students drop out of school in the present. This statement was not backed up by any further elaboration. It was therefore unclear if the respondent was referring to basic education, higher education or both.

4.8.2 Limited opportunities

In addition to the conflict raised over education, the respondents brought up the question of limited opportunities. The past was seen as having lacked opportunities for people in the past. Respondent 007 indicated that they saw the past as having limited opportunities and thus career choices. There was no elaboration on how this manifested in the past, and it can be deduced that these referenced the fact that Black South Africans were pigeon-holed into certain careers due to their race. In this regard, Respondent 025 commented that South Africans in the past had less access to education. This seems to be a reference to the majority of Black South Africans having been educated differently as a result of the Bantu Education Act. Respondent 105 stated that in the past education was limited to people who could afford an education and that there were fewer places available to go and study. This response referred more to a monetary advantage being intertwined with a racial advantage. Respondent 105 also seemed to indicate that there were fewer venues to receive an education but again there was no indication if this was referring to basic education, higher education, or both. More to the point is the comment from Respondent 113 that the past

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segregation is the cause for only a minority of South Africans being educated. This response, unlike some vague others, gave a direct reference to the apartheid past and its role in the inequality of the past regarding access to education.

4.8.3 Quality of education

Due to the political nature of the South African past, it was possible for the responses to have indicated the differences in the quality of education in comparison to the past. Quality of education was linked to race as with Respondent 215 stating that the past was characterised by people of colour being disadvantaged and that this disadvantage carried through to the present. S/he also presented the understanding that this disadvantage was as a result of historical acts such as Bantu Education and that this affected levels of poverty in the present. Respondent 154 referred to the separation of races in classrooms was due to the understanding that different races could not be in one class together. There were also some statements that seemed more emotional in nature, such as Respondent 114's, which indicated that, in the past, learning was held against students, specifically Black students and s/he stated that this kind of education was not used to empower these students. In an alternative assessment of the past Respondent 031 noted that the medium of instruction in schools was less diverse in the past with pupils having to adhere to one certain language.

4.9 Theme 7: Positive outlook on education

This theme deals with the positive outlook of responses about education in the past. There was an indication that the standard of education was better, fees for education were provided for and literacy was better. The respondents also indicated how important education was.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of positive outlook on technology was present 22 times. This theme was present in 7,3 per cent of responses. Below are some of the responses on the theme of positive outlook on education before I discuss the sub-themes that emerged. There seemed to be a strong focus in the responses on the broad theme that zoned in on the importance of education and the advantage that this brings to people's lives. Respondent 205 stated, "We still need an education to survive and to be more informed…we need to be literate in order to be taken more seriously".

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This respondent did not state how this translated into the present context. Respondent 188 viewed the past and the present as similar because education was used to sharpen the future and minds. This statement seemed slightly idealistic but based on the fact that the respondents were 18-year-old first-year students, this stance may not be out of character for a respondent of this nature. There was also Respondent 156 who understood that education was and is a priority in South Africa. Respondent 046 had the view that education has always remained important. These claims seem to be in line with the general consensus that education allows people certain advantages.

My analysis of the responses on the theme of a positive outlook on education found that sub-themes emerged as well. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

4.9.1 Importance of education

A large number of the respondents in this sub-theme understood the past as a time when education was valued, and that this ideal was kept the current context. For example, Respondent 046 viewed the past as a time when education was important and that this has continued into the future. Respondent 205 stated that from the past to the present, education was needed in order to survive. While the word choice was emotional, it could be linked to the view that education is a tool used by individuals to provide for themselves economically. It was unclear what the respondent meant when they mentioned survival and the link it had to education. It is possible to assume that the respondent was connecting survival to poverty and in that role education was seen as a way of escaping poverty. In a similar line of thinking, Respondent 157 stated that in both the past and the present education was the main focus. Respondent 156 was of the understanding that education was and is the nation's first and fore most priority. Respondent 075 saw education as being taken seriously. Going further into detail about the past and the manner in which children respect older people and do not do as they please. These responses stated that education was important but there was almost no unpacking or justification from respondents as to why the respondents viewed education as very important.

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4.9.2 Quality of education

Quality of education was a topic that divided respondents. Respondents indicated that education did not have the same quality as it had in the past. According to the respondents, education quality had improved over time and the outcome it had for those who received the education. An example of this is Respondent 051's stance that the past there was an education system that was not the same and referred to their parent's generation (and older) as not having access to the same level of information that the current generation did in terms of teachers, lectures and internet access. While Respondent 285 took the view that the education sector in both the past and the present had the goal of creating professionals for South Africa, the idea that education did not qualify people as professionals was interesting as well as the idea that basic education was not seen as enough by the respondents to be qualified as a professional, an individual needed to attend tertiary education.

4.10 Theme 8: Approval of the past

Theme 8 dealt with the minority of responses that considered the past as better than the present. The past was seen as having been good. This can be full or partial approval. Expression also took the form of nostalgia, endorsement of past events, agreement with the past, celebration, or longing for past times. Responses indicated that the past was safer the present and that politics were better.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of approval of the past was present 19 times. This theme represents 6,3 per cent of responses. Below are some of the responses from the theme of approval of the past. The past was considered idealistically with aspects of the past such as service delivery being seen as better in the past . In this regard, Respondent 086 took the view that the past had better quality basic services. While Respondent 081 stated that the past had less political and cultural problems, it is unclear what the respondent meant by cultural and political problems as they did not elaborate in this regard. Respondent 032 held that the past was a time that experienced less political-based drama and had more organisation, while in an alternate take, Respondent 067 took the view that the past was less corrupt, and that people had more trust and faith in their fellow South Africans. S/he also claimed that although the unity was forced in the past it was more efficient for humanity. The idea that apartheid and unity is coupled together is an interesting view on the past as this

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outlook is the more uncommon. An outlook on the past as a whole is that politically South Africa was less corrupt and had less political drama than at present. I do believe however that this could be an overarching view of the past which sees it as easier and less complicated in a generalised sense.

The analysis of the responses for the theme, including those above, of approval of the past, found that certain sub-themes emerged as well. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

4.10.1 Crime

Crime that took place socially and on a governmental level as issues that permeated not only the past but the present as well, such as corruption. Both versions of crime were mentioned a similar number of times, with some responses having mentioned both. Respondent 120 was of the opinion that politics were lies that got worse each day and that the past had less corruption and crime. Respondent 120 elaborated that the past was characterised by lower crime levels, corruption was not as frequent as in the present, the economy was in better shape and buildings were less dilapidated. Respondent 005 held the overall view that the past had less crime. The past was seen as a time when crime affected people's lives less than it did in the present although the responses did not go into much detail about the nature of the crimes being perpetrated.

4.10.2 Government, politics and corruption

The past was conveyed as a time when economically South Africa may have shown more development, but there seemed to be a divide between respondents who said that the past featured either more or less crime than the present. Respondent 108 stated that South Africa was quite drastically worse 20 years before. S/he claimed that while the state of the country was better than during apartheid, it was the aspect that made those times worse. It was unclear from a lack of elaboration how the country was worse in the past regardless of economic development. Respondent 086 viewed the quality of basic services as being better in the past. There was a sense communicated across responses that people were provided for better in the past with better provision of basic services and infrastructure. Respondent 081 stated that the

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past was a time of less political and cultural issues. However, this respondent did not elaborate on the nature of the political and cultural issues. Respondent 033 assessed that the past was a time when the streets were safe and there was very little corruption, because “our government did not steal our money in the past and religions were persecuted less”. Religious persecution did not factor into the respondent’s discussion, especially compared to the frequency of racial persecution that was mentioned. Respondent 032 gave her/his interpretation that the past had less political drama and was more organised. In a political sense, overall, the respondents seem to have the perspective that people were better off in the past in terms of corruption and peoples view of the government. There seemed to be a separation between apartheid and the way government functioned in the responses by the first-year students.

4.10.3 Quality of life

The responses in this sub-theme came across as less logically and more emotionally justified. There were only a few responses that provided justification for the perspectives held by respondents on the quality of life offered by the past. In this case Respondent 075 assessed the past as a time when people were passionate about life. While Respondent 179 interpreted that back then everyone was striving for the best, there was the idealism of people striving to achieve better. In my opinion, it is possible to sense some distancing from the past by the of use language that refers to it as “back then”.

4.11 Theme 9: Distancing from the past

This theme deals with responses that indicated a need for people to distance themselves from the past because of their negative view of it. Responses noted that the past was a negative time. There was an indication and/or a mental separation between the people of today and people back then. The past was seen as evil, dangerous, dark, fear-filled, brutal and ugly. These responses could also indicate shame about the past.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of distancing from the past was present 17 times. This theme was present in 5,6 per cent of responses. Below are some of the responses

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from the theme of distancing from the past before I discuss the sub-themes that emerged in detail. This overarching theme suggests that the past was a time that was far removed from the present, with Respondent 014's view that in the past South Africa was dangerous. While there was no elaboration on this particular response it is possible to infer danger due to the treatment of Black people during apartheid. In addition, Respondent 169 found that both past and present were filled with criticism, hate, wars and less understanding of others culture and religion. There seemed to be an idea that the past had more conflict because there were more aspects of culture and religion that were considered taboo. This idea communicated a level of enlightenment and acceptance that had developed into the present and future. In the case of Respondent 102, the past was remembered as a dark time with more hate and anger. However, Respondent 083 had an alternate opinion, saying that South Africa was a complex country that was hurting. The idea of hurting implied to me that the trauma of this hurt had been kept alive from the past and had been left as an unresolved issue to be dealt with in today's context.

In my analysis of the responses for the theme, including those above, of distancing from the past. I found that certain sub-themes emerged. The sub-themes that were expressed were:

4.11.1 Brutality

Because apartheid saw the mistreatment of Black South Africans and anti-apartheid White South Africans, it seems reasonable that the past would be seen as brutal. The opinion can be held that brutality was part of the past so as to keep certain ideals and a particular system intact. Respondent 169 stated that the past and present were filled with criticism, hate, wars and less understanding of culture and/or religion. While Respondent 104 held the view that not every child had the opportunity to receive an education because of their skin colour, and it was a time when people of mixed races could not be friends, be involved in relationships or classified as family members. Respondent 104 continued that war was common, and hatred thrived amongst the nation. As the respondent did not give a time frame, it was difficult to be able to know how far back they were looking and so determine the way they referred to the past. In a slightly different vein. Respondent 035 understood the past to be brutal and

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concealed and that there was less affirmative action and inequalities and less diversification. The idea of concealment is an interesting one. The respondent could have been referring to a number of things such as how South Africa concealed apartheid from the outside world, anti-apartheid protests or the concealment of the brutality that took place during those years. Similarly, Respondent 024 saw the past as being horrible for some. In this instance the "some" referred to could be Black South Africans.

4.11.2 Shame and the negative past

The past was seen through a lens of shame as the events of the past were often compared to the standards we abide by in the present, as in the case of Respondent 102 who stated that the past was remembered as a dark time with more hate and anger. Respondent 083 took the stance that South Africa was a complex country that was hurting. It is assumed that the hurt that was mentioned could be the resentment that still existed from the past that was not dealt with entirely by projects such as the TRC and others of the same nature. Respondent 071's view was that South Africans were less prideful and felt shame in their nationality. The idea of shame could be that South Africans come from a country that committed gross human rights violations close to the coming of the new millennium compared to the forward thinking and equal rights implemented globally at that point. Respondent 069 stated that the past was ugly where people from different races could not mix with each other. The idea of the ugly past illustrates the need by respondents to feel shame and look away from the past.

4.12 Theme 10: The past as continuity into the present

The respondents interpreted the past as a continuation of the same or similar events with no major changes occurring over time. Respondents discussed that the events that occurred in the present context of the respondents were similar to those that had occurred in the past. The present that the respondents experienced would have been up until 2017, when this data was collected, even though theoretically this is a fluid term. Events continued through the past and into the present in a perpetual manner.

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Of the 300 responses the theme of the past as continuity was present 45 times. This represents 15, per cent of the responses. Below are some of the responses from the theme of the past as continuity before I discuss the sub-themes that emerged in detail. Claims by the respondents were often unsubstantiated and seemed emotional in nature. Statements varied in that some held the view that there was no difference between past and present while others indicated a minimal difference. Respondent 111 stated that there was no difference and that the present was much like the past with only a few variations. There was no indication from the respondent as to what form these variations might take. Respondent 106 found that there was no difference between the past and the present and that both were characterised by indecencies done behind closed doors. Some respondents indicated that the past and the present showed little to no difference due to the fact that there were still major societal problems at play. Respondent 088's interpretation was that the past and present and found that both did not differ that much and that this was because the same problems that permeated the past were still real threats in present day South Africa. These problems seem to be environmental, social and generalised rather than personal. From my analysis of the responses for the theme the past as continuity certain sub-themes emerged. These are:

4.12.1 Continuance of injustices

Injustice was a recurring sub-theme in which the respondents indicated that they understood the past to be a time of injustice because nothing had changed, and those injustices continued into the present. Responses in this sub-theme did not seem to indicate specifically what the injustices were. Often it was referred to in a generalised manner or under an umbrella term such as social inequality. For example, Respondent 088 explained that s/he honestly thought that the past and the present were similar and that the same problems that beset the past were threatening contemporary South Africa. What these problems could be were hinted at by Respondent 108. While arguing that there was no difference between the two temporal settings, the overall opinion was that a multitude of indecencies were being done behind closed doors. The response of Respondent 132 brought greater clarity to the argument of similarity by linking being South African to being stuck in a vicious cycle of social inequalities and arguing that there may not be a way to change who we are as South Africans.

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However, Respondent 132 held that change was only seated in the individual and how they treated the world and their fellow human beings.

4.12.2 Consistency of governmental and societal elements.

Some of the respondents in the study indicated that governmental and societal elements had remained a constant from the past into the present. As an example of this, Respondent 003 explained that the youth still came together for common goals both in the past and the present, such as during the student protests that occurred during apartheid and the #FeesMustFall protests in 2016. Respondent 010 expressed that South African values remained the same as they had been in the past. The respondent did not indicate what values they were referring to and so I am unable to establish which values related to how different people were during the apartheid years from how they were in the present. Concurring with this argument, Respondent 012 stated that cultural aspects had also remained the same across time.

4.13 Theme 11: The past as change

This theme deals with the belief that everything that happened in the past was completely different from the present. Responses indicated that nothing had stayed the same in the past when compared to the present.

Of the 300 responses, the theme of the past as change was present five times. This represents 1,6 per cent of the responses. Below are some of the responses from the theme of the past as change. These respondents were emphatic in their views that the past held no similarity to the present in any way. Respondent 260 stated that that the past and present were not similar. Similarly, Respondent 210 held the view that past, and present were not similar because things that were happening nowadays are a disgrace. They mentioned the chaos in Parliament. Respondent 192 was of the opinion that there was no similarity in culture from the past to the present. Respondent 167 gave her/his evaluation that there were no similarities and that they thought much had changed.

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Through the analysis of the responses for this theme, there were no sub-themes that emerged. These responses only made it clear that nothing remained similar to the past.

4.14 Theme 12: Acceptance of the past

This theme deals with indications of acceptance for the past. This response acknowledges the negativity of the past but indicates that moving forward was more important.

Of the 300 responses the theme of acceptance of the past was present once. This represents in 0,33 per cent of responses. Below is the response and discussion of this theme.

Through the analysis of the response for this theme, a sub-theme emerged. The sub-themes relate to blaming apartheid and making peace with no resolution. This respondent indicated that they had made peace with the past with regard to the idea that the past can never find 100 per cent resolution. There was also mention that the current context cannot always be blamed for that which happened during apartheid. Respondent 018 stated that many mistakes took place in the past and that people often still lived in the past and used apartheid as an excuse for almost everything. This respondent felt that the key to a fair and bright future would be to embrace the past so that it could be learned from because the wrong done in the past could not always be resolved and concluded by stating that they believed that this was okay.

4.15 General findings

From the analysis of the above themes and sub-themes, it is possible to make a number of general findings from what has been gleaned on the historical consciousness of the first-year education students who were respondents.

(a) Racial discrimination and related inequality is omnipresent in the past. If the themes are looked at in terms of their frequency, it is possible to make assumptions as to the themes that make up the historical consciousness of the first-year students, namely that a large number based their historical consciousness on inequality and discrimination while only a small number focused on the past as change or accepting

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the past. A large number of the responses viewed the past as being a time characterised by inequality on the basis of gender and race, lack of empowerment, racial prejudice, apartheid and violence.

(b) Historical consciousness of the past is mostly negative from a presentist position. More respondents focused on the negative outlook of certain themes than the positive. The negative outlook on education and technology had greater response frequency than the positive outlook on education and technology themes. This gives an indication as to how the respondents saw the past from their presentist position as 18- to 20-year-olds. In this regard I can say that a large majority saw the past as a dark and backward time where there was a poor quality of education, a lack of technology and a lack of forward thinking in regard to race, gender equality and human rights.

(c) Historical consciousness of the past was strongly related to the present and experiences of the present. Respondents were able to make connections and see causation when referencing events of the past and relative events of the present. In some instances, the respondents were able to make causative connections such as evolved human rights that were afforded to all in a present context due to the fact that apartheid was abolished more than 20 years ago.

(d) The first-year students had strong emotional feelings about the past as a negative time. A large number of the respondents made strong emotional statements but only a few would unpack and explain with historical evidence or unpack their ideas further. It is difficult to know if this is from a lack of being able or willing to substantiate their statements. While this could have been clarified with interviews, due to COVID-19 I was unable to organise interviews of this nature. There were almost always strong opinions of the past but there was little data given to support their views.

(e) The responses were dominated by race, whether racial prejudice, racial tension or direct references to apartheid as some examples showed. Race was a sub-theme that was present across four major themes, namely inequality and discrimination, apartheid and segregation, negative outlook on technology and distancing from the past . Due to its high frequency of occurrence, it is possible to see the effect that race still has on the lives of these first-year students. It was also one of the boundaries that seemed to situate the historical consciousness of the respondents. It seems as though the respondents saw race as a factor that continued to influence society despite living in

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a context where the “rainbow nation” should exist. The legacy of apartheid for this group seems to be that there is still a lingering of race as a main aspect of present South African society.

(f) The first-year education students were working with the contemporary past in historical terms. The responses had a strong focus on the recent past, with very few looking beyond the previous 20 to 25 years of South Africa’s history. There did not seem to be any engagement with the distant past, the strong focus seemed to be from 1948 onwards. The first-year students seemed to ignore the more distant past in a temporal sense when building their historical consciousness. There also seemed to be a strong focus only on South Africa’s recent past with little reference to anything outside of the country. The responses could also be viewed as having conflated the present and the past to some extent.

(g) The respondents did not draw on the past to present their version of a futuristic forward-looking future. They also did not seem to analyse the future in tangible terms. As future teachers, it seems as though these first-year students were prisoners of the past that they were not born into. The past acts as a kind of pre-existing present. The use of language seemed somewhat dreamy, optimistic, and idealistic when looking towards the future. The past is viewed as something to leave behind so as to try and achieve this “golden” future but without any sort of indication of a plan to move closer to this ideal future.

(h) The past is an inherited legacy that the first-year students found hard to shake off. While these events were important to the respondents I do not see a need from them for retribution but rather to escape the legacy that still exists, by making the country more developed. This may be because when the respondents indicated that racial tension still existed they seemed to reference the fact that this affected mostly the older generations. Most of the respondents have the opinion that the racial tension of the past only affects them because of the effect that it had on the older generation. There seems to be an underlying need from the first-year students to escape this past even though they are not able to do so. It seems that for them there is none of this tension amongst the younger generations. In the case of the respondents, this seems to be through the improvement of quality and access to education and technology.

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(i) The respondents held the view that the past was what it was and that it could not necessarily be changed. As first-year students and prospective teachers, there could be a longing and therefore romanticisation of the past that they perceived as being better than the present. The emergence of the theme approval of the past was a surprise. I was taken aback by the discovery that some respondents felt that the past was better than the present. These respondents justified why they held this view by stating reasons such as less prevalence of crime and corruption. Respondents also discussed that the quality of life that people had in the past was better due to good service delivery and development of infrastructure.

4.16 Conclusion

This study set out to explain what the historical consciousness of the first-year university students was as well as to try and discover how it came to be this way. The findings that will be made in Chapter 5 will be based on the results from the careful analysis of the data. The data made use of the responses from two questions, from the 2017 survey, that referenced the past. These responses were then organised thematically, based on themes that I generated during the analytic process. In some instances, these themes were separated further so as to have a positive and negative designation. The responses were then analysed according to these themes so as to develop sub-themes. This analysis led to some general findings that included the overall nature of the historical consciousness of the first-year Faculty of Education students. Overall, there seemed to be a negative focus on the past and an oversimplified and highly optimistic view of the present and future in comparison.

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Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion to the study

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I unpacked the data analysis and was able to come to findings and correlate to existing studies from the literature. In this chapter I will give a reflection of the study overall. I will start with a review of each chapter in my study and then discuss the research findings and provide proposed answers to the research questions. This study set out to answer two research questions: (1) What is the historical consciousness of first year university students, in the Faculty of Education, as it relates to the past? and (2) Why do these students have the historical consciousness related to the past that they do? I will then provide my personal and professional reflection on the study and finally I will draw a conclusion to the study.

5.2 Review of the study

This section provides an overall summary of the study. I will briefly re-examine and explain what each chapter has covered, highlighting key aspects of each chapter.

Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the study. In this chapter, I provided an overview of the contemporary background and context for my study. This section focused on the effects of the legacy of apartheid on South African youth. I discussed the lack of sufficient change to South Africa at length, specifically with regard to the higher education sector. I went on to unpack the views of the older generation towards the youth and the tensions that manifested resulting in events such as the #FeesMustFall protests. I rounded off this section by referring to the COVID-19 pandemic and how this affected students across the country.

Later in this chapter I discussed my rationale and motivation for undertaking this study, unpacked the focus and purpose of it and stated the research questions. I then provided a brief overview of what was to follow in Chapters 2 and 3. Lastly, I briefly indicated the theoretical framework that I used to understand the main theoretical parameters of my study.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature related to my research topic. First, I unpacked the function of a literature review then discussed, my methodology for gathering my literature. After I had gathered my literature from the sources I had discussed, I chose

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to organise the review thematically. I generated for main themes and also included a fifth covering previous studies.

The themes for the review included, what historical consciousness is, how is historical consciousness is formed, the impact of historical consciousness on people's lives and historical consciousness and the past. The fifth section included results from previously conducted studies. This was divided into various subsections, namely studies regarding school children, international studies regarding university students and regional studies regarding university students.

In Chapter 3, I described and gave the reasoning for my choices of the research design and methodology for the study. These choices were made so as to provide possible answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

This study is a qualitative case study. It is informed by an interpretivist research paradigm, a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology because of the subjective nature of historical consciousness and what each individual constitutes as "the past".

My study made use of secondary data analysis of a survey that had been conducted in 2017 by Professors Wassermann and Vandeyar as part of a larger project dealing with youth in education. For my study, I made use of Question 6: Tell me, how do you think the past and present of South Africa differ from each other? and Question 7: Tell me, how do you think the past and present of South Africa are similar? I selected these questions as they dealt directly with the past. Seven hundred surveys were completed, but for the purpose of my study I chose to use 150 responses from each question which totalled 300 responses. The original sample for the survey in 2017 consisted of the first-year, Faculty of Education students who had enrolled at the University of Pretoria. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling method.

In describing my data analysis, I made use of an inductive, open-coding technique to generate my own themes as I analysed the data. After selecting the 300 responses, I hand-coded each response to the relevant theme. The responses were often applicable to multiple themes and so each response had to be coded in this way. Lastly, I detailed how my study guaranteed trustworthiness, ensured that ethical considerations were adhered to, and I reflected on the methodological choices I had made.

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In Chapter 4, I engaged with the data analysis so that I could generate findings from previously conducted studies as well as posed answers to the two research questions. I presented the data thematically according to the themes I had created during the analysis process.

Within each theme I gave a description of that theme. I then presented how many times the theme manifested itself within the responses. Thereafter I discussed responses from the main theme and what these responses indicated. Each theme had multiple sub-themes and each of these was discussed and the responses from each sub-theme were unpacked. General findings were discussed last, stating what I had gleaned about the historical consciousness of the first-year education students.

Chapter 5, the current chapter, serves as the conclusion to the study

5.3 Discussion of the research findings

This section discusses the findings of the previous chapter in relation to the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2 and the theory reviewed in Chapter 1.

A major finding of my study is that the first-year education university students have an in-depth historical consciousness that is related to the past, specifically South Africa's recent past. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, there seems to be the belief among the older generation in South Africa and across the world that the youth do not know history. This was also made clear in the report by the Ministerial Task Team, as mentioned in Chapter 1, which stated, "the democrats were shocked at the lack of historic consciousness amongst the youth" (Ndlovu et al, 2018: 7). This was a sentiment that was also mentioned in the study by Angier in 2017 in which it was widely held that "kids don't know history", at least in the historical detail that politicians and other concerned adults seem to expect of them (Angier, 2017: 165). This is but partially true as the third finding mentioned in the previous chapter stats that the first-year students' historical consciousness of the past showed that they were able to make connections and see causation when referencing events of the past and relative events of the present. In some instances, the respondents were able to make causative connections, although they might not have been able to recall factual details of history as is done in the official discipline of the subject. An example of this type of connection involved human rights that are afforded to all in the present context due to

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the fact that apartheid existed and was abolished more than 20 years ago. In analysing these responses, it is very clear that the youth have thought about, rationalised and used the past in shaping not only who they are but how they want to change their present society, albeit an unrealistic change. This undermines the claims made by those older generations in power that there is no connection for the youth to the past. These youths clearly used the past as a framework for their historical consciousness and not the condensed and chosen facts offered by history.

With reference to the above and as stated in Chapter 2, Rüsen developed four types of historical consciousness. These four types can be correlated to the themes that were present in the data.

The first type of historical consciousness is the traditional type. This form of historical consciousness supports the continuity of fixed and unchanging moral obligations, without acknowledging any significant change over time (Sexias, 2004: 22). It manifests itself in the responses that fall into Theme 10, the past as continuity into the present. Responses for this theme indicated that to a large extent the respondents did not see a change from the past to the present. This can also be seen in the sub-theme that was expressed relating to the consistency of governmental elements such as laws. This is also consistent with one of the sub-themes that came under Theme 8, that is approval of the past, namely in government, politics and corruption. This sub-theme also touched on the role of government and politics of the past albeit in a more positive light. These, I believe, also tied into the “unchanging moral obligations” that constitute this type of historical consciousness.

The second type of historical consciousness is the exemplary type. The exemplary type is a form of historical consciousness that draws on particular events and people from the past as a source of cultural universals which apply across the change of time, as in the celebratory history of heroes to inspire strong characteristics in the present (Sexias, 2004: 22). This type manifests itself in the responses for Theme 2, inequality and discrimination and Theme 3, apartheid and segregation. In this instance, I believe that these themes are used to promote ideals that will not repeat the events of the past. This can also be linked to the sub-themes that came about. In teaching about apartheid and discrimination there is the goal of promoting attitudes against racism, racial conflict and moving forward from what the respondents say is the “primitive

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past". This also concurs with the finding from Chapter 4 which found that the responses were dominated by race, with many of the respondents mentioning apartheid directly. The themes with the highest frequency were Theme 2 and Theme 3. This is an indication that for a vast majority of the respondents the racial inequality of the past makes up a large section of what they use to build their historical consciousness that is related to the past.

The third type of historical consciousness is the critical type. The critical type is a form of historical consciousness that turns to the past in order to break from it (Sexias, 2004: 22). An example of this type is to look at events of women's history and use this as a way of undoing oppressive gender relations within the present context. This type manifests itself in the responses in Theme 4, negative outlook on technology, Theme 6, negative outlook on education and Theme 9, distancing from the past. These themes fit within this type as they serve as an example of what existed before and how it has to change within the present context. Within Theme 9, distancing from the past, it is clear that those events are best left in the past. This was clearly illustrated through the sub-themes that emerged, namely the brutality of the past as well as the danger and fear experienced. Another of the general findings from the previous chapter also stated that the respondents viewed the past as what has come to pass cannot be changed. The respondents who have a historical consciousness that matches this type saw the past from a negative point of view and aimed to change the future, although these changes might have been conveyed in an unrealistic and romanticised manner.

The fourth type of historical consciousness is the genetic type. This type is a form of historical consciousness in which the ongoing legacy of the past is used to comprehend the radically changed present (Sexias, 2004: 22). This type manifests itself in the responses for Theme 7, positive outlook on education, Theme 5, positive outlook on technology, Theme 11, the past as change and Theme 12, acceptance of the past. These themes indicated that these aspects of present-day life were in a worse state in the past but moving forward they had improved. Responses that indicate everything being changed from the past show how far the effects of the past have pushed the events of the present to change so dramatically. This type also matches the general finding made in Chapter 4 which found that the respondents were still feeling the effects of the past as it had become an inherited legacy that they were

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experiencing. Although they found the present difficult and had to work through this legacy I found no need for the respondents to have retribution for the past.

Being able to apply all four types of Rüsen's historical consciousness to the first-year education students, shows me that they constructed a diverse and personal historical consciousness of the South African past.

Connected into the idea that the first-year students have a personal narrative of the past also brings to the forefront that the youth may not use history to build their historical consciousness but rather the past. As discussed in Chapter 1, the past includes all the experiences of people since time began (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 12). When the past is modified and processed there is no guarantee that what remains is important, the largest, most representative, or the most enduring parts of the past (Furay & Salevouris, 2000: 14). This was clear in most of the responses. Aspects of school history that were viewed as the most important by the older generations were not necessarily what the first-year education students had used to construct their historical consciousness at that point. These students did not have the same exposure to school history in the same manner: they had experiences based on the past that they had been told about and their experiences of their own past. This can be seen as the interplay between unofficial history and the development of the historical consciousness of these students.

A firm finding in the previous chapter was that racial discrimination and related inequality is omnipresent in the past of the first-year respondents. When the themes are analysed in terms of frequency, it is possible to make assumptions as to the themes that make up the historical consciousness of the first-year students. A large number based their historical consciousness on inequality and discrimination. The study conducted by Pirola da Conceição and de Fátima Sabino Dias (2011: 184-185) found that the most frequently mentioned themes in their study included: violent European occupation, Latin America being underdeveloped, technology and the arrival of Europeans. The findings in their study can be similarly aligned to the themes in my study. These findings coincide with the fact that in my study the responses also discussed the under-development or progression of economic development, technology and the violent past of South Africa. A second finding in the Latin American study (a Global South setting not totally dissimilar to South Africa's) was that these

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narratives indicated that for the students the colonisation process in Latin America was extremely violent and it has left marks in the present (Pirola da Conceição & De Fátima Sabino Dias, 2011: 185). Respondents in my study also made clear reference to the fact that the apartheid past as a form of internal colonisation was violent and that they saw the marks it left on their society. This is also echoed by the finding that a majority of the first-year Faculty of Education students built their historical consciousness on themes related to racial inequality in the past and apartheid.

Similarly in the study conducted by Wassermann, it was found that the narratives of respondents as university students, tended to focus on apartheid and in that instance the respondents gave detailed accounts (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 6). The study was also able to make the finding that ideas of race, ethnicity and other history are deeply embedded in young South Africans (Wassermann, J. , 2018: 7). In relation to my study, I found that respondents chose a South African historical theme in their responses. The narratives in the Wassermann study were characterised by South African political figures of the past and were written using a South African setting that identified the time period under discussion. The majority of the replies in my study were centred around aspects related to South Africa by describing the South African past using words and phrases that situated the responses. Throughout my analysis of these responses, there was no reference to Africa and only one reference to America.

A fourth finding was that the first-year education students had strong emotional feelings rather than deep factual knowledge about the past as a negative place. A large number of the respondents made strong emotional statements but only a few unpacked, explained or gave justification with historical facts. There were almost always strong opinions of the past but there was little data given to support their views. I got the sense that these students felt that the past was a part of the present. In the 2018 study conducted by Wassermann, it was concluded that the narratives of the respondents seemed to be free of specifics (2018: 7). This according to Wassermann, does not mean that the students did not know history but rather that they had a more personal version outside of the officially prescribed CAPS curriculum (2018: 7), a version which was based on the unofficial history that they learnt outside of school. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, historical consciousness does not need an academic level of history and/or the past to be able to be developed. While the youth

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may not have had a detailed academic knowledge of history, they were clearly able to connect with a narrative of the past that was personal to them.

A further noteworthy finding was that the first-year education students were working with the contemporary past in historical terms. Their responses had a strong focus on the recent past, with very few looking beyond the last 20 to 25 years of South Africa's history. There did not seem to be any interaction with the distant or deep past. The strong focus seemed to be from contemporary history, with 1948 and onwards being a key temporal maker. This marker corresponds with living memory of the older generations as well as the official history in the CAPS curriculum. In the study by Wassermann in 2018, a finding was that the majority of the responses were focused on the previous 20 years of history, with very few making mention of events going further back than that. I believe that this occurred because the youth focused their views of the past mostly on the events of the recent past in South Africa instead of focusing outwardly. This is also a negative consequence of not understanding the long arch of history. Overall, this can be both negative and positive. In a positive regard the students were focused and cared about the events of the recent past that shaped their country and their own lives more directly. However, from a negative stance it is concerning as it is natural to compare one's circumstances to that of others. Also, in referencing other countries, it shows that the students were aware of the outside world, which in this case they lacked. The events of the recent past formed a large part of the respondents' historical consciousness of the past. This aligns with the findings of the study by Van Beek which also found that contemporary South African history remains in the foreground and apartheid still features prominently in historical consciousness (Van Beek, 2000: 347). These findings also correlate with the Merzliakova et al (2017: 397) study that which concluded that the role of contemporary history was large, as its significance had been transformed in status by young people. This study also found that the historical consciousness of the Russian students was orientated towards the present, with interest in current events being focused mainly on their country (Merzliakova, Linchenko & Ovchinnikova, 2017:397). This finding was also relevant to the findings of my study as one of the boundaries of the first-year students' historical consciousness was there was a majority of students whose sole focus was the South African past, although in my study the first-year students

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orientated themselves from the present to look back on the past and move towards the future.

The responses of the first-year prospective teachers were dominated by race. First year-teachers are still malleable and discovering how to approach sensitive issues. With race being an issue that is still very raw for many of the youth aged 18 to 19 years, it is bound to influence the younger generation and these respondents will ultimately teach and have their students become aware of the racial tensions that still exist in the present. Race was a dominant sub-theme that was present across four major themes, namely inequality and discrimination, apartheid and segregation, negative outlook on technology and distancing from the past . It was also one of the boundaries that seemed to situate the historical consciousness of the respondents. It seems as though the respondents saw race as a factor that continues to influence society today despite living in a context where the “rainbow nation” should exist. The legacy of apartheid for this group seems to be that there is still a lingering of allowing race to be a main aspect of present South African society.

In addition, the past is an inherited legacy that the first-year students found hard to shake off. While the events of the recent past were important to the respondents, I see a need from them to escape the legacy that still exists, by developing the country. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that the racial tension of the past only affected them because of the effect that it had on the older generation. The need to escape the past, even though they were unable to do so, is due to the fact that the past is omnipresent in all aspects of their lives. The respondents took the stance that through the improvement of quality and access to education, the economy, social relations and technology, South Africa would be greatly improved. This finding backs up the literature from Chapter 2 which discusses historical trauma and the surge in demand for reparations and apologies (Sexias, 2004: 866). This process involves individuals looking back at the past to compensate for the shortcomings of the present (Sexias, 2004: 866). This finding also correlates to the Van Beek study. In this study, I have the overwhelming impression that the feelings of the respondents were not those of pent-up anger but a want to remember the disturbing past so that they could learn from it and move on (2000: 351).

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Another finding that I can make is that crime, corruption and governmental dissatisfaction seem to be frequent sub-themes in my study and in others as well. This ties in with one of the findings in the Kwang-Su study which was discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The Kwang-Su study also found that there was general dissatisfaction with the crime situation (Kwang-Su, 1999: 249). In this regard, the first-year respondents in my study seemed more appreciative of the less frequent crime and corruption that took place in the past versus in the present. These sub-themes presented themselves in Theme 8, approval of the past, in which the past was seen by some of the first-year students with no direct lived experience of it, as having been better when compared to the present.

There were also some findings that did not correspond with the literature or theory from the previous chapters. The first was that the study found that these first-year education students' historical consciousness of the past was mostly negative from a presentist position. These students live in an age where new technology is available more frequently, the standard of living is higher, and individuals are able to openly protest that which they deem to be a violation of human rights. The youth have grown up knowing that their voices create change as was shown in the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests that took place. When looking back at the past it is easy to relate to the idea that the present and future seem to be more forward-thinking and advanced in comparison to the past. Secondly, more respondents focused on the negative outlook of certain themes than the positive. The negative outlook on education and technology themes had more response frequency than the positive outlook on education and technology themes. In this regard, I can say that a large majority saw the past as a dark and backward time. The respondents categorised the past as a time that lacked the ease of the 21st century with the access to technology and the improved quality of education. With the improvements in these sectors, the past seemed to be considered with disdain, which only added to the negativity spurred on by the views of apartheid and inequality. Lastly, the respondents did not draw on the past to present their version of a futuristic, forward-looking future. The past acts as a kind of pre-existing present.

As future teachers it seems as though these first-year students were, to a certain extent, prisoners of a past they were not born into but that they had inherited. However, the sense gleaned from the data was that the past was viewed as something to leave behind so as to try and achieve an envisaged "golden" future but without any sort of

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indication how to plan in order to move closer to this ideal future. There were only glimpses provided through comments on moving forward to make South Africa better and that all South Africans strive to improve the country. The first-year students gave the impression that if the past could be left in the past then the country could move forward. In this regard, the use of language of these prospective teachers seemed somewhat optimistic and idealistic when looking towards the future. The respondents had the view that “the past is what it is” and that it could not necessarily be changed. However, they reimagined a better future – regardless of the South African past and how heavily it weighed on them.

According to Nafziger, it is essential to conduct varying studies regarding as historical consciousness among the youth as it differs significantly by country and historical context (Nafziger, 2020: 30-31). This is significant as it illustrates that while there are similarities across studies there is a conceptual difference in how these particular first-year students built their historical consciousness.

5.4 Comparing the findings to the research questions

This section discusses the extent to which I achieved the purpose of my study. The research questions posed are addressed separately to demonstrate if the study adequately proposed answers to them. The findings of each question will be summarised accordingly.

5.4.1 Question 1: What is the historical consciousness of first-year university students, in the Faculty of Education, as it relates to the past?

The historical consciousness of the first-year students as it related to the past was varied and complex in nature. The respondents were very clearly aware of the tenants that the past had left in the present. The historical consciousness that they constructed for themselves was personalised and varied because each individual used varying amounts of a theme of multiple themes to construct a consciousness related to the past. The historical consciousness of this group is situated largely in the recent past, but not going back more than 40 years and focused on South African history with almost no mention of other countries. In other words, it is a very narrow, inward-looking historical consciousness. For a vast majority of the first-year students, their historical consciousness involved race, racial inequality and apartheid in some capacity. This

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theme and its relevant sub-themes had the highest frequency. Their historical consciousness was made up of issues related to racial inequality, racial prejudice, racial conflict and apartheid that occurred in the past and to some extent, the effects thereof in the present. Many of the respondents' historical consciousness of the past indicated that they still suffered the legacy of apartheid and that they were fighting the conflict within the older generation to try and make their version of the future more achievable. The overall consensus seems to be that the legacy affected the first-year students because of tensions that existed with the older generations. As such their historical consciousness is also one of generational conflict. Historical trauma plays a role in the need for the respondents to have reparations for the past so that they can improved on the past and move forward better off into the present and the future. The historical consciousness of the past overall seems to be more negative when it is considered a present point of view.

5.4.2 Question 2: Why do these students have the historical consciousness related to the past that they do?

Why do the 18- to 19-year-olds have the historical consciousness related to the past that they do? I believe that the students have the historical consciousness of the past that they do because the effects of the legacy of apartheid are further reaching than what I once believed. Fifty years after the dismantling of the apartheid regime is not long in historical terms. The apartheid past is still considered to be a part of the recent past and as such it is still remembered by a generation that lived through that period and by the students who share households and other spaces with such generations. The lingering legacy of apartheid is thus omnipresent in the present. Having such a brutal and inhumane time be so fresh in the history of South Africa makes it understandable that issues of frustration around inadequacies of addressing the dismantling of apartheid as well as other issues that involve race are still at the forefront of the mind of these first-year education students. This is also why the respondents see the past in such a negative way from their present perspective as they just want to move forward from the "ugly past" to their more idyllic, romanticised version of the future. The future is seen in an unrealistic way so as to compensate for the brutality and harshness that the past holds. Most of the first-year students acknowledged that the past was unchangeable and because there was no changing

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what had occurred it was best to move forward from the past that was seen so negatively. The historical consciousness of the respondent is very broad due to the fact that they do not use vetted and chosen historical facts to construct it. Instead, they use the past as a construct that is made up of a more personalised narrative and sources of information that relate to feelings and emotions. This can seem as though the youth do not know history but rather they are able to personalise the past more in an analytical manner than the one constituted of mere factual memories.

5.5 Personal and professional reflections

Conducting this study was personally and professionally enriching but also a trying experience.

From the outset, you are told that any post-graduate degree that you undertake is a selfish endeavour, but you do not realise how truly selfish it is until you undertake the process for yourself. It takes priority over everything in your personal life. Over the last two years, I have had to give up much in my personal life to gain all the knowledge and experience from this process. To not invest yourself fully in the process would lead to not gaining as much from the course. A master's degree is one of the most challenging things I have ever done. The process of reading, writing, reflecting, and rewriting were some of the most frustrating and rewarding that I have experienced to date.

Throughout this time, I was taught to be more flexible and to ask for help rather than try to solve problems on my own. I am used to working problems on my own and am usually quite proud to do this. However, throughout this time I had to rethink the way that I did things and I have learnt that asking for help should not be a disappointment in my capability, but rather an opportunity for me to learn and improve. I also had to learn that doing smaller pieces of work meant that I would make more progress long term rather than doing larger pieces of work. Completing these smaller parts added up more quickly to larger bodies of work and I felt that I had achieved more. I also did and still do struggle to be confident in my ideas and knowing when I am engaging enough in critical thinking, but it is a way of thinking about myself that I have improved on and have learnt to have more trust in myself and my work.

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Throughout this process, my supervisor helped to make the entire process less overwhelming. I was able to learn from his expertise and guidance how to be successful and complete such a complex project. My supervisor helped to keep me accountable and aided in keeping me focused on the topic rather than moving outside of the focus. Throughout 2019, I took advantage of the Humanities Education MEd and PhD cohort sessions. These sessions helped me to gain a sense that I was not the only one having the feelings I was having as well as going through the same frustrations and experiences that I was during that time. It also helped to expose me to a variety of different perspectives and ideas outside of my own. It would help me to look at certain aspects of my study from a different perspective and made some parts easier to complete. I also consulted with the research librarian and was able to learn about EndNote and also how to gather good quality literature related to my topic.

On a professional note, I gained an immense amount of knowledge regarding my topic. I became aware of how first-year students see the past and what thematic aspects regarding the past they used to construct their historical consciousness. I had never thought that the historical consciousness of a group of 18- to 20-year-olds could be so diverse and that the legacy of the past weighed so heavily on them. I got a specific look at how the past is conceptualised by first-year students at the University of Pretoria.

This experience has broadened my research knowledge by exposing me to new methodologies and literature as well as to a higher level of academic research. I learnt that while this process takes much from you and your life, it gives you invaluable experience and teaches you that you are capable of far more than you had ever thought possible.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to conclude the study. There was a review of all that was achieved in each previous chapter, as well as relating the findings of the study to the research questions. Recommendations for future research were also explored.

At the outset, this study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the historical consciousness of the past of the first-year students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Overall, the study contributed to the understanding of the

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historical consciousness related to the past, of first-year, Faculty of Education students. Personally, I aimed to learn more about my historical consciousness and professionally I learnt how future teachers conceptualise the past and that this historical consciousness will to some extent influence the next generation that they will be teaching. The gap in the body of knowledge that this study addressed is related to the depth of the understanding of the historical consciousness of a specific group of youths in a specific context, namely the first-year students enrolled at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. This was done through the findings that indicated that the respondents conceptualised the past by comparing it to a romanticised vision of the present and the future. It was also made clear that the respondents were still heavily affected by the legacy of apartheid, and this was illustrated by the large number of respondents who integrated race into how they built their historical consciousness. The contribution of this study to the body of knowledge is that the study found this group's historical consciousness of the past to be mostly negative, due to the fact that they constructed it from a presentist position. This meant that a large majority saw the past as a dark and backward time. There was also the contribution that the respondents did not draw on the past to present their version of the future. It became clear that the respondents did not seem to analyse the future in a tangible manner. These first-year students had the view that the past was something to leave behind to try and achieve the "golden" future they envisioned.

This study challenged the outdated idea of the older generations that the youth do not know about the past. While the responses were dominated by emotion and most did not provide justification there was enough information in the responses to see that the first-year students had a personalised view of the past and they felt that it was valid. However, more research is needed to unpack this topic to see how it evolves over time and to understand the historical consciousness of prospective teachers who will help in shaping future generations of learners.

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Appendix A – TURNITIN CERTIFICATE

Tii

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	9%	3%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	2%
2	www.diva-portal.org Internet Source	1%
3	sashtw.org.za Internet Source	1%
4	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	1%
5	files.eric.ed.gov Internet Source	1%
6	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
7	mafiadoc.com Internet Source	<1%
8	www.qtcommission.ca Internet Source	<1%
9	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

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