

Exploring the historical consciousness of university students regarding the
imagined future

by

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Supervisor: Professor Johan Wassermann

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Declaration

I, Tasleemah Hazarvi, declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis in the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



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Professor Johan Wassermann

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Dedication

Dedicated to all those who have dreamt about the future and dared to use their historical consciousness to imagine a future better than that of the past or present.

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Tara Westover once said that “an education is not so much about making a living as making a person” (Westover, 2020:281). Having undertaken a journey to obtain this master’s degree in history education, the value I have for education and its powerful ability to change a person’s destiny has increased immensely.

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Abstract

Historical consciousness is not an interpretation of the past but can be seen as the manner in which the past is tied to the present to provide a futuristic perspective. In recent decades, many university students in South Africa may have seen themselves through various lenses of inequality and marginalisation due to South Africa's troubled past and the legacy it has left. Student-led protests and campaigns such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall have highlighted a renewed historical consciousness that university students may have and how they may imagine the future based on the past. Using a qualitative interpretivist approach, this study aimed to explore how official and unofficial historical encounters with the past affect the way in which university students imagine the future. The university students in this study were first-year students who had recently completed their schooling in South Africa and now wished to study education at a tertiary institution in the hope of becoming future teachers. Using a descriptive case study research methodology, data for this study was obtained from a pre-existing 2018 study that used open-ended surveys disseminated to first-year students. One of the twelve questions that made up the open-ended survey was analysed for this study using non-probability purposive sampling. Of the 800 open-ended surveys that were collected in the initial study, I made use of 155 surveys for this study using an inductive data analysis method and open coding. Based on the historical consciousness of the first-year participants, my hope was that a variety of themes would emerge from the data. This provided insight as to whether the youth of South Africa were attempting to model for themselves a future different from the past based on their historical consciousness. While many students romanticised the imagined future, there was also a sense of doom and despair amongst students when imagining the future although some students felt that perhaps the future would be good. Furthermore, the future was imagined through a realist lens in that the students acknowledged that there was work to be done for South Africa to have a bright future. The findings from this study also sought to contribute to the broader field of history and historical consciousness at South African universities and internationally. I also attempted to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future.

Key words: historical conscious, university students, imagined future.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| CAPS | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| NSFAS | National Student Financial Aid Scheme |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| UP | University of Pretoria |
| #FMF | #FeesMustFall |
| #RMF | #RhodesMustFall |

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Chapter 1 - Introduction and overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

For many years, most university students across South Africa may have seen themselves through various lenses of inequality, marginalisation, and isolation because of the country's troubled past and the legacy thereof. During the apartheid era, higher education institutions “were reserved for different ‘race’ groups, and also allocated different ideological, economic, and social functions in the reproduction of the apartheid and capitalist social order” (Badat, 2009:457). Like almost everything else in South Africa, in 1994 higher education institutions (HEIs) underwent a transformation at the end of apartheid to become more inclusive and receptive to the needs of students from different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. One of the key transformations in higher education introduced by the post-1994 African National Congress (ANC) government was Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. As a policy statement, this white paper aimed at overcoming the “fragmentation, inequality, and inefficiency” of the apartheid past (South African Government, 2022)

However, almost three decades into democracy, many communities in South Africa remain unequal in terms of income, opportunities, and living conditions. This impacts the ways in which university students use the past to make sense of the present and anticipate the future by means of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness and its relationship to this study will be explored in detail later in this study. University students' historical consciousness affects the way in which they perceive their future based on the past and the present. The aim of historical consciousness can be understood as “not to explore and understand certain events of the past, but to develop a general attitude towards what has happened in the past, consistent with our personality” (László, 2021:3). Consciousness thus relates to the way in which something is perceived (László, 2021). Hence, the exploration of the historical consciousness of university students in this study did not seek to understand what had already happened but used a forward-looking approach to understand the imagined futures of university students who were planning to be teachers.

The last decade has seen a shifting focus in society to incorporate and highlight the views and perspectives of South African university students, particularly regarding history. Examples of this include decolonisation and de-racialisation of “inherited intellectual spaces, and the

nurturing of a new generation of academics who are increasingly black and women” (Badat, 2009:465). However, “historical thinking in higher education occupies a much smaller body of research” (Nye et al., 2011:764). Therefore, through this study I wished to broaden the research conducted regarding university students and the way in which they made use of historical consciousness to imagine the future of South Africa. This was done through an exploration of the perspectives that university students had regarding the imagined future.

The student-led protests and online campaigns in recent years brought to light a renewed display of a certain historical consciousness that university students might already have had. After a general decline in student movements and protests in South Africa between 1994 and 2015, 2015 showed a heightened interest in historical aspects that affected student lives and studies at universities across South Africa (László, 2021). Students across South Africa started protesting in March 2015 after many of their educational, political, and economic demands were not met. One such demand was to make higher education more accessible, to cater for what was later categorised as the “missing middle”, and to ensure that state funding would be made available to those students who, despite not qualifying for government funding based on their economic status, still could not afford to pay for their studies (Glenn, 2016). These protests also highlighted the pressure to remove parts of history from universities that had their roots in apartheid, colonialism, racism, slavery, and injustice through the removal of, for example, the statue of the colonialist Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town (Wallis, 2019).

Protests and campaigns such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall emphasised the interest that university students took in history and historical symbols across South Africa as they attempted to decolonise higher education and make it more accessible. Protests under the social media hashtag #FeesMustFall called for a more financially inclusive higher education system. The futuristic vision was to allow more students access to the government-run National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The reimagining of society by university students also called for the removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town by means of the online campaign titled #RhodesMustFall. Cecil John Rhodes was a British imperialist, businessman, and politician who served as the prime minister of the Cape Colony during the 1800s. Apart from the large financial gains that Rhodes acquired through gold and diamond mining, he is also known for paving the way for apartheid in South Africa by restricting Black African rights as he raised the financial qualifications that were necessary for voting (Parkinson, 2015). Therefore, for students, his statue highlighted the related issues of injustice

and colonialism. Moreover, it is important to note that the current generation of university students in South Africa have not lived through apartheid, yet the aftermath and social degeneration left behind by this past might still affect these students in the present and impact their imagined future.

To explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding their imagined future in this study, historical consciousness was used as a theoretical framework. To fully understand this phenomenon, the concept of historical consciousness was explored in detail by looking at the work of prominent historical consciousness scholars such as Jörn Rüsen, who coined the term historical consciousness. Through the exploration of the historical consciousness of university students, I attempted to provide new contextual and theoretical knowledge of the futuristic outlooks that university students who were planning to become teachers had with regard to the imagined future of South Africa.

The first chapter focuses on introducing the title of the study, providing the background and context to the study, looking at my rationale and motivation, and highlighting the focus and purpose of the study. This chapter will also provide an overview, state the key research questions that guided the study, and provide clarification of the key concepts used. There will also be a short overview of research design, methodology, and methods and the theoretical framework that will be discussed in later chapters.

1.2 Background and context

The background of this study is the higher education space within South Africa and its evolution over time. This section will focus on the political, cultural, historical, educational, and professional background of teacher education and history education in South Africa. This section will also provide the context of the study which is the nuances that accompanied the pre-service teachers as they navigated their historical consciousness when imagining the future.

Until the mid-1950s, even though educational facilities for White teachers were improving significantly, Coloured and Black African students were trained to become teachers in mission-controlled government-funded institutions that were frequently used for multiple purposes and were often a secondary priority in the provincial administrations of education (Chisholm, 2019). However, this did not deter young non-

White South Africans from pursuing a qualification in education and thus they enrolled at universities and teacher training institutions. Education was a preferred profession because African advancement during the apartheid era was largely restricted to occupations such as “schoolteachers, nurses, technicians and priests” (Crankshaw, 2007: 633). But “teachers were seen as part of a rising intelligentsia that needed to be put back in its place” (Chisholm, 2019:109). Therefore, to keep Black African teachers segregated and out of White areas, many of the teacher training institutions and universities from around the 1960s were moved to the Bantustans, which were self-governing homelands for Black African people (Chisholm, 2019).

Furthermore, some universities and teacher training colleges were created for Black, Coloured, and Indian pre-service teachers, such as the University of Durban-Westville for Indians, the University of the Western Cape for Coloured people, and the University of the North for Black African people. However, the roughly 100 teacher training colleges could not accommodate all the people who wished to undertake teacher training at these institutions as a means to uplift themselves during apartheid. The years leading up to the end of the apartheid era embodied little change because according to Chisholm (2019:148):

The system that had been put in place over a century ago and that had developed over the 1960s through to the 1980s was coming apart at the seams. White colleges were fraying, black colleges were bursting, and universities were not filling the gaps.

After 1994, universities across South Africa had to shift their focus to become more inclusive and cater for a broader South African context. This included changing and adopting strategies and policies that would allow for a smooth transition for students coming from school and going into universities. By shifting their foci, universities in South Africa were expected to change themselves from being privileged to mass-based institutions (Edmon, 2010). Despite these transformative measures, previously disadvantaged Black students who found for themselves a place in higher education were struggling to deal with the multi-layered and complex nature of an alien-like university culture (Edmon, 2010). This is because even though there had been a transformation of universities since 1994, the nature of higher education in South Africa needed to match that of global standards. Therefore, it was no surprise that walking past a large statue of a White coloniser, Cecil John Rhodes, added to the alien culture of universities for a large number of students, especially Black university students (Edmon, 2010).

Even though South Africa has witnessed a change in the higher education space since 1994, it can be argued that an indirect rather than open approach has been used to create the conditions for an inclusive national identity for teachers (Chisholm, 2019). Therefore, history is vital for pre-service teachers as they create an identity for themselves and imagine the future of South Africa based on their historical consciousness.

The last decade has seen an intense focus on higher education in South Africa, particularly the role that history plays at universities. During 2015 and 2016, as outlined above, protests and online campaigns highlighted some of the historical aspects that students at universities across South Africa were facing regarding the decolonisation of education. The hashtags #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall also called for Africanisation of the higher education space (Desai, 2019). Through protests and campaigns, university students attempted to liberate and decolonise higher education and make it more accessible to all students but also to show the world and its leaders that university students had a strong and powerful voice that should be heard and that they were part of a new generation that wished to challenge the status quo (Desai, 2019). This interest by university students rocked the country and its leaders and served as a reminder that the youth of the country wished to see a change and transformation in HEIs. More importantly, it displayed a sense of historical consciousness in the students who highlighted the way in which the past was to be dealt with while keeping the future foregrounded. Furthermore, these protests and campaigns shed light on the socio-economic disparities that were evident in South Africa and highlighted the “missing middle”, that is, the middle-class students who were not recipients of any kind of financial assistance from public HEIs. The actions of the students questioned how they saw their future despite carrying forward the inequalities of the past and the transformation or lack thereof that had taken place in the decades since democracy.

The historical consciousness of university students and its relation to the future remains an intricate part of understanding the way in which first-year Bachelor of Education students at the University of Pretoria imagine the future as they shape careers for themselves as teachers in South Africa. Many students in the Faculty of Education completed their high school in quintile 1 and 2 schools as opposed to other faculties that are mostly made up of students from quintile 3, 4, and 5 schools (Wassermann, 2022). Quintile 1 schools are made up of the poorest 20 per cent of learners whereas quintile 2 schools cater for the next poorest 20 per cent of learners (Government of South Africa, 2022). Learners coming out of these schools are often first-

generation university students who choose education as a profession because it is a world that they are familiar with (Wassermann, 2022). The above-mentioned students formed part of the 736 820 students who had enrolled at universities and universities of technology across South Africa in 2018 (Statista, 2022). While this may be a large number of students, it is interesting to note that only 208 661 first-time undergraduate students entered public universities across South Africa in 2018 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2021:99). This is approximately 28 per cent of all the matriculants of 2017 and therefore begs the question as to what happened to the remaining 72 per cent of school leavers who did not enter the university space. It is important to highlight that the number of young people in South Africa who did not make it to university and the future that they imagined might be different from the first-year Faculty of Education university students in this study. The contrasting futures that these school leavers imagine provide a key backdrop against which this study is set.

In this study, I explored the historical consciousness of university students who wanted to become teachers in their imagined futures. The study took on a futuristic outlook when I looked at the historical consciousness of university students. Furthermore, I am both an insider and an outsider in this study as I experienced the protests and campaigns as a student at the University of Pretoria. I have also been exposed to the inequalities and disparities that students in higher education have faced in the past decade owing to my race, gender, and the area in which I grew up. I am also an outsider as I am a part-time history education lecturer at the University of Pretoria and a researcher examining the perspectives of university students who are prospective teachers.

1.3 Rationale and motivation

I was born in Pretoria three years after the first democratic elections took place in South Africa, so I did not live through the apartheid era. However, the apartheid past impacted my daily realities. I am an Indian woman who has spent most of her life in a small suburb west of Pretoria called Laudium. The forced removals that took place in 1976 as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950 during the apartheid era meant that my father and his parents were relocated from central Pretoria. My grandparents and parents had lived in the heart of central Pretoria, now known as Tshwane Central Business District, at the still-standing Queen Street Mosque premises. My paternal grandfather left a small port city known today as Porbandar, India in 1938. After spending approximately seven years in Mafikeng and another seven years in

Zeerust, he relocated to central Pretoria in 1953 where he was an Imam or preacher at the Queen Street Mosque for almost 29 years. For 23 years, he, along with my grandmother and their seven children, resided in central Pretoria until 1976 when they were forced to move to Laudium. In Laudium, under the National Party, mosques, schools, houses, and shopping centres were built over the years to cater for the people who lived in the area. I attended a Muslim school (Pretoria Muslim Trust Sunni School) during my high school years where I was taught both the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum and Islamic knowledge. Interaction with people other than those in my community was limited as most people who lived in Laudium belonged to the Indian race and had similar value and belief systems. Therefore, before entering the university space, I had very little knowledge of other cultures and the functions of communities that were different from mine. This shaped a very limited historical consciousness for me regarding the diversity of South Africa and thus I found it difficult to imagine the disparities and social inequalities that other people were facing.

During high school, history was taught to me as part of the social sciences until Grade 9. The lack of interest in history as a subject by other learners and the demand from learners for other subjects in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase meant that the subject History was not offered at my school. Even though the history of the apartheid era was taught to me in high school until Grade 9 as part of social sciences, the injustices and inequalities left behind by this era was never completely understood by me until I started my undergraduate degree. This was because of my lack of awareness about what the majority of people in South Africa were experiencing and the silences that I experienced at home where this was not talked about much. The absence of school history up to Grade 12 and a selective unofficial history that was comprised only of what my parents, grandparents, and community members had passed down to me meant that I entered university with a limited historical consciousness. I was also, perhaps, too young and naïve to introspect as to why we lived in a certain area, went to certain schools, and lived a particular lifestyle. This is because one of the aftermaths of the apartheid Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950, which forced different racial groups into different residential areas, meant that even after the abolition of apartheid, certain areas remained predominantly racialised, as they had been in the past. Therefore, the protests and campaigns that were being held by students across South Africa at a time when I was entering the higher education space as an undergraduate student hoping to become a history teacher forced me into becoming reflective, and to the questioning my own history and historical knowledge.

In 2016, I started my undergraduate degree in education with a keen interest in history. Like many other students in the Faculty of Education, I was the first of six siblings to attend a full-time contact university and the only one to achieve the qualifications that I currently hold. This motivated me to look at the struggles that still exist for people who, like me, want to become teachers, who did not live through the apartheid era, and who are considered “born frees”, that is, “those who were born after Mandela’s ascent to power and too young to experience white rule first-hand” (Bearak, 2019:1) but are still dealing with inequalities from the apartheid era. At the same time, during 2015 and 2016, universities across South Africa were experiencing unrest as student protests echoed throughout the country. Some students were calling for free higher education while others wanted to decolonise higher education. This experience made me reflect on history in South Africa and what value it would hold for students in the future. It also invoked in me, a keen interest in university students and how they view the imagined future from their presentist vantage points. Having completed my undergraduate and honours degrees, the desire to focus on history and university students once again afforded me the opportunity to venture into historical studies.

Through this study, I wished to gain a better understanding of historical consciousness and what it means for the way in which university students imagine the future of South Africa, considering their past. Broadening our knowledge of the past “affect[s] our sense of belonging and the way we imagine our own affiliations with community, places and nation” (Wallis, 2019:6). Furthermore, the search for a sense of belonging or not belonging has led to a continuous questioning and interpreting of the past and, in doing so, a valuable contribution to ongoing discussions and debates regarding the past can be made.

As a professional in the educational space, I have an inherent need to address the historical consciousness of university students regarding their imagined future so that university students can become responsible citizens and, in the case of this study, teachers, by understanding that citizenship is not “a monolithic identity but a common sense of belonging grounded in mutual respect” (Butler et al., 2015:50). An extensive volume of literature related to historical consciousness has emerged in recent years (Butler et al., 2015). However, few studies have sought to understand the way in which university students, especially those who want to become teachers, imagine the future. This knowledge informs the questions that I asked in my study relating to South African university students and their perspectives regarding the imagined future.

Conceptually, by conducting this study, I wished to understand the role of historical consciousness in university students, especially by those who wanted to become teachers. Historical consciousness was, therefore, explored by means of a futuristic lens looking at university students. I explored how being historically conscious affected the way that students imagined the future by looking at how they orientated themselves in the past and present.

I also wished to understand what informed students' perspectives regarding an imagined future, especially in the context of universities and university students who went through the schooling system in South Africa and had chosen a career path as teachers. This is inherently important as these students entered the higher education space as first-year students having left school with a certain amount of historical knowledge and lived experiences and thus were historically conscious regarding the imagined future. There needs to be deeper understanding of youth in the higher education space, their historical consciousness, and its orientation towards the future before they go on to become teachers.

From a scholarly perspective, I hoped to create a better understanding of the historical consciousness that university students had and how this affected their imagined future. While there are many studies conducted globally on university students, the South African context of university students who were born after the apartheid era remains unique (Nye et al., 2011; Wallis, 2019). Furthermore, there needs to be a better understanding of historical consciousness as seen through a futuristic lens because “young South Africans experience severe disparities as they are beginning to socialise within a highly racialised society” (Erwin & Pillay, 2020:1).

Additionally, research that has been conducted regarding historical consciousness “has instigated important disciplinary conversations and changes in pedagogical practice” (Nye et al., 2011:763). However, it is important to note that historical consciousness with regard to first-year university students wanting to become teachers has not been widely explored as the focus is many-a-time on “on [the] primary and secondary school sector, highlighting the gap in corresponding research into tertiary education” (Nye et al., 2011:763). Therefore, my hope is that this study will contribute to the literature on historical consciousness, the imagined future, and university students in South Africa.

1.4 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is on exploring the way in which first-year Faculty of Education university students used the past and present to imagine the future based on their historical consciousness.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of my study was to explore the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students with regard to the imagined future through the analysis of existing data collected from first-year Faculty of Education students in 2018.

1.6 Research questions

To explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future, the following questions guided my study:

- What is the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education university students with regard to the imagined future?
- How does the historical consciousness of university students shape their perceptions of an imagined future?

1.7 Concept clarification

Drawing from the literature on historical consciousness, the imagined future, and university students in South Africa, four concepts were key to this study, namely exploration, historical consciousness, university students, and the imagined future. Thus, an explanation is provided for the reader from the outset to ensure a clear understanding of what the study entails and to contextualise the research undertaken.

1.7.1 Exploration

The phenomenon of this study is exploration. To explore is to discover new instances or occurrences and the word is often used for studies that set out to find the extent to which one particular factor may affect other surrounding factors (Gentile et al., 2019). For the purposes of this study, exploration relates to me as the researcher who is “not sure about the nature or extent of a complex problem, and might first wish to do a limited, initial research study before

launching a more in-depth, long-term study” (Maree, 2019:12). I therefore explored the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future.

1.7.2 Historical consciousness

From the perspective of a South African, historical consciousness can be conceptualised as “one’s own history, that one belongs to a particular nation with a past and the role it plays in the world and one’s own contribution” (Kwang-Su, 1999:31). Seixas suggests that historical consciousness is made up of an individual and collective understanding of the past as well as cultural and cognitive factors that make up the understanding and relations of historical understanding to those of the present and the future (Grant & Rogers, 2019:3; Seixas, 2004). “Through historical consciousness, the self is linked to the group” (Kwang-Su, 1999:9). Historical individuality is also created through human groups in which self-recognition can only be formed through meaningful group interaction. Although historical consciousness is socially constructed within a culture, it is formed within the mind of an individual because of the gradual gaining of historical knowledge from childhood, which makes one aware of their place in society (Kwang-Su, 1999:15). In sum, historical consciousness relates to the relationship between the past, present, and future. Historical consciousness is explained and explored in depth in Chapter 2.

1.7.3 University students

The term university students typically refer to people who have enrolled to study at a university or college. An undergraduate student can be referred to as “an individual who is enrolled in a post-secondary educational programme which leads to or is directly credible towards the individual’s first baccalaureate degree” (Law Insider, 2022:1).

1.7.4 Imagined future.

This study has drawn on Hal Hershfield’s future self-continuity model, in which the manner in which the future is imagined by an individual determines how they act in the present to make their life easier in the future (Hoyle & Sherill, 2006). The imagined future can thus be conceptualised as the way in which the future is imagined or perceived by an individual from their presentist vantage point. Furthermore, the future is a time that has not yet occurred, and therefore, what happens during that time can only be imagined as there is no guarantee of the occurrence of the future and what it may hold.

1.8 Research design, methodology and methods

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology of the study will be discussed and a justification for the choices made will be given. However, in this chapter, the research design and methodology will merely be introduced. My study makes use of a qualitative research approach and uses interpretivism as a paradigm to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future.

Qualitative researchers like me attempt to interpret the manner in which people grasp their experiences and construct their worlds while making meaning of their circumstances (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, reality is socially constructed and there is no single observable reality present within the interpretivist paradigm (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, this study is context specific and socially constructed.

Along with interpretivism, I employed social constructivism as my research paradigm. Social constructivism makes use of interview data which highlights the belief that the participants have conception and they infer that conceptions are based on the belief that all our understanding and knowledge is socially constructed (Halldén, Haglund & Strömdahl, 2007). This study took on a relativist ontological positioning. From an ontological perspective, multiple realities can exist simultaneously because reality is based on context and is socially relative. Epistemologically, reality and meaning are ever-changing and are not seen as individual in nature. The epistemological paradigm that was used is interpretivism, which seeks to understand experiences of people and the world (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010).

The preferred research methodology for this study was a descriptive case study which involved an empirical inquiry that analysed a phenomenon with its real-life context and made use of multiple sources of evidence. This was done with the aim of portraying, analysing, and interpreting the unique situations of the participants through interpretations of different cases (Cohen, 2007). The descriptive case study that I used was comprised of first-year Faculty of Education students from the University of Pretoria. I looked particularly at their historical consciousness and how it related to the imagined future. The data used for this study was secondary pre-existing data obtained through open-ended surveys. For this study, I wished to analyse approximately 155 of the 800 open-ended surveys through non-probability purposive sampling.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The relationship between historical consciousness and the imagined future influenced the theoretical framework which was comprised of both historical consciousness as described by Rüsen and the theory of future self-continuity by Hershfield.

1.9.1 Historical consciousness

Historical consciousness can be described as a link that brings together the past and the present when interacting with the future. In the process model of historical thought presented by Rüsen, historical consciousness is seen as both a mental process by which “individuals orientate themselves in the dimension of time whenever they experience a difference between expected and/or planned and the realised course of the changes along this dimension” and the ability of the individual to perform this process (Körber, 2015:10). It is because of this mental process that individuals can orientate themselves in the dimension of time when there is a change between what has been expected and what has occurred. This will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.

1.9.2 Theory of self-continuity

A recent study indicates that the relationship with the future self needs to be cultivated and nurtured as those who have a vivid sense of their future self will behave in a manner that makes life easier in the future (Robson, 2022). According to the theories of Joseph Butler, the 18th century philosopher who first looked at the relationship between the past, present, and future, your future self is likely to influence your current behaviour and, therefore, the better the future you imagine for yourself, the higher the chance is of you making good choices in the present (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). These ideas were then cultivated by Hershfield who found ways of measuring a person’s future self-continuity by use of a future self-continuity scale (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). The future self-continuity scale depicts the relationship between the current self and the future self. The model developed by Hershfield serves as part of the theoretical framework that has guided my study.

1.10 Overview of the study

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the context, background, rationale, and motivation for the study and to allow for key aspects such as the research questions, focus and purpose, and concept clarification to be stated. The research design and methodology that was

used to conduct the study was explained and a general depiction of how the data was analysed has been mentioned. Chapter 1 serves as a backdrop against which my study is set and therefore provides the background, context, rationale, and methodology used in the study.

Chapter 2 consists of the literature review and theoretical framework. The literature review is an in-depth thematic analysis of both local and international literature related to university students in the South African context as well as to historical consciousness which, along with my research questions, guided my study. Chapter 2 also consists of the theoretical framework and the blending of theories related to historical consciousness and future self-continuity.

Chapter 3 speaks of the methodological choices related to the study. In that chapter, I will highlight the research design as it relates to the approach, paradigm, and ontological and epistemological assumptions. I will also explain the research methodology regarding the descriptive case study approach that was used. First-year Faculty of Education students enrolled at the University of Pretoria as the sample will also be discussed. I will explain the use of open-ended surveys as the means of collecting the data in 2018 and the ways in which I analysed the data through an inductive data analysis approach. Aspects of trustworthiness will also be discussed.

The fourth chapter deals with the data analysis and findings through open coding. This was done by reading and rereading the data to develop codes with similar data from within the data. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the data will be discussed in that chapter.

Chapter 5 will serve as the discussion of the findings from Chapter 4 and is the concluding chapter of this study. It will serve as a general overview of the study with regard to the personal and professional reflections, findings, and conclusions to the study. I will make recommendations for further studies in the educational realm based on the study.

1.11 Conclusion

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter and has served as the backdrop against which my study was set. This chapter has provided the initial understanding about exploring historical consciousness regarding the imagined future and has, therefore, provided the background, context, rationale, and methodology used in the study. By describing the background and context of the study, I have set the scene and highlighted the importance of this study within the higher education space in South Africa. The importance for this study has been reiterated

through my own motivation and positionality within the study. In the next chapter, I will review the existing literature regarding historical consciousness, the imagined future, and youth in the South African context. I will also present the theoretical framework that will guide the study by making use of the research questions presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the scholarly and theoretical literature in relation to the historical consciousness that university students have regarding the imagined future. Providing a literature review allows me to situate the study, critically approach relevant sources of literature, and thematically organise the literature (Efron & Ravid, 2018). Moreover, a literature review is vital for the understanding of the research topic and research questions as it establishes the importance of the study (Maree, 2016).

In this chapter, I will review the theoretical literature and the scholarly literature by discussing what a literature review is, why is it needed, and how I will present the literature. Additionally, I will discuss what historical consciousness and the imagined future are and present a theoretical framing for the study. Furthermore, studies conducted globally, in Africa, and particularly in South Africa regarding historical consciousness with an emphasis on young people and university students will also be explored from a futuristic perspective. By presenting the theoretical literature followed by the scholarly literature, a funnel-like approach is used in which aspects such as terminology and the methods used for conducting the literature review are first explained. This will be done to present the reader with the key elements needed to understand the undertakings of the study followed by the scholarly literature.

2.2 Reviewing the scholarly literature.

A literature review can be defined as a systematic examination of the scholarly literature that is available on a particular topic (Efron & Ravid, 2018). A literature review also ensures that an overview is given of the literature that exists regarding a particular topic and serves as a method for critically evaluating and clarifying previous research (Coffta, 2020). Therefore, the literature review attempts to provide the reader with an understanding of previous research conducted on a particular topic and may also provide the context of the study. In doing so, we are able to learn to create studies that are relevant and valued from those who came before us in order to complete one of the main goals of research, which is to expand our collective knowledge (Efron & Ravid, 2018:3). By reading widely about studies previously conducted, the gap in academic scholarship can be sought to allow for the research that is to be conducted. Conducting a literature review also allows us to ensure that literature regarding the topic exists and to prevent

repetitious studies that would not aid in further understanding of historical consciousness, university studies, and the imagined future.

To gather literature for my study, I began by familiarising myself with key terms such as historical consciousness, the relationship between the past, present, and future as well as the imagined future, and university students. This was done through a Google search. I then used Google Scholar along with research databases to find academic journals such as *Historical Encounters*, *Narration*, *Identity*, *Historical Consciousness*, *Youth and History*, and the *International Society for History Didactics* amongst others. I also received recommendations from my supervisor and made use of the University of Pretoria Library webpage which assisted me in finding the literature for this study. After collecting the literature, I ventured into reading and rereading the material in order to create themes and subthemes within the literature. Subsequent to the initial readings and sorting the literature into themes, I took a more critical stance and made notes on key aspects related to my study. Moreover, I organised the literature so that I created a logical flow of the argument. However, because of the vast amount of literature on the topic of historical consciousness, I often struggled to glean literature that was relevant to my study and not just related to historical consciousness as a whole. Throughout the study, I remained attentive of leaders in the field of historical consciousness, such as Rüsen who coined the term historical consciousness, and authors who cited his work in their own.

By conducting this literature review, I aimed to provide a comprehensive, critical, and relatively accurate understanding of the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future. This was done by comparing different research studies and theories, revealing the gaps in the current literature, and attempting to provide more insight into historical consciousness, university students, and the imagined future.

2.3 Reviewing the theoretical literature.

To reiterate, the focus of this literature review was on exploring how university students used the past and present to imagine the future based on their historical consciousness. The purpose of this literature review was to contribute to an existing body of knowledge regarding historical consciousness globally and to that of historical consciousness and university students in South Africa. This was done by exploring the historical consciousness that university students had when imagining the future. Historical consciousness can be interpreted as a concept that focuses on the “connection between the interpretation of the past, the understanding of the

present and the perspectives of the future” (Thorp, 2014:21). This is done by societies across the world that depend on history to engage with their everyday socio-economic problems, adapt to the current socio-political landscape, and to manage the expectations of the future. Consequently, historical consciousness was used as a vehicle for the exploration of how university students imagined the future.

Observing how people deal with history is important in the present, especially due to the political and social environment that we live in and the growing use of media across the world (Grever, 2019). This is particularly true in relation to first-year university students and how their imagined future may be shaped based on their historical consciousness which has generally been formed through history learned at school. However, along with school history, first-year students enter the university space with an individual historical consciousness that is different from the national and ethnic shared historical consciousness that people belonging to the same or different ethnic group or country may have. Individual historical consciousness is largely shaped by “the intermingling of cognitive, cultural, social and political dimensions in historical consciousness” (Allen, 2003:45). This makes the historical consciousness of university students key to understanding the way in which the future is imagined in this study.

In school, learners might learn how to think about the past so that they can orientate themselves in time in order to bring the past, present, and future together and live their lives as temporal beings (Lee, 2012). Thus, it is assumed that, to some extent, all university students have a historical consciousness regarding the imagined future. However, it is important to note that this transition from school to university is not smooth sailing for all students. Among the difficulties that some students face “is the social and academic integration of black students from disadvantaged family and school backgrounds”. They often come from families that lack education and are inexperienced in offering support to a child that is enrolled for higher education (Edmon, 2010:14). Also, some university students may undergo a transformation in which they transition to a different social class as they attempt to find their way within the HEIs. This is because students begin to analyse their surroundings and find a place for themselves within the higher education space (Edmon, 2010), thereby showing that race and class are prevalent in the university setting like in any other setting in a previously disadvantaged society.

With regard to universities in the South African context, recent years have brought an immense amount of attention to university students, especially through campaigns and online protests

such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall. These campaigns are seen as moving towards learning about South Africa's past from what is shown to us by a younger generation (Oelofse & Vries, 2016). The campaigns and protests not only assist us in learning from a younger generation about our understanding of our past in a contemporary context, but they also assist us in understanding what impact the past has on the way university students imagine the future. It is important that we understand the extent to which present perspectives and expectations for the future are linked to the past and how often do young refer to the past (Lee, 2012). Thus, the phenomenon of exploring historical consciousness is emphasised through understanding the impact that recent campaigns and protests have had on university students' imagined future.

To understand the perspectives that university students have regarding the imagined future, historical consciousness, as seen through a futuristic lens, was used as a theoretical point of departure throughout the study. Therefore, to explore the historical consciousness that university students had, particularly regarding the imagined future, various theories within the broader idea of historical consciousness were explored using a futuristic lens. The relationship between the process model of historical thought by Rüsen and Rüsen's theory of personal development of historical consciousness served as a backdrop against which historical consciousness appeared in this study.

2.4 Towards defining historical consciousness.

To understand what historical consciousness is, it is essential to split the term and define each word separately. Consensus on the nature of consciousness cannot be neatly agreed upon. However, consciousness can be described as "a state or continuum in which we are able to feel, think, and perceive" (Allen, 2003:43). Thus, consciousness may be interpreted as an act of thinking or a general idea of the way in which we perceive the world around us. Consciousness can also be defined as continuous and constantly changing with regard to the way we think. This can be seen as selective rather than cumulative but also finite and evaluative (Allen, 2003). Moreover, consciousness is not seen as a mental entity but rather as a function of the human brain which processes one's experiences into different groups, namely spatial, temporal, affective, and cognitive (Kabigting, 2021; Thorp, 2014). This allows a person to differentiate between past, present, and future as well as good and bad, true and false, and me versus the rest of the world. Furthermore, people experience the world through their

consciousness, so consciousness is seen as a function of an individual (Thorp, 2014). As a dimension of consciousness, historical consciousness forms part of the basic mental process which “interacts with and is influenced by other dimensions of consciousness” (Allen, 2003:50). As a result, the way in which we perceive ourselves, the world around us, and the future can be described as part of our consciousness.

The term historical consciousness can be described as the way in which people make sense of history (Thorp, 2014). However, historical consciousness can also be viewed as a “psychological and didactical construct” and hence a single definition does not exist for this construct (Körber, 2015:57). Although a single definition for historical consciousness does not exist, I will attempt to explain what historical consciousness is by highlighting the different aspects of historical consciousness that might hopefully enable more research into university students’ imagined future.

The concept of historical consciousness can be identified as the ability to make sense of the past for the sake of understanding the present and anticipating the future (Grever, 2019). It also makes use of memory as a mental operation to orientate oneself in everyday life (Apostolidou, 2013). Nevertheless, historical consciousness is seen as more than just a mental process of using the past to interpret the present and imagine the future. It is also seen as an “intersection between public memory, history education, and citizenship” (Grant & Rogers, 2019:1). Therefore, it is argued, historical consciousness is an identity-creating concept. It is assumed that individuals come to develop their identities through their historical consciousness (Thorp, 2014). By creating an identity, university students studying to become teachers seek to imagine what their future role will be in society. This is especially true in the case of first-year Faculty of Education students, like the participants in this study, who enter the university space with some idea of what the future will be like or what they wish for themselves as teachers in the future. Moreover, historical consciousness can be seen as an identity-creating concept because it contributes to several civic competencies for democracy that may not necessarily be developed in disciplines other than history. Among these are a sense of perspective, the development of empathy, individual autonomy, and identity (Mazabow, 2003). This is essential for future teachers who may already be exposed to empathy and hold certain perspectives regarding the country they live in. It is important to note that historical consciousness is more than historical literacy as it focuses on how a person orientates themselves in order to use past events to make sense of what is happening in the present and what might happen in the future.

Historical consciousness is also seen as a mental process which makes use of the capabilities and skills that an individual needs to have in order to understand empirical data and historical events. Historical consciousness progresses in cases where people feel perplexed, helpless, and in crisis (Apostolidou, 2013). Moreover, it can be seen as a mental construct which may allow for multi-perspectivity of a person or even a group of people in society (Ahonen, 2005). Therefore, understanding historical consciousness is necessary when exploring university students' perspectives regarding the imagined future. This is because students narrate and act on what they perceive history to be, especially in the case of South Africa, as the troubled apartheid past can be seen as unintelligible to students who did not live through it. The fostering of historical consciousness begins with school education. However, school alone cannot foster one's historical consciousness, and it is rather seen as a temporal organisation of the self between the past and the future (Ahonen, 2005; Lee, 2012). Thus, the society in which one lives and interacts can be seen as a shaper of historical consciousness.

Historical consciousness, according to Rüsen, “coincides with a feeling on the part of people that they can intervene and change the world” (Apostolidou, 2013:3). This happens when people try to interpret the past because of their lack of control over their lives and hope to make things better in the future. Therefore, being historically conscious requires both individual and collective understandings of the past and the establishment of the relations of that historical understanding in the present and future (Grant & Rogers, 2019). Historical consciousness can also be seen as a temporary result of an altering state of mind that occurs as people orientate themselves in time, thus highlighting the temporal space through which historical consciousness traverses. It is important to note that historical consciousness is seen as temporary because it is always evolving and changing as is, in all likelihood, the case of the first-year students who participated in this study. Therefore, historical consciousness was identified by Körber as a “set of capabilities, dispositions, and skills necessary to undertake the required operations” (Grever, 2019:226).

Apart from collective historical consciousness which relates to what people as a group know and think about history, people have an individual historical consciousness, which is based on how a person uses history to think for themselves (Körber, 2015). Thus historical consciousness allows people to think for themselves and reflect upon both their personal and collective historical identity which is essential to the formation of a historical future. Historical consciousness can, therefore, be seen as a “tool for everybody for orientating independent

actions as an emancipated member of society” (Körber, 2015:56). Our collective memory is formed through the historical context that exists within a shared life world of a community (Ahonen, 2005). This historical context refers to the way in “which we somehow consciously or unconsciously relate in a process of changing meanings” (Grever, 2019:225). Therefore, understanding the historical consciousness of students assists us in understanding the historical context to which they relate and how they use their historical consciousness to make meaning of the imagined future.

It is thus agreed that historical consciousness occurs and is used in multiple spheres in a person’s life some of which include school education, the media, one’s family and community, and public history (Grever, 2019). Because of this, university students not only gather and develop different historical perspectives but also display a sense of subjectivity towards certain narratives of history thus giving them a personalised historical consciousness. This, in turn, allows students to see their future through a personalised historical lens. Students’ historical consciousness is also influenced by the media and the “immersive historicity” that the media gives by personally involving one in “experiencing history in a virtual world as time travellers” (Grever, 2019:228). This is done, for example, through films and social media which reiterate certain historical events in a manner that allows for a virtual experience of the actual event. Furthermore, historical consciousness allows us to critically examine our surroundings to allow us to make sense of our current situation and anticipate the future and what it may hold (Thorp, 2014).

Historical consciousness related to time is more than just a way in which people think about the past (Mazabow, 2003). Rather, historical consciousness can be seen as a mental process in which the past is comprehended in order to make sense of the present and perceive the future. Apart from historical consciousness being a mental process, it also has “a trans-generational mental orientation to time. Such an orientation is based on the human aptitude to think back and forth in time” (Ahonen, 2005:699). Individuals must perceive themselves as “temporal beings: 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” (Thorp, 2014:11). In this regard, historical consciousness can be seen as making sense of the past and using it to anticipate the future. Having historical consciousness allows individuals to “make sense of both history and contemporary life and society” (Thorp, 2014:29). Furthermore, it can enable them to gain perspective on the future. Thus we see that historical consciousness within a temporal orientation allows for a relationship

between the past and the present to exist in a manner that affords the present a future perspective (Mazabow, 2003). It also allows historical consciousness to be a viable vehicle to explore the imagined future of university students.

2.5 The imagined future

Remembering the past and imagining the future from a presentist stance can be seen as intricately connected entities. The general thought behind remembering the past is that those who remember the past will not make the same mistakes in the future (Mazabow, 2003). It is with this reasoning that school history speaks of past atrocities in order to teach learners the repercussions of such atrocities (Schacter & Madore, 2016). Thus, the power of history is shaped through collective memory. This is because, according to Merck and Topcu (2016:286):

The document sitting in the basement of the national archive may have the potential to shape a nation's collective memory, but it does not have a mode of actuality until it is found, brought to the attention of the community, and incorporated into the national narrative.

The documents, other historical evidence, memorial sites, and events that are brought to the attention of the community are what act as an important links to imagining the future. This is why walking past a statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the campus of the University of Cape Town may trigger a different or even similar emotion to when one walks past the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. Both these sites serve to remind the public of history yet the historical narrative surrounding such documents, historical evidence, and memorial sites may change over time. The change in the way in which we think about the past can be referred to as historical consciousness which, in turn, affects what we want to or do not want to see when imagining the future.

South Africans will remember the #FeesMustFall movement as an event that had a great amount of history attached to it. However, this would not qualify as a collective memory for all South Africans because it did not occur in the same spatio-temporal context for everyone (Merck & Topcu, 2016). This highlights an important aspect related to imagining the future because, even though South Africans share the same collective history, we do not remember the past in the same way, which makes the way we imagine the future a personal experience.

Moreover, if a national past is remembered with great specificity, then the future will also be imagined with the same specificity (Erwin & Pillay, 2020). How university students imagine the future of South Africa is an interesting question because South Africa's past has been remembered with great specificity and selection in an attempt to steer clear of repeating past mistakes in higher education (Schacter & Madore, 2016). This begs the question as to whether the future will be imagined with the same or similar specificity.

With regard to the past, "many people will see their past determined in part, by their actions and efforts (their agency) and, in turn, see their future similarly determined" (Merck & Topcu, 2016:288). However, in South Africa, where in the past certain races were not given autonomy over their past and had to live a life that they did not want to live, such agency or autonomy may be hard to pass on to the next generation for the sake of taking charge of the future (Schacter & Madore, 2016). Also, even though the current students in universities across South Africa have not lived through the apartheid era, repercussions of this era, and eras before, affect them daily. This could include where they live and went to school and their socio-economic background and their living conditions (Schacter & Madore, 2016). This may paint a bleak picture of the past and thus a similar future ahead. Therefore, agency should not be seen as a link between reconstructing the past through collective memory and creating the imagined future. For example, demonstrations may have worked in the past, but there is no guarantee that they will work in the future (Lemon, 2016).

The question of whether the collective past and one's personal past are remembered in the same way is an essential question for shaping the imagined future. This is because what we remember of the past is essentially what we draw on when imagining the future. One study suggests that even though "participants were equally capable of remembering specific events from their nations or their pasts, they had more difficulty conjuring specific future events for the future of their nation than for their future" (Merck & Topcu, 2016:289). Thus, an inference can be made between remembering the past and imagining the future from a national perspective where there is a weaker connection between remembering the past and imagining a national future than there is regarding one's individual future. This is because remembering the past and imagining the future are seen as intricately related on both a personal and collective level.

However, with reference to the above, it is vital to note that the collective past of a group is constantly remembered through various official and unofficial mediums such as curricula,

textbooks, monuments, statues, street names, and the media. In this regard, there may be times when additional information is presented, however, there are also instances where established memories are repeated and foregrounded (Merck & Topcu, 2016). This is the case with South Africa's history where, since democracy in 1994, there are established areas of remembrance such as the Apartheid Museum, Freedom Park, and so on. This is because there is a need for remembering the past with specificity to allow for the future to be imagined with the same specificity. This public memory is augmented by the CAPS-History curriculum which serves as a guide for school history. Besides, collective identity is anchored in collective memory (Gongaware, 2012). Collective memory is formed when people "interactively share definitions of their means, their ends, and the environment in which their action takes place" (Gongaware, 2012:215). This then assists with the creation of a collective identity that may be cultivated and used through mediums such as textbooks and monuments. Also, "teaching about history not only provides information about the collective past, but it also develops the meanings of the current situations and affairs, and plays the major role in the formation of the concepts of the society" (Korostelina, 2008:25). Thus, collective identity, through the development of the meaning of the current situations and affairs, assists with the ability to imagine the future.

In light of this, one can argue that memory (or personal history) is used to create and feed identity (Weldon, 2010). Additionally, identity is constructed on many levels and an individual lays claim to several identities at any given time (Weldon, 2010). There must be an understanding of historical identities for the process of historical consciousness to occur. This is because many social psychology theories highlight the importance of history with regard to identity formation (Korostelina, 2008). The way in which the past is remembered and the future is imagined is based on episodic memory. For the mental process of historical consciousness to occur, one needs to understand the social and national identity that has been formed through episodic memory, which allows one to "engage in time travel" while consciously remembering or re-experiencing past events (Schacter & Madore, 2016:247). Based on the idea of episodic memory, the future of university students can then be imagined using their historical consciousness because imagining or simulating future events relies on many of the same mental processes as remembering past events (Schacter & Madore, 2016). Students at universities use their past to make conscious decisions in the present that heavily impact their futures. They hope that their choice to acquire a tertiary education increases their chances of

employment and that, in turn, they are able to better their standard of living (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2021).

Regarding historical identities and the imagined future, it can be argued that governments, individuals, and communities make use of history as a means of maintaining and shaping identities (Wallis, 2019). However, when contemporary issues do not resonate with the narrative of the past, “critical history perspectives call for reassessment” (Wallis, 2019:6). The reassessment of these historical perspectives leads to changing insights into the historical discourse and to changes in how individuals view their historical identities through a different understanding of the past. Besides, “the historical past may lead to shame when negatively associated with a variety of indicators of national identity” (Oelofse & Vries, 2016:263). This identity exists within interactions between people and groups and thus involves a constant relationship between past and present within groups (Oelofse & Vries, 2016).

It can, therefore, be argued that “developing historical thinking requires that students learn to navigate all the complexities of history and attempt to orientate themselves about that history” (Nye et al., 2011:764). Even though the content of these challenging histories may be hard to understand as new information can contradict an existing understanding of the past by challenging the historical narratives and deriving a different understanding of the past, university students are able to understand their place in the world, reflect on the responsibility they have to the future and use that understanding to construct ideas surrounding their future (Wallis, 2019). Therefore, developing an historical identity allows university students to shape their future by making use of historical consciousness to interpret the past and maintain historical perspectives of the future.

The importance of historical identity highlights how South African university students can contribute to civic and ethical communities in South Africa. The authors of *Exploring Historical Thinking and Agency in Undergraduate History* argue that, as an undergraduate student, there is a shift in the students’ ways of thinking and especially in the way they think about the past (Nye et al., 2011). This can be attributed to the availability of information that was, perhaps, not available during their schooling years as the history textbook being the programmatic curriculum was the main source of interaction with history. It can also be attributed to the sense of responsibility that university students take upon themselves about their future and the role that they play in society as young adults.

2.6 Presenting a theoretical framing for the study.

The main underlying phenomenon that has guided both my study and the interpretation of the research results was historical consciousness. The most important contribution to understanding historical consciousness was possibly that of Rüsen (Seixas, 2005). In Rüsen's process model of historical thought, historical consciousness is described as a "mental process by which individuals orientate themselves in the dimension of time whenever they experience a difference between the expected and/or planned and the realised course of the changes along this dimension" (Körber, 2015:10). In this process model of historical thought, Rüsen explores historical consciousness as both a mental process and the ability of the individual to perform that process.

Historical consciousness is seen as a link that brings together the past and the present to interact with an imagined future. This link between the past, present, and future performs important social and personal functions in a person's life as it allows historical consciousness to validate the present and create an environment in which future ideals and dreams can be fostered. Thus, whenever a person experiences a change in what is expected or planned and what has transpired within a dimension of time, they may need to re-orientate themselves within that dimension of time (Körber, 2015). This is done by using historical consciousness as a mental process.

However, historical consciousness does not only exist as a mental process that is used to make sense of the past after having experienced something different from what was expected. Rather, historical consciousness can also be identified as the skills and abilities needed to use the past to act in the present and to think about the future (Körber, 2015). Furthermore, historical consciousness should be seen as more than historical literacy as it is aimed at fundamentally changing the way in which a person makes use of their consciousness (Ahonen, 2005). Through historical consciousness, there is an expansion of "the temporal self beyond individual birth and death" (Ahonen, 2005:700). Thus, historical consciousness can be identified as a mental process that links past, present, and future in a manner that allows for orientating oneself across the dimensions of time in a way that can be portrayed through the following process:

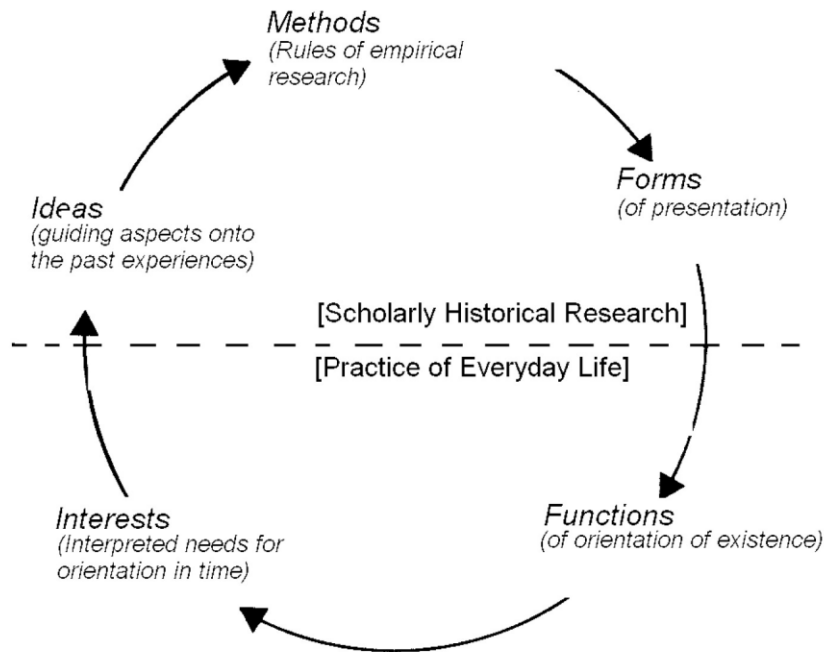


Figure 2. 1: The process model of historical thought by Rüsen (Körber, 2015:10)

Through the process model of historical thought (refer to Figure 2.1), “a path of methodological empirical processing of experiences is followed” (Körber, 2015:11) thereby bringing together the notion of time and the idea of historical consciousness in a well-intertwined model which highlights the way that historical thought can be used to interpret the imagined future. This model depicts historical consciousness as a mental process with the capabilities, dispositions, and skills that are needed to undertake the required processes and procedures (Körber, 2015). Through the above model, historical consciousness can be seen as the ability to think historically which speaks of three abilities, namely going through what is known as temporal alterity, to making sense of the world, and orientating or positioning oneself using historical consciousness (Körber, 2015).

In the 1970s, Rüsen introduced historical consciousness as a key concept in history education in Germany. The theory of personal development of historical consciousness was later developed and underwent four phases, namely to recognise that a tradition was being continued, to take examples from history, to critically deconstruct the belief of continuity, and to allow for a temporalized view of the way life was transformed due to historical consciousness

(Ahonen, 2005). Thus, historical consciousness can be measured based on which phase of the theory is being interacted with.

The theory was further developed to include Rösen's disciplinary matrix, which categorises historical consciousness. Rösen's disciplinary matrix makes use of four types of historical consciousness, that is, traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic (Lee, 2012). Traditional historical consciousness is seen as a permanent and non-negotiable way of living which occurs when traditional narratives are already provided and value systems and ways of life are established based on these narratives (Lee, 2012). Exemplary historical consciousness treats the past as examples upon which moral lessons of the present are based (Lee, 2012). Critical historical consciousness contests the first two types of historical consciousness as it "challenges traditional narratives and it draws attention to deviations from exemplary rules", and lastly "genetic historical consciousness moves beyond all three of the previous types of historical consciousness as it allows for change to be dominant" as a factor (Lee, 2012:37).

Historical consciousness is thus seen as a temporal orientation and "meaningful connection between past and future" (Lee, 2012:40). For students to make a connection between the past and the future, they need to have some sort of a framework of the past to guide them. This framework needs to exist not as a pre-formed narrative but as a tool for interpreting history. This speaks to the three dimensions of historical education in which a model was used in Germany as part of the education system. The three dimensions of historical education are: developing historical competencies (abilities), historical consciousness, and the internal historical universe, which is seen as a flexible view of history itself instead of a rigid picture of the past. We use historical knowledge or knowledge about the past to apply historical competencies and become more historically conscious. The three dimensions of historical education act as pillars that need to be built consecutively to create an even platform.

In this study, historical consciousness was used as the main underlying phenomenon and therefore various aspects related to historical consciousness were presented. The ability to orientate oneself and draw a connection between past, present and future uses both the process model of historical thought and the theory of personal development of historical consciousness. Both the notion of time and the idea of historical consciousness (process model of historical thought) and the types of historical consciousness (theory of personal development of historical consciousness) are needed to determine an individual's historical consciousness.

However, along with historical consciousness, how one thinks about the future is essential. Therefore, the future self-continuity scale was also essential when presenting a theoretical framing for my study.

2.7 Future self-continuity

It can be assumed that most Faculty of Education students who are studying at the same university will eventually progress in a similar way. This brought forth the question of whether all the students imagined the future in the same way and made the same assumptions about what their future holds. This was particularly important to note especially as all the students in this study were pre-service teachers studying at the University of Pretoria towards a Bachelor of Education degree. They would presumably finish their degrees and work as teachers.

In a recent study, Robson (2022) indicated that the relationship with one’s future self needs to be cultivated and nurtured (Robson, 2022). Moreover, those who have a vivid sense of their future self will behave in a way that will essentially make life easier in the future. This is based on theories by Joseph Butler, the 18th-century philosopher who said:

If the self or the person of today, and that of tomorrow are not the same, but only like persons, the person of today is really no more interested in what will befall the person of tomorrow than in what will befall any other person. (Robson, 2022:2)

These ideas were then cultivated by Hershfield who found a way to measure someone’s future self-continuity from the present (see Figure 2. 2).

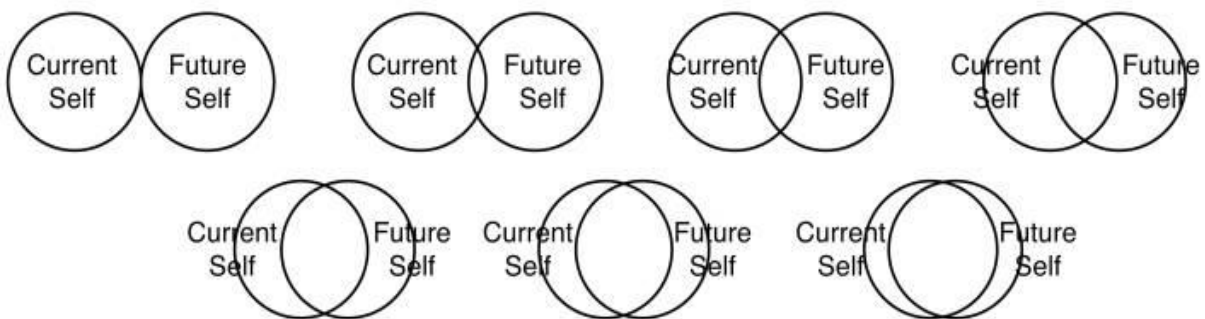


Figure 2. 2: Future self-continuity scale (Ersner-Hershfield, Garton, Ballard, Samanez-Larkin & Knutson, 2009:282)

Looking at Figure 2. 2 showing pairs of circles representing the current self and the future self (Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009:282), the “self-continuity might vary by individual, with some

individuals endorsing greater connection to their future self than others” (Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009:280). The circles and Venn diagram-like overlay in the above figure depict the relationship between the current self and the future self in which the more intertwined the two circles are, the more future self-continuity is present. This is because the more connected a person is to their future self, the more their current habits and actions will support their relationship with the future.

Even though people’s experiences are dominated by the present, they are readily able to think up images of themselves from the past and imagine themselves in the future (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). The future-orientated self is assumed to be derived from “representations of the self in the past such as prior performances and social comparisons but the future self has not yet been realised and therefore assumptions about the future self may not be constrained by reality or plausibility” (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006:1674). Furthermore, it can be assumed that an individual’s current behaviour is directly influenced by the way in which they imagine the future in that the better the future you imagine for yourself, the more likely you are to make better and healthier life choices in the present (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006).

However, according to the phenomenon known as temporal discounting, people may care less about their future outcomes than those in the present. This also brings forth the idea that the degree to which people devalue future gains may differ and this often emerges from conflicts of interest between their temporally different selves (Ersner-Hershfield, Elliot & Knutson., 2009:85). Therefore, people may care less about their temporally distant future self than their current self to the extent that their future self may seem like a different person altogether (Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009).

Additionally, future self-continuity may also lead to a greater valuation of future gains as it is easier and more pleasant to imagine how a person’s actions may lead to positive rather than negative future outcomes for a future self (Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009:285). This is particularly true for university students with regard to an imagined future. There is a greater likelihood of the pre-service educators in this study viewing the future in a positive light and imagining positive outcomes. This idea will be explored in detail in the data analysis chapter.

2.8 Studies on the historical consciousness of young people and university students

This section of the literature review focuses on the scholarly literature of young people and university students with regard to their historical consciousness. In this study, “young people” refers to primary and secondary school learners and to teenagers in general whereas “university students” refers to anyone who is registered to pursue a post-secondary school qualification at a university. This section of the literature review creates a clear distinction between young people and university students in order to highlight, first, the different types, uses, and understanding of historical consciousness that people of different age groups may have and, second, the limited number of studies that have been conducted regarding historical consciousness and university students, especially in Africa and South Africa.

In this section, I will explore the historical consciousness of both young people and more specifically university students using a geographical location. By making a distinction based on where the study was conducted, I portrayed the disparities that exist between the better-developed countries (often referred to as the Global North) and Africa and South Africa. Moreover, most studies conducted regarding historical consciousness and university students exist in the Global North and therefore there is a paucity of what we know about the historical consciousness of young people in Africa and South Africa.

2.8.1 Historical consciousness of young people in the Global North

The Global North refers to developed economies whereas the Global South is distinguished by poverty and developing economies, which are often found south of the equator (Odeh, 2010). In this section, I will provide insight into research conducted on continents such as North America, Europe, and Asia and in various countries such as Greece, Canada, Taiwan, and the United States of America regarding the historical consciousness of both young people and university students.

The first study involved primary and secondary school learners and university students and provided an interesting background. In a study conducted by Apostolidou in Greece, the historical consciousness of students in a situation of crisis was discussed. The 151 respondents were made up of primary school, high school, and university students who were asked to narrate the history of Greece to highlight their identity in the situation of crisis (Apostolidou,

2013).¹ Amongst the findings of this study was that students of all ages seemed to assign future historical significance to the economic crisis of the time. They assessed the situation using categories of war, filtering them through their “national” self-image (Apostolidou, 2013:12). One of the questions that was asked in this study was “Why do you think we learn history?” and responses to this question leaned towards avoiding making the same mistakes in the future (Apostolidou, 2013). This is indicative of the respondents making use of their historical consciousness to imagine a future different from the past and present for themselves.

Another study on historical consciousness that was conducted in Hungary by László suggests that “there is an increasing emphasis on researching and developing student’s historical consciousness” (László, 2021:1). This study was conducted to identify the level of historical consciousness that high school learners had with regard to a new curriculum that was implemented in 2020. This was done by asking learners whether they thought history should be a compulsory subject in high school. The responses to this question varied, but what is noteworthy are the reasons they gave as to whether history should be compulsory as this highlighted the historical consciousness of the students. Furthermore, László used Rüsen’s types of historical consciousness to assess the general characteristics and requirements of the Hungarian curriculum to gauge which type of historical consciousness in the curriculum was preferred. This study is useful in that it not only spoke to the historical consciousness of high school students but also looked at what type of historical consciousness the Hungarian high school curriculum expected the students to engage with.

As with the studies conducted in Greece and Hungary, a study conducted in Quebec, Canada focused on secondary school learners and their historical consciousness. The focus of this study was on how secondary school students created their identity. This study focused on French Canadian students’ historical consciousness with regard to social identity theory and

¹The crisis mentioned in the study above refers to the international economic crisis of 2013 and the ramifications that it had on the Greek economy. In 2013, Greece was facing its third year of recession, and, as a result, this led to major salary cuts, increases in tax and unemployment, food insecurity, and medication shortages throughout Greece. The International Monetary Fund, the European Union, and the European Central Bank provided economic support to Greece.

how this affected their present-day orientations (Lèvesque et al., 2013). The study showed that what Quebec students “learn in schools does not necessarily get reinforced by public culture” (Lèvesque et al., 2013:59). Also, much of how the students used their historical consciousness had to do with the way in which they interacted with public history and the history taught in schools (Lèvesque et al., 2013). This was relevant for my study as it reinforced the idea that students in secondary schools formed their own historical consciousness which helped to orientate themselves in the world. Thus they entered HEIs with a pre-formed historical consciousness., which, although it may develop and change over time, already exists.

Seixas speaks of articulating a conception of historical consciousness that allows for school history to move away from the memorisation of history towards practicing history (Seixas, 2005). Furthermore, the conception of this historical consciousness is such that it could recognise the prior historical consciousness of students and “include[s] a notion of what a more ‘advanced’ historical consciousness might be” (Seixas, 2005:141). In this study, high school students had to watch films based on history and respond to interview questions about them. The use of historical films allowed the students to engage with their historical consciousness and allowed Seixas to determine which of Rösen’s four types of historical consciousness the students had (Seixas, 2005).

The studies mentioned above were relevant to my study in that they provided a perspective on studies that had already been conducted. They depicted the ways in which historical consciousness had developed in young people. Furthermore, they highlighted the fact that students in schools already have a sense of historical consciousness and often engage with their historical consciousness when making sense of the world. However, the historical consciousness of university students globally also needed to be perused to set the scene for the historical consciousness of university students in South Africa.

2.8.2 Historical consciousness of university students in the Global North

A study conducted by Lèvesque and Zanazanian (2015) looked specifically at the historical consciousness of prospective history teachers in Canada. This study investigated prospective teachers’ knowledge and experiences in the history classroom, including the way in which they perceived and trusted sources and their visions of school history (Lèvesque & Zanazanian, 2015:391). By conducting this investigation, the historical consciousness of these pre-service teachers emerged as they referred to the past while making use of interpretive filters in order to

justify and mobilise their sense of agency (Lévesque & Zanazanian, 2015). Thus, according to that study, the historical consciousness of prospective teachers in Canada affected the way in which they engaged with history through learning and teaching, which also affected the way they acquired both pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge (Lévesque & Zanazanian, 2015:408). Therefore, it is evident that the historical consciousness of prospective teachers in the above-mentioned study was crucial and may have had a lasting effect not only on the prospective teachers but also on the learners that they would engage with. This is because, as a history teacher, one is ultimately responsible for facilitating historical knowledge and will display, whether consciously or unconsciously, their own bias and historical consciousness in the classroom.

Likewise, a recent study conducted in 2020 looked at the historical consciousness of pre-service teachers from various teacher education institutions in Taiwan (Sung, 2020). This study was done to identify “pre-service teachers’ historical consciousness of their national identity and teaching orientation” (Sung, 2020:685). This study focused on how the historical consciousness of pre-service teachers affected how they taught history in a society that was struggling to break away from the Chinese historical narrative and safeguard Taiwanese history (Sung, 2020). From 2003, both Chinese history and Taiwanese history has been taught to students at schools in a linear fashion, that is, from ancient times to the present, and this has potentially resulted in two collective memories and identities (Sung, 2020:687). The participants of this study had been taught this history linearly during the early 2000s and, at the time of this study, were pre-service teachers at various teacher education institutions. The school curriculum in Taiwan has since changed to incorporate three parts, namely Taiwanese history, Chinese history, and world history (Sung, 2020:687). It is interesting to note that the pre-service teachers who are identified as Taiwanese, displayed second-order historical aspects such as multiple perspectivity, historical evidence, identity, and multiculturalism when engaging with the curriculum. In the study that was conducted, Taiwanese preservice teachers defined history by focussing on various issues including values such as self-understanding and democracy more than the Chinese students in this study did (Sung, 2020). However, the pre-service teachers with a Chinese orientation towards historical consciousness saw Chinese history and Taiwanese history as interlinked (Sung, 2020). This study presented an interesting view of how pre-service teachers who had been through the same school curriculum may have had different historical identities and thus a different historical consciousnesses. The question that

arises is, do these pre-service teachers who embody a different historical consciousness intend to teach national identity in Taiwan differently?

One may assume that pre-service teacher's historical consciousness only affects the way in which they teach history in countries with conflicting histories, but this is not the case. A study conducted in 2021 showed that pre-service teachers in the United States of America were "often exposed to conflicting interpretations of the American past" (Curry & Horn, 2021:38). Despite being exposed to many more resources relating to history than at school level, these pre-service teachers also brought with them certain flattering ideas about American history and the greatness of historical figures that might have been difficult to overlook (Curry & Horn, 2021). The study focused on the historical consciousness of pre-service teachers in America to highlight whether they brought forward conflicting interpretations of American history (Curry & Horn, 2021). The critique that this study offers is that "those whose work involves the training of future storytellers of official history, be they historians or history teachers, can help improve the multi-perspectivity of the official narrative by introducing the contextual and shifting nature of historical narrative" (Curry & Horn, 2021:58). Therefore, the understanding of historical consciousness of students in universities globally, especially those studying to become history teachers, is vital in the broader understanding of how university students imagine the future based on their historical consciousness in South Africa.

Moreover, the studies previously conducted, as discussed above, illustrate the historical consciousness of students and pre-service teachers across the world. They portray the fact that historical consciousness plays a role in every country and that people in those countries deal with history in different ways. Furthermore, owing to its troubled past, South Africa may face several challenges not only with the way in which history is portrayed but also with regard to the historical consciousness of university students.

2.8.3 Historical consciousness of young people in Africa

To be historically conscious, one needs to use the past and the present to make sense of the future. However, the past may not always be relevant or easy to make use of when thinking about the future. This is especially true in the case of Africa where many African countries were colonised and may have suffered great hardships, such as civil unrest or war, during their struggle for freedom. Thus, we must distinguish the historical consciousness of young people

in Africa from those in the rest of the world with a view to understanding that, perhaps, as expertly said by Hartley, to young people in Africa “the past is a foreign country” (Hartley, 1978).

A study conducted in 2016 by Holmberg looked at how young people in Uganda narrated their past based on significant history and historical orientation (Holmberg, 2016). What makes this study significant is that it makes use of historical consciousness and related ideas. This study explored 219 written responses to three assignments by 73 participants. While a strong sense of nationality was foregrounded by the participants, an African identity also existed. Interestingly, studies conducted in other parts of the world do not emphasise the same sense belonging to a continent that this study does. Perhaps it is because of the shared colonial past in Africa that allows for an African identity to exist. Moreover, the colonial past was highlighted in almost all the narratives in this study indicating that, like in South Africa, Uganda’s troubled past remains key to using the past to experience the present and imagine the future. Holmberg’s study not only provided the reader with the context of the historical consciousness of young people in Africa but also provided a glance at aspects such as colonialism that form an integral part of African history. Thus, depicting Africa’s colonial past and other inequalities that existed in the past are vital in shaping the historical consciousness of young people in Africa. However, that study draws no comparison between aspects related to the historical consciousness of students in Africa and those in the rest of the world. For this study, it is important to highlight the gap that emerged from the review of the literature, that is, the lack of focus on the historical consciousness of university students in Africa and particularly in South Africa and the different ways in which historical consciousness is portrayed, used, and understood by young people and students at universities.

Another study of interest compared how Portuguese, Cape Verdean, and Mozambican students interpreted the contemporary past from a national and global perspective (Barca, 2015). This study made use of the Portuguese language as the unifying factor between the three countries. The participants of the study included 135 secondary school students who were asked to narrate the history of their own country and that of the world over the past 100 years (Barca, 2015). While some students from Portugal and Mozambique spoke of violence and danger when narrating world history, almost half of the participants from Cape Verde did not focus on world history at all, thus depicting a disassociation from the rest of the world that may exist among students from an island country like Cape Verde (Barca, 2015).

Additionally, the participants from Cape Verde held a confident and progressive view regarding change within their own country. The participants from Mozambique mentioned wars and various economic and social factors thus foregrounding the troubled past within their narratives (Barca, 2015). Additionally, these participants depicted a powerful sense of progress throughout their national narratives as they narrated the history of Mozambique from colonial times through to independence (Barca, 2015). The manner in which the participants in Africa narrated both their national and global histories differed from the Portuguese participants who vaguely described both the world wars, followed by the 1929 economic crisis, and finally resulting in a violent and unhappy present (Barca, 2015). This is significant when drawing parallels between participants in African countries who hoped for progress and the Portuguese participants who were despondent about the present.

Although there were similarities highlighted by the participants of the three countries, there were also significant differences. For example, the national narrative held more importance than the global narrative. However, the participants from Cape Verde and Mozambique depicted a less linear change in the world compared to participants from Portugal (Barca, 2015).

2.8.4 Historical consciousness of young people in South Africa

The perception of memory has become increasingly common for anchoring the past in collective experiences. Since the 1980s, traumatic or catastrophic memories have become the backdrop against which experiences of the past are set (Lorenz, 2010). This notion of memory could be one of the factors that affects South African students, especially because of the violent past experienced by South Africans. Thus, students feel that judgement based on a person's skin colour continues to form part of South African society as they are still experiencing it in their everyday lives (Oelofse & Vries, 2016). University students who speak about the complexities that they face with regard to university life provide an understanding of what they may have to deal with, especially when coming from backgrounds that do not prepare them for the academics or culture of universities in South Africa (Edmon, 2010). In 2015, South Africa experienced an outcry from students who wanted the "colonisers' statue" of Cecil John Rhodes to be removed because they saw it as the colonial past being remembered in a glorified manner. The idea of a colonial ruler automatically brought forth the trauma attached to South Africa's past. Perhaps this was because the trauma left behind by our past was, and still is, remembered even by the generations who did not live through those experiences. It could also

be because there were struggles that 21st century South African university students faced that were a legacy left behind by the past.

The CAPS document highlights the various protests and marches that took place in the struggle for freedom and the violence that accompanied these marches and protests to guide the education of the country by highlighting the struggle for freedom and serve as a reminder to the current generation about the struggles discussed in certain sections of the history curriculum. It is with this knowledge of history that the youth of South Africa come out of school and go into universities. It is imperative to shed some light on the protests that took place in South Africa during 2015 and 2016 and thereby gain insight into the historical consciousness of students at universities in South Africa in order to discover what their historical thinking is and, thus, how they interact with the past.

For the purpose of this literature review, two campaigns will be analysed: #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. The student-led movements #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall have drawn considerable analysis, speculation, and reactions in South Africa (Glenn, 2016:83). Many of the students who took part in the protests were protesting because they felt that their expectations had not been met. In order to participate and take responsibility for their democracy, citizens of all ages called on their sense of responsibility towards others (Lemay-Hébert, 2009). There was a sense of idealism and solidarity from students across the country that had not been seen in a long time and, in March 2015, some students at the University of Cape Town decided that the statue of Cecil John Rhodes needed to be removed from the university's main campus which interestingly is built on land that was donated by Cecil John Rhodes (Nordlinger, 2016). Additionally, "commemorative activity requires an audience" which must agree with the values and ideas of those who encounter the commemorative act (Wallis, 2019:23). While the University of Cape Town eventually removed the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, the vigour, excitement, and enthusiasm of the students across South Africa remained for months to follow.

The #FeesMustFall campaign followed shortly thereafter and, within a few weeks, students at universities across South Africa were calling for financial restructuring of university funds. According to Glenn (2016), "several analyses of these movements have seen them as the reaction of the poorest of the poor. But UCT had one of the wealthiest student bodies in the country." (Glenn, 2016:88). One could, therefore, argue that perhaps, apart from financial

constraints, another aspect that drove the students to protest was the historical consciousness that reminded them of the struggles that their parents and grandparents had undergone in South Africa coupled by with financial inequality which was, and still is, an aftermath of apartheid. However, there were also many student protesters who came from privileged, well-off families, such as children of university professors, vice-chancellors, major political figures, and heads of parastatals, who were prominent activists in the #FeesMustFall campaign. This suggests that the struggle should not be understood as being primarily about affordability but more about the underlying ideology and principles (Glenn, 2016). Therefore, “according to the students, the dream of equality amongst all citizens in South Africa is still, to this day, not accomplished” (Oelofse & Vries, 2016:172). Thus, the difference between equity and equality in South African higher education with regard to the #FeesMustFall campaign that took place is yet to be explored.

According to Edmon (2010:10), “universities feel the pressure to diversify racially” and, in the higher education space, “race never presents itself as an autonomous phenomenon’. With the pressure intensified since the recent protests and campaigns, the universities, as physical spaces of interaction, allowed for the development of consciousness in the university students, thereby enabling thought about their imagined future.

Regarding the historical consciousness that was displayed by university students in South Africa through the protests that took place, one of the things that need to be remembered is that our contemporary views and prejudices cannot be written into history as we do not possess the power to rewrite the past (Lemon, 2016). However, it is in crisis periods that we look to the past for guidance and, when ideas are contested, young people often revert to (and hence reinforce) their notions about the past (Wallis, 2019). In a recent study conducted at a South African university, notions of race and ethnicity in first-year participants who had taken history as an elective subject in school were seen as deeply rooted in young South Africans’ narratives of history, despite living in a post-apartheid era (Wassermann, 2018). However, the ideas of the past that young people remember is the period before democracy even though it is almost three decades post-apartheid. Often, scratching at historical wounds can be described as the “results of historical injustices caused by past actions” (Lorenz, 2010:84).

In 1999, a study by Kwang-Su (1999), seen through a presentism lens, sought to investigate historical consciousness and its relationship to the cultural identity of students who were

studying History at selected South African universities. The study focused on the historical consciousness of students in South Africa during the first few years after the first democratic elections, that is, 1994 to 1999. The main objective of the research was to determine and measure the nature and level of historical consciousness of university students in South Africa. However, the study by Kwang-Su (1999) did not adopt a futuristic lens; rather, it aimed at investigating the relationship between cultural identity and historical consciousness. Almost 22 years later, I have explored a more recent account of the historical consciousness of university students in South Africa, and, most importantly, through a futuristic lens.

A study conducted by Angier (2017) at the University of Cape Town investigated the knowledge and understanding of the national past that was derived from narrative accounts of South African history. The study made use of narrative accounts of 27 students who had recently completed the national school history curriculum. It sought to highlight the importance of racial identity as a factor in the formation of national historical consciousness in post-apartheid South Africa. Another study conducted by Wassermann (2018), researched the personal narratives of 31 first-year history education students to analyse their stories through narrative inquiry. While the historical consciousness of university students was being analysed, the focus remained on the past with a contrast between apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

2.9 Conclusion

It has been stated that “he who controls the present, controls the past, and he who controls the past, controls the future” (Wassermann, 2007:31). Many studies have been conducted over the years about historical consciousness, which has been discussed for many decades. This literature review has found that all students enter the university space with some historical consciousness, whether official or unofficial. Student’s historical consciousness may also be influenced by a number of factors that develop over time because the past, present, and future are dynamic and ever-changing, especially in a country like South Africa. However, as can be seen from the literature review above, there needs to be more exploration of the way in which students as future educators make use of their historical consciousness to imagine the future. Therefore, based on the above review of the literature, I as the researcher sought to fill part of the existing gap in the research, that is, the historical consciousness that university students who are studying education have regarding the future and, in doing so, broaden the

understanding of the concepts of historical consciousness and the imagined future of university students.

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, the research methodology and design that I used to conduct this study will be discussed. First, I will discuss the research design, which includes a qualitative research approach, an interpretivist research paradigm, and ontological and epistemological assumptions. Next, the research methodology, which is a descriptive case study, and the methods used will be explored. This study made use of the secondary data analysis method as the original data was collected in 2018 using open-ended surveys. I will then discuss the sample in detail and include aspects of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3 - Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

My research design and methodology aimed to highlight the research process whereby the historical consciousness of university education students regarding the imagined future was explored. The themes that were theoretically framed in the first chapter and further explored in the literature review in Chapter 2 guided the research design and methodology. Moreover, the methodological assumptions and the meta-theory that fostered my choice for qualitative research will be explained. Therefore, the research design and methodology discussed in this chapter will allow for the analysis of the pre-existing data in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I will explain the qualitative research design which will address the exploration of how university students use the past and present to imagine the future based on their historical consciousness. The paradigmatic framework will discuss social constructivism from an interpretivist paradigm point of view and will allow for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, the research approach to the study which is aligned with the theoretical framework will also be unpacked and followed by an explanation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which the study is based. An explanation of the research methodology, the chosen descriptive case study method that was used to analyse the data, the data analysis, and the chosen sampling methods will also be discussed in this chapter. Lastly, aspects of trustworthiness, the limitations of the study, and the ethical considerations will be addressed.

3.2 Research design

Research design may be interpreted as the plan according to which a researcher wants to carry out the research. This can be seen as an outline of the research that is used to iron out any theoretical errors or hindrances that may occur while conducting the research. Moreover, the research design can be understood as the connections between the research questions, the research data, and the strategies that are used for analysing the data (Yin, 2016). Additionally, the research design in this dissertation aimed to bring together the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the methodological paradigms in a coherent way.

A research design consists of the research approach, and, in this study, a qualitative approach has been used. Furthermore, it comprises the research paradigm which, in this case, is interpretivism with an in-depth focus on social constructivism. The research design is informed by the “ontological and epistemological perspectives, research skills and research practices, and the specific method of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (Leavy, 2014:86). The ontological and epistemological assumptions in this study, that is, a relativist ontology and interpretivist epistemology will also be discussed.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

The research paradigm for this study consisted of social constructivism within the interpretivist paradigm. Qualitative researchers like me seek to understand how people understand their experiences and the world around them and use this understanding to make meaning of their circumstances (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:15). This can be understood by means of interpretivism. Furthermore, the research paradigm looks at understanding the subjective world of human experiences and is characterised by a concern for the individual (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Therefore, interpretivism as the research paradigm in this study lent itself to constructing a life world based on making meaning and, within this paradigm, social constructivism is based on the idea that all the understanding and knowledge that we have is socially constructed. This means that our own reality (as with the students in this study) is created through social interactions, relationships, and experiences (Leavy, 2014).

Interpretivism also speaks to creating meaningful understanding based on human experience, in this case, first-year Faculty of Education university students and their experiences which allow for imagining the future based on their historical consciousness (Maree, 2015). Furthermore, interpretivists assume that reality is not “objectively determined but is socially constructed” and there is no single observable reality present within the interpretivist paradigm (Maree, 2015:60). This is the case because there are multiple realities present within any given situation. Moreover, interpretivism speaks to the construction of meaning and is strongly influenced by phenomenology. Thus, social constructivism within interpretivism is aimed at analysing qualitative data to extract meaningful and symbolic content (Maree, 2015).

One of the branches of social constructivism that is relevant to my study is symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is based on the idea that all aspects of society are socially created through social interactions that take place both on a macro and micro level.

Thus, social interactions, as can be seen with the first-year Faculty of Education students, create shared meaning of the world around us, especially in terms of defining our emotions, experiences, and mannerisms such as gender norms and other inexplicit behaviour that is taught through social interactions (Leavy, 2014).

The above highlights my choice of social constructivism within interpretivism because historical consciousness is rooted in history which can be seen as a social science. The study of history and historical consciousness can also be identified as being aware of the way in which people interact with each other in the past and the present. Thus, social constructivism within interpretivism allows for university students to be historically conscious based on the social interactions that they may have had with history and the past. Also, by studying students in their natural environment on campus, one can understand how the past and present are used to imagine the future. Using social constructivism within interpretivism as my research paradigm serves to highlight the multiple realities that are present at any given time. Hence, multiple first-year Faculty of Education university students' use of historical consciousness can be explored with regard to the way in which the future is imagined. Inductive data analysis is used in the interpretivist paradigm in which themes are allowed to emerge from the data itself (Maree, 2016). Therefore, as the researcher, I aimed to understand the perspectives of university education students about the future by making use of social constructivism within interpretivism. This was to interpret the conceptions that students may have had about historical consciousness based on the way that they imagined the future.

Social constructivism within interpretivism can be seen as a paradigmatic guide to my study as it is based on interpretations and explanations by people. This is because, by studying people, one can understand the perceptions they have of their own activities. Furthermore, the use of social constructivism within the interpretivist paradigm allowed for multiple perspectives of first-year Faculty of Education students with regard to how they imagined the future of South Africa.

3.2.2 *Research approach*

The research approach that is used within this study is a qualitative one. Qualitative research can be defined as a “carefully thought through narrative of preliminary decisions that harmonise and provide initial guidance for the investigator’s fieldwork” (Saldaña, 2011:87).

Moreover, qualitative research examines the quality of relationships, situations, and activities. This allows for the focus to remain on understanding the context and explaining the intentionality of behaviours, relationships, situations, and activities (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). Researchers using a qualitative research approach (as I did) seek to discover or explore new ideas instead of verifying a predetermined idea and therefore emphasise natural settings which, in the case of this study, is the University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus (Sherman & Webb, 2005). Thus, qualitative research is often referred to as a natural approach (Sherman & Webb, 2005). However, one of the challenges of qualitative research is that researchers like me are both insiders and outsiders when interpreting the data. Being both an insider and outsider allows the researcher to have a closer understanding of what the participants have lived through or experienced (Sherman & Webb, 2005). Therefore, the researcher acts as both an insider and an outsider to the research because the researcher, me in the case of this dissertation, needs to submerge themselves into the experience to fully understand the experiences of the participants while acting as an outsider to avoid researcher bias. However, the researcher also needs to apply a critical lens when judging and analysing the data thus making the researcher an outsider to the research (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010).

By adopting a qualitative approach, I attempted to explore the historical consciousness of university students by engaging with the participants in this study in their natural setting while examining real-life events and situations as captured in their responses (Goodman, 2011). Also, a qualitative approach enabled me to not only to interact with the ideas of others but also to understand “the complex relationships between, within, and among people and groups including our own entanglements” (Leavy, 2014:2). Thus, the way in which the participants, the first-year Faculty of Education university students, used their historical consciousness and drew on their interactions with themselves and others in relation to an imagined future could be explored through qualitative research. Using a qualitative research approach allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research setting (the university) and the complex relationships between the people in this setting (the students).

3.2.3 *Ontological and epistemological assumptions*

Ontology is a “philosophical belief system” which examines the nature of social reality, what can be learned regarding this reality, and how can this learning take place. It can also be described as what is believed regarding the nature of reality (Leavy, 2014:3). Epistemology can be seen as a philosophical belief about “how research proceeds as an embodied activity”, and how one represents the role of the researcher as well as the relationship between the researcher and the research participants (Leavy, 2014:3). Based on the paradigm and approach that have been highlighted above, the following section will discuss both the ontological and epistemological assumptions made in this study. Ontology attempts to answer the question of what reality is and how it can be described through key ontological questions that needed to be reflected on by me, as the researcher, before the research could be conducted. These questions give rise to distinct ontological positions such as realism, relativism, materialism, and idealism (Maree, 2019). Ontology seeks to interpret one’s philosophical beliefs regarding social reality and, more specifically, whether there are single or multiple realities present (Yin, 2016).

Ontological assumptions are based on the nature or essence of the social phenomenon that is being investigated. This study will take on a relativist ontological positioning. Relativism is based on the ability of the individual to construct meaning; this allowed the participants in this study to use their historical consciousness when making meaning of the present and imagining a future as multiple realities are present within relativism. Moreover, within relativism, realities are seen as a social construct and are not objectively determined, thus participants may imagine for themselves a future based on how they make use of relativism (Maree, 2019). The ontological assumptions are that social reality is constructed and characterised by diversity since different people interpret events in different ways which may result in multiple perspectives of a single incident (Maree, 2019). Consequently, the use of relativism as an ontological positioning in this study allows for the exploration of university students’ diverse historical consciousness in which the future is imagined. This is inherently important in a qualitative study of university students’ historical consciousness and the imagined future as all students will have different perspectives and thus portray a different historical consciousness based on their personal encounters with official and unofficial history.

On the other hand, epistemology can be seen as the “study of the process of knowing” or how we know what is known (Leavy, 2014:82). Epistemology refers to the nature and form of knowledge and the manner of knowing and learning about the social world. It aims at proposing answers to questions such as, how can we know about reality? (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

For this study, the epistemological assumption that I will apply is interpretivist in nature. Interpretivism within epistemology allowed me as the researcher to study the participants in a subjective manner while trying to avoid bias. From an epistemological perspective, interpretivism seeks to understand the world and experiences of other human beings (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). With regard to interpretivism, the goal is not to eliminate researcher bias but rather to allow for aspects such as trustworthiness to be enhanced so that multiple perspectives can be documented, and the contextualised experiences of the participants can be highlighted.

3.3 Research methodology

The research methodology seeks to explain how the study was practically conducted by describing the approaches and methods that have been used in the study (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). The research methodology can also be seen as the principles that guide the research (Leavy, 2014). A research methodology consists of the methodology used which, in the case of this study, is a descriptive case study. It also consists of the procedures and techniques that have been employed to collect and analyse the data.

3.3.1 Descriptive case study

The research methodology for this study is a descriptive case study. The term case study is often used interchangeably with qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). However, certain characteristics differentiate a descriptive case study from other types of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A descriptive case study involves an empirical inquiry that looks at a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and when multiple sources of evidence are used” (Maree, 2019:121). Case studies seek to get as close to the subject that is being studied as possible to generate knowledge of the case. This is done through the engagement of the participants in their natural settings (in this case, university students at the University of Pretoria)

and through access to subjective factors such as their feelings, thoughts, and desires (Yin, 2016). Furthermore, descriptive case studies “portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and thick descriptions of participants’ lived experiences of thoughts about and feelings for a situation” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

With regard to a descriptive case study, the main aim is to portray, analyse, and interpret the participants’ unique understanding through accessible interpretations of different cases (Cohen, 2007) thus enabling researchers such as me to work through the participants’ unique data in order to reach an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this research methodology, the researcher exposed herself to new opportunities and insights while simultaneously searching for meaning and understanding. This makes the researcher the primary source of data analysis.

Therefore, the use of a descriptive case study in this research ensured a nuanced understanding of the first-year students at the University of Pretoria and how their historical consciousness related to the imagined future. This will hopefully enable an addition to the existing body of knowledge on historical consciousness. In this regard, I, as the researcher, can explore the historical consciousness of multiple first-year Faculty of Education students through pre-existing data.

3.3.2 Research method

For this study, I made use of pre-existing data in the form of open-ended surveys that were collected by Prof. Johan Wassermann and Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar. The pre-existing data used in this study stemmed from a large-scale project that dealt with youth and education and focused specifically on first-year Faculty of Education students. That data were derived in 2018 from the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Therefore, this study used secondary data analysis which can be defined as making use of existing data for research (Johnston, 2014). Secondary data analysis looks at the way in which one may apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge and skills to address the research questions of a study by making use of existing data (Johnston, 2014).

The open-ended surveys that were used as data in that study were collected to allow participants to express themselves freely, based on the survey questions, and consisted of 12 questions. Furthermore, because that question was open-ended, it allowed the students to

provide their narratives using their past and present as points of reference. However, for the purposes of this study, I analysed the responses only to Question 8 which was specifically related to the future. This question asked: Tell me, how do you see the future of South Africa?

Historical consciousness, as discussed in the literature review, cannot be defined using a single definition. Hence, to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future, conclusions could only be drawn from the outward manifestation of the participants' historical consciousness. This was achieved by analysing the participants' narrative responses to the open-ended surveys.

The participants in this study were given complete autonomy to generate their own responses to the open-ended survey in a written manner, thus allowing them to be more sincere and authentic. This might have led to rich data as the participants were not given options to choose from and were able to provide a personalised account of how they imagined the future.

3.4 Sampling

Data sampling refers to the “selection of people, organisations, locations or events” to be included in a research project (Leavy, 2014:541). In qualitative research, sampling can either be probability or non-probability. For this research study, the data sampling technique that was used was non-probability purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling is conducted when the researcher wishes to discover, gain insight, and understand something about the participants of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the case of this study, the data was collected using purposive sampling by Prof. Johan Wassermann and Prof. Saloshna Vandeyar. Therefore, the sample selected by the researchers was one that allowed for an in-depth understanding of a specific case, which was the first-year Faculty of Education students in 2018. Non-probability purposive sampling was chosen so as to capture as many responses as possible from that population of students who had completed their secondary schooling and had just started studying education at university, may have repeated the first-year of an Education degree or decided to change their degree after studying for a few years at a tertiary institution. Therefore, non-probability sampling allowed for an analysis of how they imagined the future.

Purposive sampling cannot be generalisable as it is used to gain insight of people's special experiences and competencies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For example, in the case of this

research, the experiences and competencies of the participants of this study may not be easily generalisable to people who are not first-year Faculty of Education university students. Furthermore, “participants in purposive sampling are selected as they are seen to represent characteristics that are of interest to the research topics at hand” (Maree, 2019:389). The goal of purposive sampling is to emphasise information-rich sources (Yin, 2016). Having participants complete open-ended surveys and make use of purposive sampling allowed me to harvest knowledge-rich data that was related to the research questions and the purpose and focus of this study.

The participants at the time at which the study was conducted (in 2018) were first-year Education students at the University of Pretoria’s Groenkloof Campus. The sampled group of students belonged to one faculty, on one campus, at one university, and they were all enrolled to become teachers. Thus, due to the research design, the sample included the entire population. This was because the sample should have been well represented in that the researcher had to ensure that the parameter characteristics of the wider population (sample frame) were early and correctly set (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Because the sample consisted of first-year students, access to the sample was available and realistic.

In this study, four main factors regarding sampling will be explored, namely sample size, representativeness, limitations of the study, and access to the sampling strategy (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Using a larger sample size in my study not only allowed me to broaden my study of university student’s historical consciousness regarding the imagined future but also created greater trustworthiness in the study itself. I made use of 155 participants chosen at random from approximately 800 participants. This was because “survey research should have no fewer than 100 cases in each major subgroup and 20 to 50 in each minor subgroup” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:100). All the first-year Education students were sampled, but they could decide whether they wanted to participate in the project. These students matched the criteria for the participants in the study and thus could be approached easily. For my study, the sample size that I selected (n) was a percentage of the total population (N).

As with a descriptive case study, the research conducted did not start with any predicted patterns but rather began with an open-ended research question, What is the historical

consciousness of university students with regard to the imagined future? This “would lead to the use of an explanation building technique” (Maree, 2019:122).

3.5 Data collection method

The data collection methods describe the way data was collected. This study made use of secondary pre-existing data in the form of open-ended surveys. The data was not collected by me, as the researcher.

Some of the advantages of using pre-existing data as I did are that the researcher does not have to spend time and money collecting new data. Furthermore, “the opportunity for collaboration is enhanced” when making use of pre-existing data (Jones, 2010:1011). Moreover, using pre-existing data took time and effort for me to understand the study as a whole, the research design used, and the sample and population from which the study was derived (Jones, 2010).

I began my study in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic in which, due to the various lockdown levels and the uncertainty that came along with the pandemic, collecting data for this study proved to be challenging. Therefore, I opted to make use of pre-existing data. In addition, the pre-existing data was collected by seasoned academics Professors Wassermann and Vandeyar, who made use of a well-developed and piloted survey to ensure that the study remained authentic and that the data collected adhered to the norms of data collection through open-ended surveys. This enhanced the trustworthiness of my study.

Surveys are used to collect data at a particular point in time with the aim of “describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determining the relationship between specific events” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison., 2007:205). Open-ended surveys are often conducted to describe any generalised features by examining broader issues such as populations, and programmes, and they provide descriptive, inferential, and explanatory information (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Open-ended surveys are seen as an inexpensive method of collecting data and can be described as exploratory as no assumptions or models are suggested thus allowing patterns and relationships to be explored and making it easy to compare and analyse the data collected from students. For this reason, the open-ended surveys conducted did not distinguish between race, gender, and other demographics which may have affected the students.

Although the open-ended surveys that I used in this study formed part of a bigger project which dealt with youth and education, the focus was only on the single question related to historical consciousness and the future. The students completed the survey anonymously and the data was then electronically transcribed in its original state, so no omissions or grammatical errors were corrected. Therefore, the data collection method enabled me to explore the historical consciousness of university students by analysing the open-ended surveys from students and thus exploring their historical consciousness regarding the imagined future.

3.6 Data analysis and writing up

Data analysis can be described as the process during which linguistic or visual material can be classified and interpreted to state implied and specific dimensions and allow for making meaning of the material (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data analysis is seen as a process that is ongoing to avoid having data that is “unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:197). For this study, I analysed 155 of the 800 open-ended surveys that were collected through random-purposive sampling using an inductive data analysis approach with open coding.

Open coding can be described as “reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units” (Maree, 2019:136). Open coding breaks down qualitative data analysis into smaller parts in order to examine them for similarities and differences (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2016). Within open coding, the codes can be seen as objectives that are transparent representations of facts (Maree, 2019). The coding process assisted me, as the researcher, “to quickly retrieve and collect all the text and other data ... so that the sorted bits can be examined together, and different cases compared in that respect” (Maree, 2019:136). This was done by analysing the data from the open-ended surveys that were disseminated to first-year university students at the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.

To identify themes within the data sets, I made use of codes which are “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2016:4). The use of codes further allowed me to link the data analysis to the explanation or meaning that I attributed to it. Moreover, each individual datum to which I assigned a code was later used to detect patterns, categorise, and build on the relevant theories in order to summarise and distil

the data (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2016). By doing so, I began to search for patterns within the coded data to categorise them as can be seen in Figure 3.1. Along with the research design, methodology, and ontological and epistemological assumptions, my own subjectivities, personality, and predispositions also influenced the open coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2016).

Because coding is seen as cyclical, I initially coded the data and then re-coded it to refine and reorganise the codes and categories. This was done after deep reflection of the emerging patterns by paying careful attention to language so that the data was well managed. Therefore, the data during the second cycle of coding underwent multiple filters and scrutiny so as to create categories and themes within the data. These categories were labelled and colour coded in order to highlight general categories across the data. This can be seen in Figure 3. 1 in which I created a system based on words within the data that were similar to each other.

Question 8: Tell me how do you see the future of South Africa?
 Research question: What is the historical consciousness of university students with regard to the future?
 Research question: How does the historical consciousness of university students affect their vision of the future

Words from data that are the same/similar

Positive/ good/ successful future- I already see it as great

Good teachers/education/education etc

Ambitious people

Willing to make a difference/ bright/ bring change/ successful- I believe/ hope that we have the ability to make it great

Move away from past/ racism etc- we have to move past the past and heal from the wounds of the past etc

Negative/ bad/ doomed future- I don't believe we can have a good future. Bad leadership

Technological influence

Bring back the past in the future

How I see it and how I want to see it isn't the same

No response

Figure 3. 1: Coding the data based on words that were similar to each other

During the second cycle of coding, as the data analysis continued, the university students' historical consciousness about the imagined future became more apparent. The way in which they used their historical consciousness started to formulate themes within the data. The 10 initial categories were eventually reduced to only five and were renamed to what seemed to resonate with the way in which the participants used their historical consciousness when imagining the future. Of these five categories, some categories contained clusters of coded

data and therefore required further refinement into subcategories. The consolidation of these categories and subcategories further allowed for the data to progress towards themes and subthemes.

The choice of nouns used to describe how the future was imagined using historical consciousness was also considered and aspects such as hope, positivity, improved technology, better education, motivated people, racism, poverty, and despair were highlighted. I continued coding and recoding the data until I reached saturation. Saturation is reached “when no new information seems to emerge during coding, that is, when no new properties, dimensions, conditions, actions/interactions, or consequences are seen in the data” (Saldaña, 2016:248). Furthermore, in order to reach saturation, all the data needs to be accounted for in the categories and subcategories and no new insights can be found (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With regard to this study, I coded and re-coded the data by labelling it, sorting it into categories and subcategories and colour coding the data in order to reach saturation. This can be seen in Figure 3.1, where, for example, Participant 62’s response is highlighted in three different colours to indicate that there were three major categories that the participant spoke of, namely technological influence, education, and the willingness to make a difference in the future.

As depicted in Table 3. 1, using the broad categories that were identified, such as technology, a bright future, and education, themes within the data were then developed. The following table provides insight as how the data was coded using open coding. Broad themes that emerged included romanticising the future, pragmatists who believe that maybe the future will be great based on their historical consciousness; realists who believe that there is work that needs to be done in order for the future to be great, and fatalists who believe that the future is full of despondency.

Table 3. 1: Example depicting how some responses lent themselves to more than one theme through open coding

| | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 62 | 16109814 | South Africa will develop under academics. It will be the best developed country and technology will be much better. |
| 63 | 17116865 | I see the future to be very bright. I believe our children re going to change South Africa for the better. |
| 64 | 16227817 | The future is a bright one. The country may hit a few potholes along the way, but the newer generations will overlook these mistakes and move forward stronger. |
| 65 | 11019493 | With UP's 2025 vision, I see better education for South-Africa. Better education equals to a brighter future for any country. I see a greater quality of education for South Africa. |
| 66 | 17319847 | South Africa's future is brighter than ever because this nowadays everyone even little kids "our future" take education very very seriously. This is an advantage for us as a country. |
| 67 | 17275963 | Unclear because South Africas is not a nation with consistency. |
| 68 | 17326983 | I think it would be technological enovative since everything is done through technology. |
| 69 | 17239821 | South Africa will have a bright future because young people have desire to learn new things and have experiences on it. -Everyone at high school have passion to see himself/herself on tertiary school. |
| 70 | 16003307 | I see a future full of struggle and illiterasle unless we rise up and change it. |
| 71 | 16135394 | I see the future of South Africa going extremely well or extremely bad. It could go either ways depending on the government. We need to all be equal and help those before you help yourself. |
| 72 | 17344566 | As a better South Africa which has grown. The economy will be strong again and there won't be any struggle. |
| 73 | 17344124 | I see the future of South Africa in a very standertized and upper level because things are starting to change now, technology is escalating day by day. |
| 74 | 17324212 | Without necessary intervention, South Africa might become the most illiterate country. Worst case scenario is that the currency might also drop. |
| 75 | 17345449 | I feel that eventually us South Africans will abundance our ancestral ways and finally be able to work together for a better South Africa that's a positive one. |

Table 3. 2: Example of open coding that was used to create themes within the data

| | | |
|----|-----------|---|
| 46 | 17147868 | I see a bright future, because if everyone works together, we can make it a better place. |
| 47 | 17058270 | The future of SA is good, if we all work on the common goal. |
| 48 | 17060525 | No data. |
| 49 | 16028679 | I see us growing and leading the world with education and agriculture. |
| 50 | 17320102 | I see South Africa becoming an economically independent nation. |
| 51 | 17031380 | I feel that my generation has a lot to say and is ready to voice their opinions, especially the women. If these people get the chance to do such, South Africa could fly. |
| 52 | 15303226 | Politically I see the future of South Africa having been dragged in the mud destroyed before it even begins all in the name of freedom by the people who believe that just because they fought for this freedom they can misuse it. |
| 53 | 17164096 | Firstly most of South African are now educated so I can surely say that in future will have South Africa who will love education and make our country a better place. |
| 54 | 17249318 | BI see the future of South Africa growing in education and the access of getting a good education is beyond praises also see it becoming a better place of people succeeding. |
| 55 | 17013875 | I see a future where we focus more on unity, respect, academic than to focus on all the negative. We as SA can help each other build a positive future. |
| 56 | 17074739 | I see the future of South Africa ending up like Zimbabwe unless change takes place which I don't think it will. |
| 57 | 17204951 | South Africa's future is looking bright as a developing country as more and more South Africans are getting better in academics (education) and other industries. |
| 58 | 17339759 | I see the future of South Africa with no physical labour, I see computers everywhere. |
| 59 | 160377988 | I see a unity standing together. |
| 60 | 17037396 | I see SA as a 'smart country' where almost everything will be taught on or with some sort of technology. |
| 61 | 17037868 | I do not see the future of South Africa possibly going into a reverse apartheid. I see South Africa being run into the ground and becoming more poverty stuck than presently. |

3.7 Trustworthiness

One of the key assumptions of qualitative research with an interpretivist angle is that reality is ever-changing, multi-dimensional, and holistic thus making it difficult to be measured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This is one of the reasons why trustworthiness is an important factor in qualitative research. Trustworthiness refers to the “degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of the study” (Connelly, 2016:435). Trustworthiness also refers to the way in which data is collected, categorised, and classified (Gunawan, 2015). This section focuses on the way that I, as the researcher, ensured trustworthiness in my study.

Trustworthiness can be ensured in the research study by informing “the reader of our research processes” and by ensuring that the study is carried out with integrity (Leavy, 2014:604). I ensured trustworthiness in this study by making sure that I carried out the study with integrity and ensuring that I did not infringe on the rights of any person related to the study. This was enhanced through the use of pre-existing data that was collected by Prof Wassermann and Vandeyar who are both experienced researchers. During data analysis, the data was coded and re-coded the data until it reached saturation level to ensure that the data interpretation remained accurate. The quality of the study was also enhanced through consistency in the coded data (as can be seen from Tables 3. 1 and 3. 2) thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the study.

In this study, I made use of criteria that were outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and which are widely accepted by qualitative researchers (Gunawan, 2015). These criteria include credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. Conformability ensures that the participants’ views are reflected and are not influenced by the researcher (Tong & Dew, 2016). Because I used pre-existing data and had no direct contact with the participants of this study, conformability was ensured. This is the case with dependability too, which relates to how the data was recorded and transcribed in an authentic and transparent manner (Tong & Dew, 2016). The collected data was stored in its original form and then further transcribed in its original form including all grammatical errors and omissions.

Credibility refers to the “confidence in the truth of the study and therefore its findings” (Gunawan, 2015:435). One of the ways to ensure the credibility of a study is to use mechanical means to record the data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In the case of this research, credibility was ensured within the study because the original data was transcribed electronically without any

alterations to it. Therefore, the data existed with all the spelling and grammatical errors. The original data remains stored in its raw form without spelling, grammar or any other alterations should its credibility ever be in question. Also, more than one researcher working together reinforces the integrity of the research process through multi-perspectivity and thus reinforces the findings (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The credibility of the study was further enhanced by having one of the researchers of the original project, Professor Wassermann, as the supervisor of this study; he ensured that the data was used appropriately.

Transferability refers to the ability to include elements such as detailed descriptions of the location, people, and context along with making sure that one is transparent about trustworthiness and analysis without making generalised claims about the findings (Gunawan, 2015). Thus, using transferability, researchers focus on the story of the participants without claiming it to be everyone's story in order to paint a vivid picture that can resonate with the readers (Gunawan, 2015). Transferability in this study has been ensured through rich and detailed descriptions of the participants and their location and the context in which this study took place. In this study, there is ample data given about the participants of the study without generalising the results of the study, which contributes to the transferability. The total number of in this study was 155. The data remains authentic in that it consists of many participants who came from different backgrounds. Furthermore, the participants' gender, age, race, or any other demographics have not been disclosed making the data collected unbiased.

3.8 Ethical considerations and implications

In order for a study to be considered ethical, there needs to be a clear ethical stance from the researcher. Furthermore, there needs to be a clear balance between the interests of the researcher and the values and rights of the participants for a study to be conducted in an ethical manner (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In this study, the ethical considerations included the methods used to achieve trustworthiness as mentioned in the section above. Moreover, ethical considerations for this study were ensured through participant involvement and institutional clearance.

This study was made available to all first-year Faculty of Education University of Pretoria students in 2018, but the students had autonomy as to whether they wanted to participate in the study. Furthermore, the participants of this study remained anonymous throughout. Participants are considered anonymous when the researcher or other persons cannot identify

the participant from the information provided (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) thereby eliminating the negative consequences of the invasion of privacy in terms of ethical considerations and ensuring equality, in this case, exploring the historical consciousness of university students about the imagined future without consideration of race, gender, religion, and so on (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

With regard to institutional clearance, ethical clearance from the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee was granted. Ethical clearance is a requirement at the University of Pretoria when any research is conducted through the university. Through the Ethics Committee, all research applications are reviewed to make sure that ethical behaviour is constantly adopted by researchers. Ethical clearance for the pre-existing data used in this study was obtained by Professor Johan Wassermann and Professor Saloshna Vandeyar in 2018 (Ref No. UP 16/11/01). I obtained ethical clearance to make use of this data in 2021 with the reference EDU129/21. Therefore, having ethical clearance for this study means that the rights and values of the participants were not infringed upon.

3.9 Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations of this study are that the research focused on participants from only one university and thus could not be easily generalised to other universities regarding historical consciousness. Furthermore, while everyone possesses historical consciousness to some extent, one of the criteria for inclusion in the sample of the study was that the participants needed to be registered at the University of Pretoria in the Faculty of Education in 2018. Because I used pre-existing data, I did not have any contact with the research participants. While this may have assisted with ensuring reliability, it is difficult to determine what the historical consciousness of the students about taking part in this survey might have been. Also, the participants of the study consisted only of first-year students during one particular year.

3.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the research design and methodology of the study. The study made use of a qualitative research approach within the interpretivist and social constructivist research paradigm while looking through a relativist ontological lens and an interpretivist epistemological lens.

The research methodology that was elaborated on in this chapter was a case study research methodology. The data used for this study was pre-existing data in the form of open-ended surveys disseminated to first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus. Data analysis was conducted using open coding through a thematic approach to explore the historical consciousness of the participants regarding the imagined future.

Aspects of the research design and methodology discussed in this chapter allow for a detailed data analysis and interpretation in the chapter to follow, Chapter 4. Based on the categories and subcategories that were derived during the open coding process, the themes and subthemes that emerged will be used to analyse the data in Chapter 4 and the findings will be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 - Data analysis and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings related to the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future will be discussed by analysing and interpreting the pre-existing data from first-year Faculty of Education university students. This discussion will explore the historical consciousness that these university students had regarding the imagined future. The themes for this chapter were derived through open coding, as explained in Chapter 3., After coding and recoding the data, five themes and subthemes emerged.

In this chapter, the introduction to the data analysis and interpretation will provide a brief overview of each theme and what it entails. In Theme 1, the students romanticised the future by imagining it to be bright, great, and successful. This theme is made up of less than 10 subthemes, with the first subtheme relating to unity and togetherness as a key aspect of the future, and the second subtheme imagining a world filled with endless opportunities in the imagined future. Furthermore, the participants continued to romanticise the third subtheme as they imagined the future as one that was better than before with no real challenges. Lastly the fourth subtheme romanticised education as the key to success.

The hope for a positive future is continued in Theme 2 in which students seemed to be pragmatic about the way in which they imagined the future. The future was imagined to be one that would lead to great destinations, but certain key aspects were needed for this to happen. Within this theme, subthemes such as good education and improved technology prevailed.

The third theme, Theme 3, consisted of students who were realists, in the sense that they imagined the future of South Africa as one that would perhaps be good, but it could not be said for sure. In this theme, students were aware of the challenges that existed and therefore acknowledged them when imagining the future of South Africa. The subthemes within this theme included using the wounds of the past to imagine a better future and hoping that the future would be better than the past and present.

Theme 4 was made up of participants who viewed the future as one that was filled with despondency. These participants did not imagine anything good in the future and, therefore, in this theme, there was a general sense of despair. This could be seen as participants in the first subtheme imagined that lack of education and unemployment would lead to doom whereas, in

the second subtheme, the participants believed that violence, poverty, and racism might destroy the future of South Africa. In this theme, there was a general sense of blaming the government for the doom and despair in the imagined future (Subtheme 3) and blaming fellow youth for the way in which the future was imagined (Subtheme 4).

The last theme in this chapter spoke of those who did not provide any answer to the open-ended survey and chose to remain silent about the way in which they imagined the future of South Africa. Theme 5 is made up of two subthemes in which the first spoke of those who did not answer the survey question (Subtheme 1) and the silences that emerged from within the data, that is, key aspects that were not mentioned by participants in this study (Subtheme 2).

Each theme in this chapter was explained by highlighting key aspects of the data to ensure that there was a coherent data analysis and interpretation of the pre-existing data used in this study. In doing so, I have provided the reader with a logical understanding of the data in this chapter. This will allow for the discussion of the research findings in Chapter 5.

4.2 Theme 1: Romanticism

To romanticise the imagined future is to “talk about something in a way that makes it sound better than it really is, or to believe that something is better than it really is” (Cambridge Dictionary [OED], 2022:online). This theme deals with first-year Faculty of Education students’ responses that suggest that South Africa’s future is exceedingly bright and successful. The responses related to this theme did not imagine any type of “real life issues” affecting the South African and world futures and, therefore, this theme romanticised the imagined future. The theme concerning participants that emerged from the data adopted an overly positive stance and imagined the future as bright while others suggested that they believed or hoped that the future would be successful.

Therefore, it is of note that of the 155 responses, 71 responses and partial responses related to this theme. This made up almost 46 per cent of all responses received. Furthermore, these responses point to the fact that almost half of the participants in this study felt positive in a romantic sense because of the milestone that they had achieved by completing their high school education and, at the time of the study, venturing into higher education in to become teachers. Most of these participants were 18 or 19 years old and were optimistic about having started their higher education studies.

Therefore, the responses in this category mirrored optimistic and romantic views of the imagined future. For example, Participant 005's response was that the future would be "bright and shining and successful" thus indicating that they imagined everything would be well and good in the future. Participant 022 concurred by responding that the imagined future would be "great". While this participant provided a powerful, slang-like, one-word answer, the idea of the future being romanticised was clearly discerned and such thinking was further illustrated through the response of Participant 081 who explained that they saw the future as bright "because of a lot of young people ... want to make a change". This thinking was supported by the response of Participant 140 who imagined the future to be "bright and full of hope". It is essential to note that the participants did not elaborate on what "bright", "great" or "full of hope" suggested. However, words such as these often suggest that participants remain sanguine about the imagined future.

Hence, the participants who imagined the future through a romantic lens could be divided into four subthemes. First, there was the group that imagined the future as one that was full of peace and unity. Next, there was a group of participants who viewed South Africa and the rest of the world as full of opportunities and possibilities. The third group imagined the future, with possible reference to the present and past, to be better than ever and could be equated to an egalitarian state. The fourth group focused on education as the key to success and the participants imagined that education was the only thing necessary for a bright future. With regard to the four subthemes, no substantiated reasons were given as to why the future was imagined in this romantic manner. The first group has been labelled *United we stand* to highlight the sense of unity that could be seen from participants as they imagined the future.

4.2.1 Group 1: United we stand.

Within the theme of romanticisation of the future and imagining everything to be wonderful, there was a general pattern of unity, peace, and standing together. South Africa's colonial and apartheid past was riddled with inequality, injustice, and separation of different races and classes. Perhaps ideas of unity and peace could be attributed to the idea of imagining a future different from the past. Furthermore, the students were easily able to think up images from the past and thus make assumptions about the future. Yet the imagined future might not always be based on reality or plausibility (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). Therefore, as first-year university education students, the participants easily imagined the future as completely different from

present-day South Africa. This was the case despite giving little to no insight as to why they imagined the future in this way or how they thought such a future could be attained. Therefore, the participants might have used their feelings and emotions to imagine the future instead of rooting the way they imagined the future in reality. Moreover, the participant's responses could be attributed to the fact that at the time of the study these participants had just started studying to become teachers, and teachers by nature are idealistic because they believe that through education they can make the world a better place. Furthermore, teaching as a profession is seen as idealistic as it is seen as a vocation or calling.

Moreover, there was a sense of unity in this theme regarding participants that emerged from the data, which is best described through the Zulu word *simunye* which means we are one. The participants in this group embraced both diversity and the idea of a rainbow nation for all. Therefore, within this group, there was a sense that no one was left behind when imagining a future in South Africa.

This can be seen through the words of Participant 059 who wrote: "I see a unity standing together" when imagining the future. This was without any context as to which aspects of the future would embody unity and how this could be recognised or achieved in the future, but in all probability speaks to a longing for a future better than the past or the present. Along the same lines but with more detail, Participant 114 stated, "I see the future of South Africa as a united country striving for the protection and loving of our own nation as a whole." While this participant provided more details as to how the future of South Africa would be driven by unity, it also highlighted the idea of protection and raised the question as to why and from whom this participant imagined the future of South Africa needed protection. However, while the idea of protection was not further delved into, the subtheme of unity was foregrounded by Participant 135 who saw "the future of South Africa being a great place to be, everyone will be happy to be, and not discriminated against" thereby looking at past discriminatory practices and using the past to influence the way in which the future was imagined. This historical consciousness-orientated concept of the past influencing the way in which the future was imagined was further noticed by Participant 125 who saw "a world of peace and love", saying, "someday we will learn to love each other no matter what your race".

The idea of unity, peace, and standing together was further explored by Participant 113 who provided more details as to the way in which they imagined the future of South Africa by

explaining, “I see the future of South Africa so bright and shining, I see peace, from all different races, cultures, traditions. I see people coming together as one, and jobs being available”. Likewise, Participant 129 imagined the future of South Africa as “very positive and very diverse”. The manner in which these participants imagined the future once again romanticised it by bringing forth ideas of a bright, shining, and peaceful future but interestingly, the romantic imagery continued as this participant envisioned economic prosperity with jobs for everyone. Thus, we see how far removed from reality the students in this theme were as they highlighted aspects such as “bright” and “shining” that were almost immeasurable and unaccountable, making it hard to decipher exactly how they imagined the future of South Africa. This brings forth the second subtheme where participants imagined the future of South Africa to be one that could be seen as a world of opportunities.

4.2.2 Group 2: World of opportunities

Within the theme of romanticising the imagined future, a second group of participants emerged who imagined the future as full of opportunities and possibilities. While there were not many descriptions given by the participants as to how and why the future of South Africa was imagined in this fashion, it can, amongst other reasons, be attributed to the fact that the participants in this study were mostly 18- or 19-year-old university students during their first week at university after having passed the high school examinations and been accepted at the University of Pretoria. These students were among the 75,1 per cent that had matriculated in the previous year, 2017, and the approximately 28 per cent who had achieved sufficient marks to allow them entry into universities (TimesLIVE, 2018). These students had subsequently chosen to pursue a degree in education. Therefore, the future to them may have seemed like a world full of opportunities. Furthermore, the participants of this study were education students who chose to serve others through teaching in the future and may have seen their career as one that allowed them to better the future not only for themselves but for those around them as well.

In this regard, Participant 027 stated, “I see a good future with many possibilities and work opportunities.” While this participant did not divulge much about what these possibilities or economic opportunities might entail, Participant 072 imagined the future of South Africa “as a better South Africa which has grown”, alluding to the idea of growth, opportunities, and possibilities for teachers and other workers. Through imagined growth and opportunities, South

Africa would flourish towards a different future as imagined by the participant. Moreover, the participants whose imagining of the future fell within this theme not only mentioned what they wanted to see in the imagined future but also highlighted what the future should have less of. For example, Participant 109 explained, “I am going to be positive and say I see less poverty and more love.” This also suggested that the future of South Africa was full of economic and humanitarian workings. Furthermore, the participant did not root the claims made, thus romanticising both the idea of love and overcoming poverty.

Added to the idea of the future of South Africa being full of opportunities, Participant 115 stated, “South Africa will be the well-developed and stable country in the future.” The use of the word “the” indicates that South Africa would not only be well developed economically but would also embody social cohesion as indicative of a stable country in the future. It is necessary to note that this claim is coming from a romanticised view of imagining the future as the participant did not explain how the country would develop or stabilise but nevertheless envisioned, in a longing manner, a country that was economically well developed and therefore full of opportunities for all that lived within her borders. However, these claims might have been rooted in a longing for a better future which was then expressed through the romantic claims of desiring a future different from both the past and the present. In addition to these two groups, there is a third group within the romantic theme that suggests the imagined future will be better than before.

4.2.3 Group 3: Better than before

The idea of South Africa being well developed and stable was further advanced by the participants who almost saw the future of South Africa as an economically developed utopia in which nothing bad could occur. They also compared South Africa to other countries. This was seen through Participant 034 who imagined that “the future of South Africa is going to be the better place, like other developed countries”. This is suggestive of the idea that at the time of the interviews South Africa was a better place than during apartheid and its colonial past but that it is seen as being able of joining the ranks of developed countries thereby making it greater than ever in the imagined future. Furthermore, this participant compared the future of South Africa to that of other countries thus using a presentist lens to naively romanticise the imagined future of South Africa.

The participants in this study had spent most of their time at school but since the completion of their schooling had registered to attend a tertiary institution. Therefore, as 18- or 19-year-old

students, they were very optimistic about the future because they had reached a milestone by completing a very important aspect of their lives, that is, their schooling careers. However, this optimism was also because they could now see themselves as responsible adults who could make a difference in the future. This idea was explored by Participant 087 who proposed assertively:

The future of South Africa is very bright. I've discovered that there are so many hidden treasures in this country and if we could just set our minds on [sic] the right position, we could possess them. South Africa is very much blessed. Dubai is nothing when it comes to what I am seeing in South Africa in the coming years.

This participant not only imagined an economically bright future for South Africa but also compared it to Dubai. This comparison is interesting because while the participant did not indicate what aspects of Dubai the imagined future of South Africa would entail, the recent economic progression of Dubai is noteworthy. One cannot help but wonder if this participant imagined the same kind of economic progression in South Africa in the future, and thus imagined that the future of South Africa would be better than before.

4.2.4 Group 4: Education is the key to success

South Africa was also seen by those participants who romanticised the future through the prosperity of education in South Africa. Participant 121 imagined the future of “South Africa as [a] developed country with a lot of professional teachers”. This can be seen through the above-mentioned participant’s response as they alluded to the idea that development was directly related to the number of professional teachers who existed within a country. This may be a point of interest for this participant who has drawn a comparison between the past, present, and future by making use of both development and professional teachers. These comparisons may be based on the idea that at the time of the study the participant was a romantic pre-service teacher in their first week of teacher training at university.

Furthermore, romanticising the future based on the way in which education is imagined in the future by the participants was evident through the use of positive language, such as the word bright. For instance, Participant 024 imagined a future “of South Africa stepping into another level educationally. I see it having a bright future because of the bright teachers it will have” and Participant 014 said, “It is more brighter and more advanced in education and the structure of

South Africa will change to be better and more advanced.” These sentiments were mirrored by Participant 032 who also saw “the future of SA being very BRIGHT!!! Where e-learning will be introduced everywhere, and every South African being successful and having zero per cent poverty”. They romanticised the idea that the future of South Africa would be bright because of education and the educational upliftment that these future teachers imagined. This was done through progressive ideas in education such as the introduction of e-learning which would be introduced by the future teachers (students who participated in this study) to change both the education system and society. Thus, it can be suggested that the participants in this subtheme were optimistically speaking to themselves about themselves as they imagined a better future for themselves because of the changes that they would make in the future.

While the general idea of education may seem like a theme that should be entrenched in reality, some of the participants wished to see a bright and positive future for South Africa that was rooted in education but they did not explain any details as to what role education would play. This theme might have existed because the participants of this study were first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria during their first week of their studies and thus saw education as the key to success. Especially as future teachers, they viewed education as the answer to all the current problems and thus romanticised the role that it would play in the future.

In this theme, the focus remained on longing for a better world as the participants romantically imagined the future of South Africa. To conclude this theme, I make use of rose-tinted glasses as a metaphor to describe the way in which the participants imagined the future of South Africa. This theme concerning participants from the data imagined the future of South Africa through romantic, optimistic, and hopeful rose-tinted lenses which were used as a filter through which factors such as economics, social cohesion, and education were foregrounded. The use of this lens can be seen as naivety on the part of the participants who, it might be assumed, were almost removed from reality and therefore could not imagine any challenges regarding the imagined future. Furthermore, apart from the togetherness which can be seen in this theme, there is a sense of education being the key to the imagined future and the participants alluded to the idea that they, as the new generation, were the keepers of the keys. Therefore, the future could only be seen as better than what came before.

4.3 Theme 2: Pragmatists

The second theme gleaned from the data focuses on the participants who believed that the imagined future would be good but that certain key aspects needed to be in place to achieve that future. Therefore, this theme has been titled, pragmatists, because pragmatists “deal with problems in a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas, or rules” (OED, 2022:online). Furthermore, this theme concerning participants viewed the future through an optimistic lens and looked to aspects such as education and technology to foster the great future that they imagined.

Of the 155 responses, 31 participants’ responses and partial responses relate to this theme which is approximately 20 per cent of all the responses received. The participants in this study, as first-year Faculty of Education students, were filled with optimism and enthusiasm based on the fact that they had just been accepted at a leading university in South Africa and could see themselves qualifying as teachers in the future. Furthermore, the participants had not imagined the future to be detached from present-day reality. They focussed on the future based on an educational and technological perspective when they discussed how they they imagined the future of South Africa. This indicates that they may have had a strong sense of future self-continuity in which, according to Hershfield, your future self may influence your current behaviour, thus making better and healthier choices for yourself. This is directly linked to the way you imagine your future (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006:1676).

Furthermore, in order to link the past and present to the future, students in this group made use of their historical consciousness to offer grounds upon which their future dreams and ideals might rest (Allen, 2003). This can be seen as one of the main reasons why Participant 137 highlighted a range of aspects that were needed in order for the future of South Africa to be great. This participant indicated:

I see the future of South Africa becoming better, I see low cost and free education. I see less unemployment rate. I see less pollution. I see less homeless people. I am not saying this, but I am also saying this because I am contributing into building the community. I will open campaigns and help young children go to school.

In this way, they depicted several past and present concerns that they imagined regarding the future as well as aspects that they did not want to imagine when thinking about the future of

South Africa, such as economic prosperity, environmental concerns, and social welfare. This participant also indicated that they saw the future as “becoming better”, which signified a process that would take place. This was mirrored by Participant 146 who wished to see “more skilled labour, more employment, and more freedom” when imagining the future of South Africa. Participant 002 also agreed that “technology-wise, [the future is] full of ambitious people and great dreamers and achievers” thus indicating that there was hope that the imagined future would be good. This participant did not indicate what they meant by great dreamers and achievers but spoke of a specific kind of person that was needed to make the future great, that is, ambitious people. Therefore, a sense of optimism guided this vision of the future which might have been influenced by new ideas surrounding technology and ambition, which dominate global futuristic ideas. This optimism persisted throughout a range of responses and could be seen in the response by Participant 018 who said, “I see SA so bright with talented and gifted people. Because of the teachers we will have doctors, nurses etc. and also improved in term of technology.” This brings forth the idea that education and the role of the present group of pre-service teachers are essential for the future to be imagined as bright and successful and shows that the participants were thinking generationally about the future.

4.3.1 Group 1: Good, better, best education

In this subtheme, some participants believed that education could be improved by obtaining a tertiary education and becoming a teacher and that this would ultimately result in a good education system in the future because of the professionals trained to empower others. Then, there were those participants who believed that the participants, as future teachers, would better the current education system. Lastly, there were those hopeful participants who envisioned the future of South Africa as having the best type of education possible. Each of these ideas will be developed within this subtheme.

Participant 003 imagined the future of South Africa to be good in terms of education. They indicated that “with good teachers who are willing to make a difference and not just teach for money – great! We’ll develop as a country who will succeed in all ways”. This brought forth the notion that the future would be great provided that the education system of the country was good and that there were good teachers. They hinted that some teachers merely wanted money or jobs while others saw teaching as a vocation. This ideology was mirrored by Participant 004 who also believed that “we can have a good future as long as those studying

now are willing to make a difference”. The key focus here was once again education and educated people who were needed for the future to be excellent, but here the prerequisite was that it had to be those who were studying now to become teachers. This placed the responsibility on the current generation to make a difference, implying that the current teachers could not do it. Furthermore, through the use of the word “willing”, it was as if a choice was given to those currently studying to become teachers to make the future better than the present. While some participants did not explicitly say whether the future would be good or not, there was an underlying sense in their responses that education was needed to imagine a good future. For example, Participant 085 believed in “more young people getting the chance to go to school and succeed” and Participant 121 concurred, saying, “I see South Africa as [a] developed country with a lot of professional teachers” thereby indicating the need for a good education for a good imagined future and the centrality of good teachers in that.

The participants in this subtheme also thought of the future as better than the present and this was seen especially in terms of education. In this regard, Participant 045 explained that “the future of South Africa is looking bright. More people are eager to learn and empower themselves with education”. These sentiments were matched by Participant 100 who imagined the future of South Africa with “better schools; with better education” and consequently associating education with a great future. Another participant in this study, Participant 053, also felt that “firstly most South African are now educated so I can surely say that in the future [we] will have South Africa who will love education and make our country a better place”. This links to the way in which other participants imagined the future. For example, Participant 054 also saw “the future of South Africa growing in education and the access of getting a good education is beyond praises also see it becoming a place of people succeeding”. Thus, the idea was that better schools and an improved education system were what was needed to cater to those who wanted to learn as more access to schooling should lead to an overall improvement of South Africa.

Lastly in this subtheme, there were participants who believed that the imagined future would be great because South Africa would have the best education system. This idea was elaborated on by Participant 097, who believed, “Well we are going to teach the learners who will eventually become the future so the future for SA looks bright”. Participant 139 imagined the future of South Africa as “only the educated country where everyone is a professional person because they got a qualification” and Participant 148 echoed this idea but provided

more details, including an estimate of when they imagined the future would be good by linking education to social and economic development. This participant said, “I think in 30 years’ time, South Africa will be a developed country because all the youth of today are following education.” Participant 049 indicated almost naively that they saw South Africa growing and leading the world in education and agriculture, assuming that South Africa would not only have the best education system but be the best in the world. Furthermore, Participant 138 saw “the future of South Africa in other [sic] another level in few years to come in term of education and technology”. Therefore, a future that was different from the past and present was imagined with better levels of education and technology use.

4.3.2 Group 2: Improved technology

In the theme of pragmatists, there were participants who imagined the future of South Africa to be great provided that there was improved technology. These participants not only highlighted improved technology but also looked at the role it would play in making things more accessible. For example, Participant 026 imagined “a future full of technology, where cars can fly and everything is more accessible” thereby hoping that South Africa would be more technologically advanced and that revolutionary technology would be easily accessible. The use of the word accessible suggests that technology and other amenities might not be free but rather easily attained by all as one of the promises of a newly technological society. In this subtheme, the participants imagined an easier or more advanced future because of the role technology would play. These participants imagined a good future for South Africa and therefore hoped that it could be achieved through the use of technology.

Participant 058’s imaginings are a case in point. They saw “the future of South Africa with no physical labour, I see computers everywhere” indicating that the way in which South Africa could be great was through the use of 4IR technology. This thinking was echoed by Participant 060 who saw the future of “SA as a ‘smart country’ where almost everything will be taught with some sort of technology”. However, Participant 068 not only imagined the future of South Africa as prosperous and advanced because of the future use of technology, but linked it to the present by stating, “I think it would be technologically enovative [sic] since everything is done through technology” thus alluding to the idea that technology already played a very important role but it needed to be more advanced. This was mirrored by Participant 073 who suggested,

“I see the future of South Africa in a very standertised [sic] and upper level because things are starting to change now. Technology is escalating day by day.”

The theory of self-continuity states that the future self is likely to influence current behaviour, thus, the better the future you imagine for yourself, the healthier and better choices you will make (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006:1676). This can be seen in the response given by Participant 110 who said, “I see classes given on iPads and tablets. Teachers still standing in front of class but everything is electrical. I see new jobs being created and better bigger opportunities.” This portrayed the role they saw for themselves as a teacher but also highlighted how the future would be great as a result of improvements in technology such as innovative, virtual classrooms and learning through various platforms. Once again, the integration with education remained consistent in this study.

In the case of this research, Theme 2 depicts the hope that the participants had regarding the imagined future. This is because pragmatists essentially believe that the future will be great. However, it is important to note the role of both education and technology that emerged within this theme. Education and the use of technology may be seen as keys that can unlock a better future through the immense role that they will both play in the future imagined by the participants. Education and the use of technology may be seen as keys that can unlock a better future as imagined by the participants. Moreover, that the future will be good if participants succeed in achieving what they imagine their roles to be in the future. With regard to technology and the imagined future, it is important to draw a parallel between technology and advancements that will ultimately lead to a better future. This is because using and improving technology is often seen as a form of advancing current skills, dispositions, and overall outlook on life, thereby leading to a better, imagined future. Therefore, this theme concerning the participants remained hopeful for a better, imagined future. While the participants who belonged to the next theme also anticipated a good, imagined future, they were certain that there would be challenges along the way.

4.4 Theme 3: Realists

This theme focuses on the participants in this study who imagined the future of South Africa to be rooted in reality, as one that would perhaps lead to great destinations. The number of participants whose responses and partial responses related to the theme was 20 out of 155 responses which is approximately 13 per cent. This percentage indicates that there was a small

number of participants who were realists and, therefore, believed that maybe the future would lead to great destinations but that there was some work to be done considering the past and the present. As the title of this theme suggests, the participants in this theme were realists who have “hopes for or accepts only what seem possible or likely and does not hope for or expect more” (OED, 2022:online). Realism can be seen as a paradigm that “provides guidance for where truth can be found but not the truth itself” (Frankel, 1996:xiii). This is because realists believe that there are significant things in the world that exist independently of our thoughts and experiences (Frankel, 1996:xiii).

In this theme, the participants who interacted with the past to make sense of the present and imagine the future and those who made use of the realities present within their lives, are explored. These participants mentioned contemporary social and economic issues such as racism, poverty, inequality, and other social ills that may have affected them both as an aftermath of the past and the tempered reality of the present. The participants also imagined a future that was different from their past and present realities in which they imagined freedom, peace, and equal opportunities for all. For example, Participant 040 stated that “if we do not fix the situation, it is a dark future but if we talk about the problems and open the wounds to let it heal, it would be bright”. This alludes to the idea of democracy, courageous conversations, and that the wounds of the past must heal now or else the future will suffer. Along similar lines, Participant 092 gave a more descriptive answer as to how they imagined the future of South Africa. This could be seen as they spoke about the continued racial issues from the past, stating that they imagined the future of South Africa as “one where racism is not given or received from any race to any race. I see a SA where there is a small wage gap, and where education is of an equal standard across the country”. Participant 154 also imagined the future of South Africa as one where maybe things would be better by emphasising that “there is change but it’s on a slow pace; maybe in the future things are going to be better”, thus indicating that the process was cumbersome but there was hope that the future would bring change. Therefore, the participants in this group looked at making use of the wounds of the past such as racism, poverty, and lack of education to imagine a future different from the past and the present. In this theme, two subthemes will be explored, namely using the wounds of the past to imagine the future and the future will be better than the past. Within these subthemes, aspects such as racism, poverty, inequality, struggles, freedom, peace, development, and equal opportunities will be discussed.

4.4.1 Group 1: Using the wounds of the past to imagine a better future

This subtheme is based on the realities of the present that are left behind as a repercussion of the colonial and apartheid past. This is rooted in the idea that the issues of the past and present made their way into the future through the imagination of the participants within this study. In this subtheme, issues such as racism, poverty, inequality, and struggles that are mentioned but not specified, will be discussed.

Racism is a contentious topic in South Africa. It has been a major part of South African history since the apartheid era. While some believed that after the 1994 democratic elections, inequalities and racism would no longer exist in South Africa, “many have come to the realisation that historical inequalities, rooted in the racist oppression and disposition remain part and parcel of the country’s social fabric today” (Heleta, 2018:48). Conscious of the inequalities and social ills present, participants in this theme mentioned them when imagining the future of South Africa. For example, Participant 008 stated that “if we move away from the wounds of racism and get the chance to heal as a country, the future of South Africa is extremely bright”. The use of the phrase “wounds of racism” clearly sums up both the notion of racism and alludes to the idea that racism if not given a chance to “heal” will begin to rot, just as a physical wound does. Furthermore, the theme concerning participants emerged from the data and participants in this theme mentioned race as something to move away from or overcome in order for the future of South Africa to be good. Participant 119 stated that they saw the future of South Africa as “a country that is more united rather than divided by race and culture”. Such thinking was echoed by Participant 132 who saw the future of South Africa as one “where nationality and race will be inconsidered [sic]”. Participant 144 imagined “SA as one united nation, whereby the colour of your skin don’t matter that much”. Participant 147 concurred by stating, “I see the future modern and everyone will be supportive and start looking past the colour of your skin.” These sentiments were echoed by Participant 070 who saw “a future full of struggle and illiterasie [sic] unless we rise up and change it”. Furthermore Participant 017 also indicated that the youth were responsible for the future and that “if young people do not rise up and make a difference, South Africa is headed for doom”. This indicates that the youth of South Africa must make a difference as this could not be expected from those currently in power. Thus, they imagined a future in which all people were equal but there was healing and work that was needed in order to achieve such a future. However, it is interesting to note the response of Participant 039 who not only mentioned racism but also spoke of “another uprising with racism

and an even worse uprising with education”. An “uprising” with regard to racism when imagining the future may be interpreted as using the racist past to imagine what the future would look like as people could rise (like they did in the past) against continuing racism and poor education. This may also suggest the possibility of a violent future to achieve education and other societal change, thereby indicating that these participants were imagining a non-racial society in which all people were equal but there was healing and work that needed to be done in order to attain such a future.

Apart from racism, participants in this subtheme also mentioned poverty as something that would occur in the future. Participant 061 stated, “I do not see the future of South Africa possibly going into a reverse apartheid. I see South Africa being run into the ground and becoming more poverty struck than presently”. This indicated that they imagined the future of South Africa as being worse off than in the present as a result of poverty, economic decline, and mismanagement of the country’s assets. This view contrasts with what Participant 141 imagined when they stated that there would be “more educated people resulting in reducing poverty, lowering unemployment”. While these two views are opposing, both participants still had poverty as a focus of the future that they imagined. Along with racism and poverty, inequality in its broadest undefined sense and other struggles also existed as wounds of the past that were used to imagine the future. These thoughts were reiterated by other participants who believed that the future would hold the same inequalities and struggles that were currently in the present. Participant 076 saw “the future as a better place. No more racism and social inequalities because our generation will bring about change”, indicating that the future might be bright, but the onus was on the current generation to which the participants belonged, and the future would contain some form of struggle or inequality already being faced in South Africa. However, there were also participants who fervently imagined that the future would be better than the past and present as can be seen in the next section.

4.4.2 Group 2: The future will be better than the past and the present

In this subtheme, the notion of the realities of the present were used to imagine a future free from the issues of the past and the present. In this subtheme, the participants imagined a future that would be better than the past by using the realities that already existed in their everyday lives, such as poverty, inequality, and racism amongst others, to imagine a future that would exist without these realities. Thus, we see emerging hopeful themes of freedom as opposed to

the apartheid era that affected South Africa's past and a peaceful, developed country that would allow for equal opportunities for all. Participant 019 summed up this idea by stating, "I see the future of South Africa with a nation that has freedom in their mind, because most people are free physically at this moment but mentally enslaved". Mirroring this idea, Participant 111 stated, "the future of South Africa is in good hands if we all work together and respect one another, irrespective of race or culture", thereby indicating that the future of South Africa would be better than the past.

Often the work that needs to be done is to create, as implied by the participants, a non-racial future in which there is unity through cooperation. For example, this was indicated by Participant 088 who stated, "At this moment I believe my generation will make a change for the better. I have hop [sic] for a peaceful country." They highlighted the role that peace plays when imagining the future of South Africa. Furthermore, Participant 118 stated, "When we decide to not only be responsible people, but to care for each other together, this country could soar to new heights. Until then we will continue on as we have for the past 10 years." Therefore, the participants alluded to the idea that South Africa could only have a better future if current and past mistakes such as discrimination, inequality, and a general lack of ubuntu were avoided. Participant 128 concurred, stating that "unless everyone stops acting like children and realise what they are doing to our beautiful country, I don't see a future for South Africa unless everyone realises that". However, it is interesting to note that this participant mentioned that "everyone" was to work together but did not specify who was included in this term. Furthermore, this participant did not mention binaries in terms of what the future might look like but rather stated that they could not see a future at all.

Participant 106 took a political stance as to what needed to change in the country and indicated, "If it were up to me, I see South Africa having a capitalist economy system that actually encourages people to do more and to b [sic] more, instead of expecting from the government." They thus imagined a free economy in its extreme with no state intervention to even help the poor in the future. By contrast, Participant 071 placed all responsibility for the future on the government by stating, "I see the future of South Africa going extremely well or extremely badly. It could go either ways depending on the government. We need to all be equal and help those before you help yourself." Here, for the first time, we see the government as a key component when imagining the future of South Africa.

Therefore, it is evident in this theme that the way the participants imagined the future of South Africa was rooted in the realities that were present. As discussed above, these realities included racism, poverty, inequality, struggles, freedom, peace, development, and equal opportunities for all. While the realities and the struggles regarding these realities remained the same, the way in which they were used to imagine the future differed. Therefore, we see the emergence of two themes that dealt with similar issues. The first theme used the wounds of the past to imagine the future and thus brought forth a sense of hopelessness when imagining the future, while the second consisted of participants who stated the realities of the past and present as aspects that they would use to better the imagined future.

4.5 Theme 4: Fatalists

There were 24 out of 155 responses related to this theme, that is approximately 15,4 per cent of the total number of responses. This suggests that around 15 per cent of the participants saw the future of South Africa as doomed and never getting better. These participants can be regarded as fatalists, that is, people “who believe that people cannot change the way events will happen and that events, especially bad ones, cannot be avoided” (OED, 2022:online). This indicates that these first-year university students who, in 2018, had just matriculated and been accepted to study at one of the leading universities of South Africa had very little optimism regarding the imagined future. This is noteworthy as one would assume that the participants would have a lot of enthusiasm for the imagined future. This is because they have just started their higher education in order to become teachers and create for themselves a better future, which brings forth the question as to why these young students lacked enthusiasm for the future.

These participants not only viewed the future as one that was doomed but also gave various reasons for the doom that would accompany the imagined future. For example, Participant 028 said, “I don’t believe that our country could grow into a better place.” This participant did not give much information as to why they did not see South Africa becoming a better place but the underlying doom that accompanied the imagined future was evident. They expressed that the past and present that were good were now behind us and that we had reached our apex as a country and therefore nothing could get better. This could be seen in the response by Participant 086 who stated that “the future of South Africa is anything but bright” and Participant 067 who stated that the future of South Africa was “unclear because South Africa is not a nation

with consistency”, alluding to the idea that there were contradictions and ambiguity in the way things were done. Therefore, while these participants did not explicitly say that the future of South Africa was doomed, the fact that the future was seen as not bright and unclear was indicative of the doom that overshadowed the imagined future of South Africa, as described by the university students. The concept of doom was further elaborated on by Participant 094 who indicated that the future of South Africa “looks dark, foggy and damn scary... sorry but its difficult to see the positive”. This participant did not give a reason for imagining this future of South Africa but provided a more descriptive view of how the future of South Africa was imagined. In this theme, we will look at four groups: doom in the future; the youth of South Africa; the role of the government, violence and racism that leads to doom; and the lack of education and unemployment that contribute to this fatalist view of the imagined future.

4.5.1 Group 1: The future is doomed because of the youth

The student population at universities in South Africa during 2018 is often referred to as the born frees. This is because they were born in democratic South Africa after the first democratic elections and did not witness the apartheid era. However, the aftermath left by the apartheid era has continued to affect them, even though they have experienced more freedom than any other generation and are often looked at as the generation that will bring about change to society.

Therefore, within this research study and particularly this theme, it is interesting to note that there were participants who felt as if the youth of South Africa were to be blamed for the despondency attached to imagining the future. For example, Participant 012 stated:

I think the future of South Africa is doomed. The youth does not care about education, they only concerned in feeding their addictions. High rate of drug abuse. Use of technology has taken over youth’s lives, and they don’t care about what is happening in the world around them. South Africa wont have [a] leader to lead the country in the upcoming years.

This indicates that the participants saw the youth as being at fault and not society and its structures or the past. The impact that the youth of South Africa have had on the imagined future was further highlighted by Participant 090 who stated, “I don’t see a very good future and we as the youth need to be the change that we would like to see”, thereby alluding to the idea

that only the current youth of South Africa could bring about change. This was further highlighted by Participant 122 who argued:

I really hope for a great future for South Africa, and I hope the new generation will make South Africa a better place, because if things will be going on as it is going now, I honestly can't foresee a good future for SA.

This participant hoped that young people would make a difference because they could not imagine a good future even though they hoped for one. Also, the participants in this subtheme did not see anyone else as being responsible for imagining a different future but instead blamed their imagined future on the youth of South Africa. They did this through a process of othering or horizontal oppression, in which one young person blames another for the situation. However, in this subtheme there were participants who believed that the future of South Africa was doomed, and that this was because of the government.

4.5.2 Group 2: It is not us; it is the government

This subtheme highlights the participants who were fatalistic in nature and believed that the world was doomed, a situation that they blamed on the Government of South Africa and those with political power. It is important to note that the leading political party at the time of this study in 2018 was the ANC which has been in power since the first democratic elections. This government was once tasked with rebuilding a better, more unified future for the whole country. Yet, almost three decades later, there is a general sense of despondency towards the government as can be seen through Participant 101's statement that "the future of South Africa is doomed. This will be because of politics" and that of Participant 030 who stated that "if the government, at the present moment, does not change for the better, South Africa will have a difficult time coping with the rest of the world both economically and socially". While it is not clear why and how South Africa's future would be doomed and how it would have trouble coping, this participant viewed the government as the main reason behind their imagining a fatalistic future.

These views were elaborated on by Participant 052 who believed:

Politically I see the future of South Africa having been dragged in the mud destroyed before it even begins all in the name of freedom by the people who believe that just because they fought for this freedom, they can misuse it.

This participant drew on their historical consciousness to remember the past and the struggle for freedom and then used it to interpret the current government and its role in imagining the future of South Africa. They also alluded to the idea that those who fought for the freedom of South Africa were now abusing that freedom through means such as corruption, money laundering, and other societal ills. Participant 126 also believed that “the future of SA is going to be a hard place to live in because of the political problems and also money problems” thus indicating that politics and political and economic instability hindered imagining a good future for South Africa. This can be seen through the response of Participant 105 who stated:

With a different leader it could be the best country in Africa, the economy in terms of the currency, standard of living and growth would b [sic] better but with the current leader I see our country in the depression phase of the business cycle.

This participant thus stipulated that for a better future and for economic growth, South Africa needed to have a change in leadership. The participants in this theme also believed that the future of South Africa was doomed because of factors such as violence, poverty, and racism that would continue into the imagined future.

4.5.3 Group 3: Violence, poverty, and racism may destroy the future of South Africa

Within the theme of imagining the future of South Africa to be fatalistic, there were participants who believed that past and present social ills such as violence, poverty, and racism would eventually lead to doom. South Africa’s past was riddled with injustices and violence throughout the apartheid era. Although nationalistic history is taught at schools in the hope that the current generation will recognise the past as a foreign country and will steer clear from repeating such mistakes, the legacies of the apartheid era still exist in the form of poverty, poor housing, lack of education, and other factors such as violence and racism. Those past and the present circumstances may have influenced the university students to imagine a future that was filled with doom. This can be seen through the words of Participant 031 who said, “I do not see that racism will ever be a thing of the past as some people still do not believe in being equal with one another” and Participant 037 who indicated that “the future of South Africa is looking very bad as our people cannot live in peace or accept each other”. Participant 078 stated, “How I want to see it and how I see it is not the same. I want SA [to] let go of the past and people to be kind and nice with each other, but I feel, because of apartheid, I don’t think it is going to change quickly”. This indicates that how they saw South Africa’s future and how they wished to see it

were not the same, which alludes to a double consciousness. Participant 155 concurred that “in my mind I would like to think South Africa has a bright future and holds a lot of potential, but the reality of it is that South Africa could also be heading for a downfall”. This alludes to the idea that the reason for South Africa’s future to be doomed is because the people of the country cannot live together in peace and harmony and that racism is inherent for some.

These ideas of poverty and war were reiterated by Participant 095 who said that “if we are going to go on like how we are now, South Africa does not have a good future; a lot of people are going to live in poverty and there will maybe be a citizen war”. This can also be seen in the response by Participant 084 who said, “I see the future of South Africa where there will be poverty, overcrowded, high rate of crime in our communities.” This highlights the subtheme of poverty and violence as a reason for imagining the future of South Africa.

Participant 041 stated, “Either a civil war will end this feud, or an assassination or a genocide. I don’t think that I see this country healing without a climax in violence involving bloodshed” and Participant 091 believed “that there could be an outbreak of extreme violence and then perhaps real peace”. These participants believed that healing could only take place through bloodshed, which is indicative of the past trauma that the participants were projecting into the future. The students were aware of the bloodshed, violence, poverty, and other social ills of the past and present and used their historical consciousness to project their present fears onto the way that they imagined the future of South Africa.

4.5.4 Group 4: Lack of education and unemployment leads to doom

The participants in this study, the first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria, were hopeful that through education and employment they would be able to secure a better future for themselves. Therefore, the importance of both education and employment can be seen in this theme; the participants attributed the lack of it in the imagined future to be fatalistic.

The lack of employment when imagining the future was seen by participants as creating a future that would be filled with despondency as Participant 010 stated, “I see more people qualify to work but the problem is that they are few jobs being opened nowadays which leads to more unemployment rate increase than before.” This indicates that little to no economic growth and reliance on the government to provide jobs for the educated were the reasons for

imagining a future filled with doom. Therefore, unemployment was seen as fatalistic. Along with the lack of economic growth, the participants also imagined the country facing a depression in the future. For example, Participant 099 stated that they saw the future of South Africa as “economically depressed due to the depreciation of the currency”. This was further elaborated on by Participant 103 who stated that “on the current path, our resources will be sold and depleted. Mass emigration of South Africans leaving. We are on a negative slope right now”. Thus they indicated that the future of South Africa was headed for doom.

With regard to education, the participants in this theme believed that if there was no education in the future, the future would be fatalistic. For example, Participant 074 elaborated that “without necessary intervention, South Africa might become the most illiterate country and, in the worst case scenario, the currency might also drop”. They thereby not only mentioned what the lack of education might do to the future of South Africa but also assumed that the country might become the most illiterate country. Participant 127 concurred that “in the future South Africa everything will be accessed by a degree, people without a qualification will suffer”, thereby depicting a total reliance on education to ensure that the future of South Africa would be good.

Therefore, this theme depicts the overall doom and despondency that some participants in this study imagined in the future. They did not believe that the imagined future would be good and seemed to have lost all hope for the future. Furthermore, the participants in this theme provided multiple reasons for their despondency regarding the imagined future which included blaming themselves as the youth of the country and blaming the government of the country. These participants also blamed the way in which they imagined the future on the violence, poverty, and racism that existed both in the past and the present. Furthermore, the participants in this theme imagined that the lack of education and the increase in unemployment would lead to a detrimental imagined future. In this theme, it is interesting to see the use of historical consciousness as the participants vividly imagined a past that they did not fully experience but nevertheless used to highlight present-day disparities that ultimately influenced the way they imagined the future.

4.6 Theme 5: Avoiders

This theme speaks to the silences that emerged from the data. More specifically, it speaks to those participants who did not respond to the question at all and the pertinent issues that were relevant to imagining the future of South Africa but were not mentioned by the participants.

These pertinent issues included aspects such as the role of the government in the future of South Africa, the lack of representation of women in the imagined future, and to what extent these university students viewed South Africa's future through an outsider lens.

4.6.1 Group 1: No answer is an answer

In this theme approximately 7 of the 155 participants did not answer the question of how the future of South Africa is seen. This was approximately 4,5 per cent of the participants. "Missing data may threaten statistical power by reducing sample size", however, as the percentage of participants who did not answer the question remained below 10 per cent it did not alter the data received and could thus be ignored (Langkamp et al., 2010:5). There are several reasons why the question may not have been answered. These reasons include: lack of awareness of the survey being conducted; lack of capability to answer the question as a result of not having the correct knowledge, skills, or competence: and lack of motivation where people were aware and able to answer the question, but they were unwilling or unmotivated to do so (Langkamp et al., 2010). With regard to imagining the future of South Africa, perhaps the participants in this study could not imagine the future because of a lack of future self-continuity or they were not able to use their historical consciousness to imagine the future of South Africa.

4.6.2 Group 2: Silence speaks a thousand words

With regard to the silences that appeared within the data, certain key elements were not prevalent, for example, a reliance on the Government of South Africa. The ANC has been in power since the first democratic elections. This political party has played an important role in ensuring democracy in South Africa and has been a beacon of hope for many South Africans. Thus, it is interesting to note that there were very few participants who spoke of the Government of South Africa in a positive light and even fewer who imagined the role that the government might play in the future.

Furthermore, few participants imagined the future of South Africa in relation to Africa and the world. The future was still seen through an inward-looking geopolitical construct of South Africa and not necessarily as a key component of Africa or the rest of the globe. Participants also did not mention the role of women when imagining the future of South Africa, considering that most students enrolled at the University of Pretoria in 2018 identified as female (Wassermann, 2022).

Therefore, feminist views and ideas should have come through strongly in the data, yet it was absent.

4.7 Conclusion

This study explored the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future by looking at how they saw the future. As discussed in Chapter 3, the data for this chapter consisted of a pre-existing survey conducted in 2018 that asked participants how they saw the future of South Africa. Following the process of open coding where themes and subthemes emerged, this chapter then led to the data analysis and interpretation of five themes and the subthemes within each theme. In the case of this research, I, as the researcher, was able to deduce general findings about first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria in 2018 regarding the imagined future. One theme that emerged focused on university students romanticising the future which some participants saw as very bright and successful and therefore in this theme factors such as peace, unity, and standing together as a nation were prevalent. Another theme was that the imagined future would be great but work needed to be done to achieve this great future. This included a better education system and improved technology. The third theme that was prevalent in the data was rooted in reality where there was hope that perhaps the future would be free from issues of the past and present. We also saw the emergence of a sense of doom attached to the future by the youth because of themselves, the Government of South Africa, and the social ills present such as poverty, racism, and violence. Some silences that emerged from the data have been discussed in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on the findings drawn from the data analysis in this chapter. These themes and subthemes along with my research questions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 - Overview, discussion, and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw this study to a close by discussing my personal and professional interpretivist positioning through a review of the study, engaging in a scholarly discussion of the findings, proposing answers to the research questions, and discussing my personal and professional reflections. The review of the study consists of a backward-looking summary of the previous chapters. The research questions, as determined in the first chapter, served as a guide for the analysis and interpretation of the data in Chapter 4 and will be used to culminate the discussion in this chapter. Thereafter, as the researcher, I also attempt to propose answers to what the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education university students was with regard to the imagined future and how the historical consciousness of university students affected their vision of the imagined future.

This study made use of pre-existing data in the form of open-ended surveys conducted in 2018 from first-year Faculty of Education students to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future. The findings from the data, as depicted in Chapter 4, allowed for the exploration of the historical consciousness of those university students regarding the imagined future. Moreover, the discussion of the findings based on the literature review in Chapter 2 as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data in Chapter 4 produced multiple themes and subthemes which will be used in this chapter to provide my personal and professional reflections and conclude this study.

This final chapter therefore serves as evidence for the discussed interpretivist research methodology that was used to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future. The emergence of multiple themes and subthemes revealed that the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future was complex.

5.2 Discussion of the findings

In this section, I as the researcher will discuss, analyse, and interpret the findings of each theme presented in Chapter 4 and link it to the literature review and theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. I intend to propose answers to the research questions relating to how and why the participants used their historical consciousness to produce the themes that emerged in Chapter

4. I will also provide an in-depth discussion of how the literature review and theoretical framework link to the findings in Chapter 4 and thus may contribute to or fill any gaps in existing and relevant bodies of research.

This study analysed the responses of first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria and highlighted the way in which they made use of their historical consciousness to imagine the future of South Africa. By analysing the responses received from the participants, valuable insight into the complexities of university life regarding university culture and academics and the way in which these students made use of their historical consciousness when imagining the future of South Africa was obtained (Oelofse & Vries, 2016).

Themes such as romantics, realists, pragmatists, fatalists, and avoiders emerged in Chapter 4 and allowed me as the researcher to discuss what the participants as prospective teachers in their first year of study said regarding the way in which they imagined the future. However, making use of these themes as headings in the discussion of the findings placed the findings into neat boxes which might not have allowed for a bigger picture to emerge. Therefore, to explore the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future, I opted to work across themes in discussing, analysing, and interpreting the themes from Chapter 4 according to the theory of personal development of historical consciousness which undergoes four phases. I will also analyse historical consciousness as an identity-creating concept and how it relates to the imagined future according to participants in Chapter 4. The participants who avoided the question as well as the silences that emerged in Chapter 4 will also be analysed.

The theory of personal development of historical consciousness seeks to imagine how people use their historical consciousness not only as a process to understand the events of the past and how they affect the present and future but also as a concept that embodies characteristics such as the norms, values, perceptions, and concepts (Körber, 2015). These characteristics depict how individuals engage with the past when using their historical consciousness.

Using historical consciousness as a point of departure, I will explain the four phases of historical consciousness and how it relates to the findings of this study. These phases are to recognise that a tradition is being continued, to take examples from history, to critically deconstruct the belief of continuity, and, to allow for a temporalised view of the way life has transformed due to

historical consciousness (Ahonen, 2005). Therefore, I have divided this section of Chapter 5 into the following sections according to the above-mentioned phases:

- The first phase of the theory of personal development of historical consciousness will examine the romantic, pragmatists, and fatalist themes (Ahonen, 2005).
- The second phase of the theory of personal development of historical consciousness will focus on the romantic, realist, and fatalist themes (Ahonen, 2005).
- The belief in continuity is deconstructed through various themes such as romantics, pragmatists, and fatalists in the third phase of the theory of personal development of historical consciousness (Ahonen, 2005).
- Themes such as the romantics, in which education is seen as the key to success, and the realists, where the future is imagined to be better than both the past and the present, allow for a temporalised view of life that has transformed because of historical consciousness which is the fourth phase of the theory of personal development (Ahonen, 2005).
- Historical consciousness as an identity-creating concept where the way in which the participants make use of historical consciousness when imagining themselves in the future will be discussed will also be discussed (Thorp, 2014).
- The theory of future self-continuity and the way in which it relates to first-year university student's historical consciousness will also be explored. (Robson, 2022).
- Avoiders, including the silences that were touched on in Chapter 4 and those who did not answer the question, will be explained.

5.2.1 Recognise a tradition is being continued

This is the first phase of the theory of personal development of historical consciousness (Ahonen, 2005). In this phase, the participants were able to use their historical consciousness to recognise something that had happened in the past, was happening in the present, and would most likely continue to happen in the future.

Therefore, in the romantic theme of Chapter 4, we see that there were participants who imagined the future to be better than before because they recognised past suffering and pain but imagined that there would be no hardships or challenges in the future and that the future would hold a world of opportunities. For example, the participants in this study under Theme 1 romantically mentioned that the future of South Africa would be a well-developed one in which nothing bad would occur. This can be attributed to the fact that the participants at the time of this study were 18- or 19-year-old students who had just started university. They imagined themselves as the ones to bring about change in society and break the tradition of past economic inequalities by imagining a well-developed country in the future. Furthermore, the utopia-like state that these participants naively imagined in which nothing bad would occur could also be seen as a means of recognising the continuity of a tradition and therefore romanticising that there would be no suffering in the future.

There was also a recognition of the continuity of tradition which can be seen in Theme 2, Group 1 titled The Pragmatists: Good, Better, Best Education, in which the participants believed that all in the future of South Africa would be well, provided that the education system improved. Thus, the participants in this theme recognised that there had been a continuity in the tradition of suffering and hoped that by improving education they might end this suffering and provide a better life for all. Consequently, the participants in this study projected the role that they as future teachers would play in the future as they saw that through education, and essentially teachers, they might be able to recognise and end a tradition of suffering.

In Theme 4: The Fatalists, the participants blamed the government for the doom and despair that they imagined in the future. The participants recognised that the future of South Africa was doomed and will not get better thus recognising that there would be a continuation of despair in the future. In this theme, Group 2 of the participants imagined the future to be doomed because of the government as they indicated that the political party that was in power in 2018 would misuse the freedom that they had essentially led the country towards. While many participants did not indicate that the government would lead the country to doom, others alluded to the fact that South African politics needed to reform to include just and righteous leaders who would assist in bettering the imagined future.

5.2.2 *Take examples from history.*

In this phase of the theory of personal development of historical consciousness, the participants drew on history when imagining the future of South Africa. Therefore, when imagining the past, the participants thought of the official and unofficial history that they had learned and used it to imagine a future which might be similar to or different from the past. By recognising and projecting aspects of the past when using their historical consciousness to imagine the future of South Africa, the participants took examples from history.

With regard to the romantics, there were participants who romanticised a future different from the apartheid past. These participants had not lived through apartheid and were part of the born-free generation, yet they drew on the segregated apartheid past when romanticising a future for South Africa in which everyone would be united. The participants mentioned factors such as peace, unity, and togetherness which might have been seen as removed from reality, but there was still a sense of taking an example from history and thus imagining a different future.

This idea of taking examples from the past continued in Theme 3: The Realist, when the participants used the wounds of the past to imagine a future that was different from the past. In this group of realists, the participants used the realities left behind by the colonial and apartheid past to imagine a future where factors such as racism, poverty, inequality, and struggles would still exist in the imagined future. There was also a sense of remembering the past in order to imagine a future of South Africa in which those who remembered the past would not make the same mistakes in the future. Also, according to the theory of future self-continuity, as explained in Chapter 2, those who had a vivid sense of the future would act in a manner that would make their lives easier in the future. Furthermore, if the past was remembered with a certain amount of specificity, so the future would also have specificity (Merck & Topcu, 2016). Thus, there was a constant referral to the past by the participants of this study as they attempted to imagine the future. For example, they made mention of racism and other elements left behind by the legacy of apartheid as aspects that would either make its way into the future or that they did not want to see in the future. Nevertheless, the mere mention of racism was already using South Africa's divided past to imagine the future.

Furthermore, the participants in Theme 4: The Fatalists, also took examples from the past as they imagined that racism, poverty, and violence would destroy the future of South Africa. This

was because these participants had taken examples from South Africa's racist, poverty-stricken, and violent past, as well as the legacy thereof when imagining the future. Thus, there was an inherent sense of despondency that some participants displayed when they imagined the future, while other participants might have felt that there was a need to critically deconstruct these beliefs of racism, violence, and poverty when imagining the future of South Africa.

5.2.3 Critically deconstructing the belief of continuity

In the third phase of the process model of historical thought, the participants may have used their historical consciousness to critique the past when imagining the future. Thus, we see that these participants moved away from the past by criticising continuation and imagining innovation. In this phase, the participants believed that there would be no continuity of the past in the imagined future. This could be seen across various themes in the study.

The participants in Theme 1 romanticised a world of opportunities in the imagined future where there was both hope and optimism. Although the first-year students in this theme used rose-tinted lenses to imagine a future that might be removed from reality, they also allowed for aspects such as social cohesion, education, and economics to be foregrounded when imagining a world of opportunities. The participants imagined the future as one that was completely different from both the past and present and thus deconstructed the belief of continuity. For example, the participants belonging to Theme 1 believed that with hope the journey into the future would be imagined. They believed that the future of South Africa would be different from the past and the present and that it would embody greatness. Furthermore, to deconstruct the idea of continuity of the past, the participants imagined the future to be greater than ever (Theme 1) in that there would be a world of opportunities available to them that was not necessarily available in the past and that there would be unity amongst the people of South Africa.

This was also seen in Theme 2: The Pragmatists, in which there was a group of participants who imagined that the future would be completely different from the past or the present and would be filled with improved technology. This theme described the hopes that participants had regarding the imagined future. They were imagining that the future would be good provided that certain key aspects were present. The participants mentioned technology as one of the key building blocks upon which society was formed.

Theme 4 also saw the participants attempting to deconstruct the belief of continuity by imagining the future as one that was filled with doom and despair. This could be seen in Group 1, where the participants imagined the future to be doomed because of the youth. They used a form of horizontal oppression when holding their fellow youth responsible for the doom and despair. The youth in this study are considered born frees as they did not live through apartheid and thus did not face the inequalities and separation of the colonial apartheid past first-hand. Thus, in holding the youth responsible for the doom and despair, they were deconstructing the belief that the future was the responsibility of the generation before them. This is echoed in Group 4 in which the lack of education and unemployment led to doom. In this group, the participants looked at the past but believed that aspects such as unemployment and education, if not eradicated, would ultimately lead to doom and destruction in the future. Thus, we saw the participants imagining a future in which they did not deconstruct the belief of continuity in totality but rather imagined factors such as lack of education and unemployment as the main reasons for failing to continue towards success.

5.2.4. Allow for a temporalised view of life that has formed because of historical consciousness

In the last phase of the theory of personal development, Phase 4, the participants imagined a future that was bound by time in which the past and the present might influence the future, but it would be completely different from both the past and the present. This relates to the idea that life is ever-changing, and history remains bound by time. Thus, we see that in this phase, one was unable to traverse through the past when acting in the present or imagining the future. This phase was to do with the idea that the future might not be seen through a past or presentist lens.

One such theme that imagined such a future is Theme 1 in which the future was romanticised, and education was seen as the key to success. This, although different from the past and the present, was not rooted as participants imagined a future where, through them becoming teachers and thus keepers of the key, they possessed a temporalised view of life that was based on their use of historical consciousness.

Another theme that exists in this phase is Theme 4, Group 2 in which the past and the present are seen as better than the future. In this theme and subtheme, the future was imagined as one that was free from issues of past and present. Realities such as racism, poverty, and the struggle for freedom, peace, and equal opportunities for all were imagined in the future. Thus,

it is evident that this theme also made use of historical consciousness when imagining the future but did not influence the way in which the future was imagined.

5.2.5 Historical consciousness as an identity-creating concept

What we remember of the past is essentially what we draw on when imagining the future. Therefore, historical consciousness can be seen as a vehicle that was used to shape the perceptions of first-year Faculty of Education students regarding the imagined future. Historical consciousness is seen as an identity-creating concept in that first-year Faculty of Education students imagined their roles as teachers in the future. Their perspective regarding the future was based on what they remembered of the past and was used to create an identity for themselves when imagining the future. This could be seen in the data analysis and interpretation of Chapter 4, especially in Theme 1 which showed that there was an inherent hope that the future would be good because of the identity that these students had created for themselves when imagining the future. The participants of the study drew on the idea that if there were good teachers in the future, there would be a better quality of education and thus a better quality of life in general in the future. This relates to Theme 1 and more specifically to the second and third groups, namely World of Opportunities and Better Than Before, of the data analysis in Chapter 4 as historical consciousness as an identity-creating concept allowed the students to already imagine themselves in the role of teacher and thus imagined a good future for themselves and South Africa in general.

The participants also used their historical consciousness to create an identity for themselves by looking at the role they played in society as future teachers and how that impacted the way in which they imagined the future of South Africa. Historical consciousness as an identity-creating concept also allowed for the creation of civic competencies such as empathy and a sense of belonging within the country, which was essential for democracy (Mazabow, 2003). Furthermore, even though the focus of history education has remained grounded in past events and historical knowledge that define a nation, there has been a shift in focus recently in the way that students conceptualise the relationship between history and national identity (Trofanenko, 2008). Through the historical consciousness of the participants in this study, there was a collective notion of South Africanness in which the future was imagined to be great as long as “we” are willing to make a difference and have a common goal in mind. This highlights the

collective identity and sense of belonging that existed in the participants as they imagined the future of South Africa.

5.2.6 Future self-continuity

As discussed in Chapter 2, the more a person thinks about the future, the more they will make decisions in the present that will benefit them later. Thus, we see that the participants in this study often imagined what their role as educators would be in the future and projected whether the education system would be better than in the present. Education, the role of teachers, and the role that the participants in this study would play in the future was integral to the way that the future was imagined. Therefore, one may assume that the first-year Faculty of Education students in this study, according to the Venn diagram-like overlay of the future self-continuity scale that is depicted in Chapter 2, remained connected to their future selves. Their habits and actions supported their relationship with the future.

5.2.7 Avoiders

The idea of the past affecting the way in which the future is imagined can also be attributed to those participants who chose not to answer the question. This may be because these participants could presumably have belonged to racial groups that, in the past, were not given any autonomy over their lives and could not make any decisions for themselves. They would therefore feel that they did not have the right to imagine the future of South Africa. It could also be because some participants may have felt like they could not answer this question due to their lack of motivation, skills, and competencies.

Therefore, with reference to the theories that I have made use of, it is evident that the historical consciousness of the university students in this study is multifarious in nature. Thus, as depicted above, there are multiple types of historical consciousness that university students make use of when imagining the future, which often fluctuates along a pendulum ranging from romanticising the imagined future, to imagining the future as one that is filled with doom and despair. Participants in this study used the different types of historical consciousness as portrayed in the theory of personal development of historical thought to imagine the future. Furthermore, the way they thought about the future also depends on how intertwined they imagined the present and the future to be according to the future self-continuity scale by Hershfield, as highlighted in Chapter 2 (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). Thus, the use of both the theory

of personal development of historical consciousness, which highlights the types of historical consciousness that university students have, and the diagram that depicts the future self-continuity that the first-year Faculty of Education students had, indicate the gap in the research that I have sought to fulfil. Therefore, by understanding the way in which participants in this study used both their historical consciousness and the future self-continuity scale, a connection can be drawn between the future that these participants imagined and the role as teachers that they might play in the future because, while the future may currently be imagined as abstract, they will be responsible for their own and learner's futures as teachers.

5.3 Proposing answers to the research questions

Drawing on the above, in this section, I will propose answers to the research questions based on the findings that have emerged from my data analysis and interpretation. This is done as I attempt to discuss the extent to which the purpose of my study (exploring the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future) is achieved. Each research question will be discussed separately to ensure that answers are proposed to both questions.

Question 1: What is the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students with regard to the imagined future?

The historical consciousness of the first-year Faculty of Education students in this study with regard to the imagined future can be seen as complex and diverse. This is because many aspects determine the way in which university students use history when imagining the future. As seen in Chapter 4, the way the future was imagined by the university students using their historical consciousness often fluctuated along a continuum. Some students saw the future of South Africa as full of hope and better than before whereas other students imagined the future to be filled with doom and a sense of despondency.

The question of what the historical consciousness of the university students regarding the imagined future was lay within the exploration of their historical consciousness. Therefore, the way that historical consciousness was explored by the participants in this study remains tied to the types of historical consciousness that were used by the participants when imagining the future. Thus, the findings of this study indicate that the first-year Faculty of Education students in this study had varying historical consciousnesses which ranged from traditional to exemplary,

to critical, and to genetic historical consciousness (Lee, 2012). This can be seen through the traditional non-negotiable narratives that the participants indicated when imagining the future. For example, the participants who indicated that the past had been filled with elements such as poverty and racism and who thought that the future would hold the same made use of these permanent narratives of traditional historical consciousness. The participants also took examples from the past to imagine a future that was better than the past (Lee, 2012). This indicates that they were aware of what had happened in the past, and they wished to imagine a different future for themselves and South Africa. The third type of historical consciousness that could be seen in this study, as indicated by the participants, was that of genetic historical consciousness where the participants challenged traditional narratives of poverty and racism and chose to deviate from examples of the past to imagine a future that was rooted in reality (Lee, 2012). This type of historical consciousness could be seen through the answers to the survey question of the participants in the realist theme of Chapter 4. The last type of historical consciousness, as displayed by the participants in this study, spoke of genetic historical consciousness in which the first-year students used their historical consciousness to imagine a future that allowed for change to be dominant (Lee, 2012). This type of historical consciousness was emphasised by the participants who indicated that the future would be better than the past, that there will be better education and improved technology, and by those who romanticised the imagined future.

I found that the historical consciousness that the university students had affected the way in which they imagined the future because it allowed them to make use of the past and the present to imagine the future. Thus, the more the participants thought about the future and the more they used their thoughts about the future when making decisions in the present, the more in touch they were with their future self-continuity. This leads me to propose an answer to the next question, Question 2.

Question 2: How does the historical consciousness of university students shape their perceptions of an imagined future?

According to the theory of self-continuity, the interest that one shows in the future is determined by one's actions in the present (Robson, 2022). This is because there is a direct correlation between our actions in the present and how they will affect our future. Thus, we saw the participants of this study imagining that the future of South Africa would be great based on their

current actions which had been to undertake an education degree in the hope that it would assist them in bettering the future not only for themselves but for the entire country.

Moreover, the use of historical consciousness draws on the mental operations of time in which memory is formed. Thus, historical consciousness may rely on memory of the past to make decisions in the present and imagine the future. For example, the participants of this study belonged to the born-free generation which did not live through apartheid, and therefore they obtained their knowledge of the apartheid era from official or unofficial history. However, it is pertinent to note that the legacy left by apartheid still affects university students and thus the participants imagined the future of South Africa free from the legacy of apartheid. For example, Theme 4 in the data analysis spoke of violence, poverty, and racism which might destroy the future of South Africa. While it is evident that these participants drew on the memory of violence, poverty, and racism that still exists in society, their historical consciousness had progressed through the helpless and perplexed feelings that had been at the centre of remembering the past for most of their lives.

Furthermore, the perception of the imagined future was shaped by the collective understanding of the past. Collective memory is seen as pertinent in the shared life world of the society in which we live. This is because our knowledge of the past is shaped by our interactions with people. This led to the participants in this study to try and engage with what might be needed to imagine a good future for South Africa. Through Theme 2, we see the idea of a good education for all being foregrounded as what is needed to imagine a good future for South Africa. We also see collective understandings of the past shaping how the future was imagined in Theme 2. This was expressed through the need for better education when imagining the future of South Africa, which highlighted the collective memory that is essential in the use of historical consciousness to imagine the future in this study.

Lastly, historical consciousness is seen as trans-generational; it allows the participants to think both backwards and forwards in time. This is based on the logic that what I did yesterday affects what I am and what I do today in turn affects my future. Thus, we see how the past influenced the university students when imagining the future of South Africa. In Theme 3, Group 1, we saw the participants using the wounds of the past to imagine the future of South Africa. This was because these participants believed that there was an inherent need to correct the mistakes of the past before moving forward in order for the future to be better than the past.

As discussed in the literature review, during history lessons in school, it is assumed that learners learn how to think of the past to orientate themselves in time and bring together the past, present, and future into a relationship that enables them to exist as temporal beings (Lee, 2012). Thus, a significant finding that emerged from this study is that the first-year Faculty of Education students entered the university space with some historical consciousness that allowed them to imagine the future by drawing on examples from the past to make moral decisions that may affect the future. Nevertheless, despite many changes in recent years, the higher education space in South Africa remains a place riddled with inequalities as many of the students from disadvantaged families and school backgrounds lacked adequate social and academic integration. They therefore hoped that through education they would be able to create a different future for themselves (Edmon, 2010). I hope to contribute to the academic works regarding the exploration of the historical consciousness of university students regarding the imagined future.

Moreover, the first-year Faculty of Education students who made use of their historical consciousness when imagining the future will remain more informed regarding the future. This is because the more we think about the future, the more our current actions mirror what we wish to see in the future (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). One of the implications of this is that when these first-year Faculty of Education students become teachers, they will be able to use their historical consciousness and their imagined future to assist young learners in schools to imagine a future that is filled with hope and prosperity. In doing so, they may assist in shaping the historical consciousness of school learners while making use of their own historical consciousness. They will also ensure that they keep contributing to a better future because, through the upliftment of others, we rise and make a difference for all. However, the participants in this study who indicated that the future would be filled with doom and despair might mirror the same emotions in their present-day lives unless they themselves change. Lastly, even though new information may contradict existing understandings of the past, by challenging historical narratives, the first-year Faculty of Education students will be able to understand their place in the world and use this to reflect on the responsibility that they may have towards their future and the future of others.

5.4 Personal and professional reflections

My first and very brief encounter with historical consciousness was during the second year of my undergraduate degree in the history methodology module. At that time, I had a slight inclination toward what the term meant without fully understanding the depth and complexities that accompanied it. In order to grasp the term historical consciousness, I had to question my own historical consciousness, and to do that I had to delve deep into aspects such as why I was born in a different hospital from my siblings (perhaps because I was the first child of my parents to be born after apartheid), why I live in the area that I do, and why I went to the school that I did.

It was also during my undergraduate degree that I witnessed the protests and campaigns by fellow students to bring about change within the higher education space. These protests and campaigns left me with the question of what drove these students to so desperately seek a reformed space of learning. However, I also knew that by comprehending the thought process that went into the organisation of these protests and campaigns, I might only reach minimal and not so favourable conclusions. The desire to find out more about university students and historical consciousness continued throughout my postgraduate studies. Thus, as I embarked on this master's dissertation, I set out to understand what impact historical consciousness has on university students and the way in which they imagine the future.

During the time that I spent compiling this dissertation, I underwent a form of metamorphosis in which I had to learn and unlearn a variety of things that accompany such a task. This included my time management skills, as a master's dissertation requires many hours of dedication, and, most importantly, the consistency to read, write, learn, and unlearn every day. It also included realising that the best way to learn is to ask for help, to accept that I do not know it all, and to know that I am capable of learning and growing. Furthermore, I also had to prioritise my time and narrow down my focus to progress. As a result, this journey has allowed me to glean resources, explanations, and lifelong lessons. Furthermore, I learned the art of sacrificing and prioritising both big and small tasks in all areas of life. Most importantly, this dissertation has taught me to celebrate every small win along the way as it was the smallest bits of work done repeatedly that led to a completed dissertation.

Professionally I have gained an immense amount of knowledge about my topic and the higher education space in South Africa. I have broadened my understanding of historical

consciousness and university students regarding the imagined future. The topic has brought to light the fact that young people in South Africa have varied opinions about the future and use their historical consciousness to interpret the past. I have also gleaned a great amount of knowledge about academic literature, research, and methodologies. There is an extensive amount of literature available on historical consciousness globally that has allowed me to widen my understanding of historical consciousness, however, there is much more research needed around higher education students in South Africa and how they imagine the future using their historical consciousness. As a part-time lecturer, this study has allowed me to broaden my outlook on university students in general.

Apart from this, I also learned to think critically, engage in educational discussions, question my thoughts, opinions, and education, and to learn and unlearn parts of history that confined my growth. It is through growth that I then undertook the journey to explore how university students imagine the future by using the term historical consciousness as a point of departure. Therefore, understanding and unpacking the idea of historical consciousness was essential for this exploratory study to take place.

I was guided and assisted throughout this journey by my supervisor who trusted and supported me enough to give me the freedom to work on this dissertation without allowing it to overwhelm me. My supervisor remained a beacon of light that prevented me from getting lost along the way by ensuring that I was kept accountable and aided throughout my study. The Humanities Education MEd and PhD cohort sessions also provided me with a learning platform and reminded me that I am not alone throughout this journey.

5.5 Review of the study

This section will provide an overview of the previous chapters in this study through a brief explanation with an emphasis on the key aspects of each chapter as well as by discussing how each chapter unfolded.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation introduced the study and provided the focus and purpose of the research along with the research questions. The background and context against which this study is set is the legacy left behind by apartheid and more specifically the university environment in South Africa in recent years. This was discussed in detail to portray the similarities and differences present in this context from a national and international perspective.

Also, in this chapter I discussed the motivation and rationale of the study along with a summary of my theoretical framework. I then provided concept clarification and an overview of the chapters to follow.

Chapter 2 was the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. This chapter looked at the local and global literature related to historical consciousness and the way that university students imagined the future of South Africa. The literature was thematically organised. The literature review began with an introduction to both the scholarly and theoretical literature followed by a review of what scholars have said about the key concepts related to the study. The chapter progressed with a review of the theoretical literature and an attempt to define historical consciousness to navigate the past and imagine the future. This was followed by literature related to imagining the future and presenting a theoretical framing for the study. I then looked at future self-continuity as well as studies on the historical consciousness of young people and university students in the Global North, in Africa, and then in South Africa.

The qualitative research design used for the exploration of the university students' historical consciousness regarding the imagined future was unpacked in Chapter 3. This was followed by the paradigmatic framework which included both interpretivism and social constructivism. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach and the ontological and epistemological assumptions were also discussed. A relativist ontology was used in this study to allow for the exploration of multiple university students' historical consciousness regarding the imagined future, and interpretivism as the epistemological approach was considered. This was followed by a discussion on the chosen research methodology which was a descriptive case study along with the research methods. Sampling was also discussed to provide a clear understanding of the data sampling technique and the sample size. Furthermore, as the chapter progressed, aspects such as trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability were also analysed. Lastly, ethical considerations such as participant involvement and institutional clearance were discussed in Chapter 3.

Once the literature was reviewed and the research design and methodology discussed, the data analysis and interpretation were highlighted in Chapter 4. Moreover, the fourth chapter made use of pre-existing data collected from surveys that were disseminated to the first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria. An inductive data analysis approach was used to analyse the data by means of open coding. The 155 participant responses to the

question, “Tell me, how do you see the future of South Africa?”, were analysed. Five themes emerged from the data based on the ways in which the first-year Faculty of Education students of the University of Pretoria imagined the future. These themes were labelled under the headings romantics, pragmatists, realists, fatalists, and avoiders and allowed for subthemes within each theme to be created.

Chapter 5, the final chapter, shows how I as the researcher explored the historical consciousness of university students through the pre-existing data that were analysed in Chapter 4. I navigated this exploratory study by analysing the data and the emerging themes related to the way in which historical consciousness was used to imagine the future. I applied the theoretical frameworks as per Chapter 2 to explore the historical consciousness of the university students regarding the imagined future in this chapter. The descriptions, analysis, and interpretation in this exploratory study allowed for a broader understanding of historical consciousness and the imagined future of university students.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to culminate the study and provide a conclusion to my dissertation. To do so, this chapter has included the review of the study which briefly mentioned what the other chapters entailed, provided a discussion of the findings, compared the findings to the research questions, and included my personal and professional reflections.

This study set out to explore the historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students at the University of Pretoria regarding the imagined future. The gap in the body of knowledge that this study set out to address was the exploration of historical consciousness of first-year Faculty of Education students with a specific focus on the imagined future. This was done by analysing the responses of some first-year education students at the University of Pretoria regarding the way in which they saw the future of South Africa. Participants in this study indicated the effect that the past and present had on the way in which they imagined the future by either romanticising it, hoping that it would be good by stating the key aspects that the students thought were necessary for the future, or assuming that the future would be fatalistic because of a past that still has a profound impact on university students. In doing so, I was able to broaden my understanding of historical consciousness and the imagined future of university students and thus make a valuable contribution to the literature surrounding this topic.

This study contributes to a larger body of research in that it highlights both the negative and positive aspects of historical consciousness that affected the way in which the future is imagined. Many participants romanticised the future of South Africa by imagining a future free from any problems and full of hope. This study also shed light on HEIs and the disparities that exist among the youth of South Africa in the university space. The responses received from the participants indicated that these students had an emotive opinion regarding the future that they wished to convey and that they saw themselves as those who would bring about change to the country in the future. Therefore, the historical consciousness of the first-year University of Pretoria students ranged from imagining the future as one full of positivity and hope to imagining a future where there were expected challenges in the future as well as imagining the future to be full of doom and despondency at the other end of the spectrum. However, there needs to be more research on ways that pre-service teachers in South Africa can use their historical consciousness to shape a future for themselves and for younger generations that is different from the past and present of South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Turnitin Certificate

MEd

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