

**Tripe and Recognition: The pursuit of Cultural Justice for Misrecognized African  
Cuisine**

by

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## Abstract

The food discourse is shaped by cultural norms and standards that dictate what foods are deemed valuable and acceptable. However, these standards are predominantly rooted in Eurocentric food culture making it the standard against which all other cuisines are measured. This Eurocentric dominance in the culinary world leads to a perpetuation of marginalization of cuisines. When Eurocentric food culture is considered the standard, it creates a bias that marginalizes and overlooks the richness and uniqueness of other culinary traditions such as African cuisines. As a result, African cuisines, are exposed to cultural imperialism which is a dimension of cultural injustice. Cultural injustice is rooted in how social structures represent, interpret, and communicate certain ideas, as demonstrated through cultural domination, which entails encountering foreign and hostile cultural interpretations; non-recognition, which entails being rendered invisible by dominant cultural practices; and disrespect, which entails being stereotyped and disrespected regularly in public and daily interactions (Fraser 1997: 14). In this study I investigate the food epistemology necessary to ensure that African cultural foods are valued, accepted and granted recognition for their cultural significance. This is accomplished by analyzing Charles Taylor's (1994) and Axel Honneth's (1995) theories of recognition along with Nancy Fraser's (1997) theory, and her proposed transformative remedies to address misrecognition. Through this analysis, I demonstrate how a reconceptualization of what acceptable food is defined as, as a whole can grant African cuisine a respectable status as that of Eurocentric food cuisines.

**Keywords:** Culture, Cultural oppression, Cultural empiricism, Recognition, Misrecognition, Cultural injustice, Marginalization, Respect, Race, Racialization, Eurocentrism, African cuisine.

## **Table of Contents**

Acknowledgements.....	2
Declaration.....	3
Ethics statement.....	4
Abstract.....	5
1: Introduction.....	7
2: Exploring the subject of African food.....	12
3: Cultural Injustice.....	25
4. South African Cuisine: A Case Study of Cultural Injustice.....	34
5: Conceptions of Recognition.....	46
6: Suitable conception of recognition for Black cultural cuisine.....	64
7: Final word.....	74
Bibliography.....	76

## **1. Introduction**

When a lay person thinks about food, they are normally thinking about any substance that can be consumed by a living organism to provide nourishment and sustain life. This can be seen in analogies that parents use to encourage children to not skip a meal or finish their meal. For instance, parents may tell children that the meal that they consume will help them to grow big and strong like the adults they aspire to be like. It is uncommon for one to think of food as the site in which an injustice such as the oppression of a cultural or racial group can take place. This is hardly the case unless an individual examines the intricate relationship that exists between the value given to cuisine and the people who consume it. Cuisines that are associated with White people are treated with respect and are valued highly while cuisines associated with Black people are sometimes derogated. This deferential treatment of foods based on who consumes them illuminates how food traditions can be racialized, dominated, marginalized, and misunderstood which are symptoms of cultural injustice as I describe it in this research.

The discipline of philosophy "has too often dismissed food as a trivial, humoral, and uninteresting topic" (Borghini 2020: III).

This perspective is changing, however, as more philosophers recognize the profound philosophical implications that food and eating have on various aspects of human existence. Contemporary philosophers have begun to make food a topic of serious and concentrated study, they have also begun to revisit earlier thinkers, to ask: how does our understanding of historic philosophers deepen when we consider their discussions of food as something more or other than casually chosen illustrations, examples, and metaphors? Some contemporary philosophers of food believe that such work can fundamentally reshape the discipline; that beginning philosophy with questions about humans' relations to food not only will bring us to new understandings of historical figures but also will invite us to reconsider the most fundamental, perennial problems of philosophy. What does it mean to be a person? What does it mean to know? What are our obligations to others? If we begin with the unavoidable fact of our being as eaters, and not just as thinkers, such fundamental rethinking inevitably follows (Heldke 2013: 135).

The quote above highlights the unique role of philosophy in food discourse. Firstly the "chief contribution philosophy can make to discussions of food in the public sphere and the academy is to reveal underlying assumptions that bind and limit those discussions" (Heldke 2013: 135).

This speaks to the critical and analytical approach used in philosophy. In the context of food, the critical and analytical approach can help us to dissect and scrutinize existing underlying assumptions that shape our thinking and behaviour when it comes to how we think about the things we eat, how we eat them, why we eat them and where we can source them. For instance, how do we think about the foods consumed by different racial groups? Why is it an adventurous moment when a White person attempts to eat a cuisine associated with Black people? Why do black people feel like it is an achievement to afford themselves the same foods as those eaten by White people? Why is it abominable to eat with hands at Kream restaurant compared to a Shisanyama (barbecue)? Why is it that Black people struggle to find foods that are cultural to them in prestigious spaces such as the mall of Africa or when they access the cuisines, the cuisines are foreign to their palate as they are assimilated to White food standards with an unfriendly price tag attached to them? The critical and analytical part of philosophy helps us to ask these questions and trying to answer them illuminates hidden biases and prejudices that can influence the perceptions around food.

In this dissertation, I present the contention that African food/cuisine because of its association with Black people is often subjected to cultural injustice, which in turn, results in its misrecognition. The importance of this claim is that it sheds light on a critical issue: the misrecognition of Black people's cuisine which results from perceptions such as "Black bodies are unclean and unhealthy" (Wolcott 2015). This injustice illuminates a broader issue of how, "[the] battle for inclusion and multiculturalism has been joined in the realm of food. Africa has been a major contributor to world cuisine and this contribution has either been overlooked, trivialized, or denied. References to African cuisine as primitive, unsophisticated, and virtually non-existent abound within the pseudo-studies of international and ethnic cooking. As far as the detractors are concerned, Africa has not influenced world cuisine because it had nothing worthy of emulating or of sharing with people and cultures outside or within the African continent" (Spivey 1999: 1).

An instance of the misconception that Africa has nothing worthy of culinary to share with people and cultures outside or within the African continent can be exemplified by examining the Michelin star system. The Michelin star system was first used to recognize great restaurants in 1926. They have grown in popularity over the years, becoming a well-known icon of culinary prowess, influencing restaurant reputations, and luring foodies from all over the world (Team 2023). Michelin inspectors evaluate a restaurant based on five factors: the quality of the ingredients used, the balance and combination of flavours, the expert use of culinary

techniques, the chef's expression through the dishes, and, most importantly, the consistency of the establishment over time and across the entire menu (Team 2023). Although Michelin star inspectors do not currently operate in Africa, five South African chefs have been recognized for their work in restaurants that fall under the scope of the inspectors (Lindeque 2023). This begs the question: does not the culinary talent displayed in developing Michelin-starred meals have a transferrable character and, as a result, should resonate inside the domain of their South African restaurants as well?

We may probe the temporary nature of taste and judgment by analyzing why Michelin star inspectors have not spread to Africa despite awarding ratings to African nationals. It helps us consider how cultural customs and culinary inventions attain global recognition and renown. The Michelin star system and other Eurocentric cooking standards, as the apex of culinary appraisal, may be understood as a mirror of a greater pattern of cultural dominance and erasure. The culinary norms and standards that have been formed that fall outside of the Eurocentric food standards suffer an existential threat because assimilation is essential for them to gain recognition. The concept of culinary magnificence, which becomes closely tied to the prevailing Eurocentric epistemology, maintains a hierarchy that flavours some cuisines while demeans others. This Eurocentric culinary hierarchy rewards a small few while pushing the enormously rich and diverse African cuisines to the sidelines, if not destroying them entirely. This illuminates how in numerous cultural contexts, Whiteness has historically been associated with sophistication, refinement, and cultivation, in contrast to the impression of darker-hued foods as more primitive and undesirable (Belasco 2008: 23). This reflects a broader societal pattern where food choices are not merely personal to the parties who prefer them but are deeply influenced by cultural perceptions and power dynamics, which in turn shape our identities and the narratives of food within our cultures. This marginalization of African food highlights the need to reevaluate the Eurocentric standards of food which contain biases and misconceptions about African cuisine. Moreover, it underscores the importance of exploring a conception of recognition that best encapsulates the recognition that Black people's cuisine deserves.

In chapter two I will argue that there is such a thing as an African food culture. To begin, I will lay the foundation for the conversation by giving an overview of what the subject of food entails. Subsequently, I will give an overview of what the subject of culture encompasses. This will pave the way to the discussion of the cultural nature of food which will help us understand

how then food becomes/is cultural or what it means to say that food is cultural. To further emphasize the multifaceted nature of food and its depth, I will briefly explore race and the notion of food as racial which will serve to illuminate how unjust food racialization is. This chapter will serve as a foundation for the following chapter in which I will be exploring cultural injustice.

Chapter three lays the foundation for the main contention of this dissertation that African cuisine is often subjected to cultural injustice. I will begin by addressing the question of what cultural injustice entails. To do this, I will first explore the concept of cultural injustice and its components. Secondly, I will use Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression as a framework that highlights injustice in which some of its elements align with the manifestation of cultural injustice. This will lay the foundation for the following chapter in which I demonstrate how African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice and what perpetuates it.

In chapter four, the objective is to demonstrate how South African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice. I will do this by using tripe as a site of illustration. This will then be followed by the discussion of Eurocentrism and White supremacy as forces that perpetuate the cultural injustice subjected to South African cuisines associated with Black South Africans. This chapter will lay the foundation for the chapter that follows in which I explore the politics of recognition as a possible just remedy to misrecognition experienced by Black people's cuisine as a result of cultural injustice.

In chapter five I will conduct a comparative analysis and critique of Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth's conception of recognition to assess which conception of recognition best encapsulates the recognition that African cuisine deserves. To begin, I will lay down the conditions that the conception will have to meet to best encapsulate the recognition that African cuisine deserves. This will be followed by an analysis of the conceptions to assess if they meet the conditions. Lastly, I will adopt a recognition theory that will best encapsulate the recognition that I believe African cuisine deserves. It is crucial to highlight that in this chapter, I conduct a brief assessment of the theories to gauge their suitability for addressing cultural injustice. This preliminary examination is a means of thoroughly exploring these theories. However, it is important to clarify that the in-depth analysis, focusing on determining which theory is most appropriate and can be adopted for this dissertation, will be conducted in the following chapter.

In chapter six, I conduct a comparative analysis and critique of Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth's conceptions of recognition to determine which of these conceptions best encapsulates the recognition that Black cuisine deserves. To begin, I will establish the conditions that the chosen conception must satisfy to effectively address the recognition that African cuisine merits. This will then be followed by an analysis of the theories to examine if they meet the conditions. My thesis concludes that African foods should be recognized in their natural authentic state without subjecting them to standardized Eurocentric food norms.

## **2. Exploring the subject of African food**

In this chapter, I argue that there is such a thing as an African food culture. An essential disclaimer is that, when reference is made to African cuisine throughout the dissertation, the reference will be to African foods that are associated with Black people. The words African food and Black food will be used interchangeably. To begin, I will lay the foundation for the conversation by giving an overview of what the subject of food entails. Subsequently, I will give an overview of what the subject of culture encompasses. This will pave the way to the discussion of the cultural nature of food which will help us understand how then food becomes/is cultural or what it means to say that food is cultural. To further emphasize the multifaceted nature of food and its depth, I will briefly explore race and the notion of food as racial which will serve to illuminate how unjust food racialization is. This chapter will serve as a foundation for the following chapter in which I will be exploring cultural injustice.

### **2.1 Food**

When we conceptualize the subject of food in philosophical discourse it surpasses ordinary nutrition where it is thought of as a means for one to be physically healthy. It ties together several elements that are inclusive of a group's culture and identity (Belasco 2008: 15). In some contexts, food serves as a silent and representational storyteller, conveying the history of the individuals or groups that consume it. This means that each dish placed on the table embodies its centuries of culinary evolution, representing the mingling of influences that have shaped a group's identity (Belasco 2008). Similarly, to how a book can let the mind travel, a single taste of a cuisine can transport an individual across continents just with the use of their palate as particular foods carry histories that vary depending on their place of origin and the people who consume the food. Individuals create relationships, deepen friendships, and strengthen familial ties through the act of sharing a meal (Belasco 2008). Food, in addition to uniting individuals, also serves as a window into societal conventions and protocols. Dining etiquette reflects cultural beliefs, manners, and social hierarchy such as not eating when there is thunder, not speaking with food in the mouth, giving the best part of the meat to the father of the household, and giving children what remains. In this context, the dining table becomes a microcosm of behaviour, where each gesture and ritual carries significance for the parties involved in such a way that should one engage in a behaviour that is considered to fall outside of what is appropriate, they are made to feel shame and they refrain from ever conducting themselves in

that manner again. Such practices frequently extend beyond the individual, impacting interactions within the greater society and defining the standards of behaviour that define the identity of a group.

Given that food defines the identity of a group, important to note is that, in this research given its roots within the philosophy discipline. When reference to food is made, this will not only be referring to the conventional role of food as a source of physical sustenance. This is important to note because I do not want to draw attention to food as a substance to sustain life but as a significant element of identity which is a site in which cultural injustice takes place. This alludes to how “in many cultures, the importance of food and eating extends well beyond mere sustenance, playing a role in identity expression, communication, social interactions, as well as in delineating status and gender roles. Moreover, research by Lindeman and colleagues (Lindeman & Sirelius, 2001; Lindeman & Stark, 1999, 2000) suggests that food choice is a means by which one expresses one's philosophy of life" (Vartanian, Herman, and Polivy 2007: 266). For instance, eating healthy foods based on the philosophy that promotes the belief that healthy eating is essential for one to lead a good and long life. This highlights the rich cultural and social dimension of food, showing how food is intertwined with our identities and how we choose to express ourselves. Moreover, it underscores the idea that “food preferences also serve to separate individuals and groups from each other and as one of the most powerful factors, in the construction of identity, we physically, emotionally and spiritually become what we eat” (Osseo-Asare 2005: x). Food can be a powerful expression of identity and a way for people to connect with their heritage and traditions. In this sense, injustices related to food can be perceived as injustices against a group's defining element, leading to misunderstandings, stereotypes, and cultural insensitivity.

Food is not just for physical sustenance and nourishment as conceptualized in layperson terms. Food is a complex and multi-faceted subject that touches upon issues of culture, identity, communication, and social norms. In the following section, I will give an overview of what the subject of culture encompasses to lay the ground for the discussion of the cultural nature of food.

## **2.2 Culture**

Culture has always been the cornerstone of human society. It constitutes our ideas, values, and behaviours. Culture serves as a vital conduit for the transmission of knowledge and identity from generation to generation as the customs of the previous generations are continually transferred to other generations. It has served as the prism through which we interpret our experiences and provide meaning to our existence (Cohen 1993: 195). Culture grants us the ability to make sense of our surroundings, giving our life meaning, purpose, and a sense of belonging within the social settings we exist in. This ability acts as the foundation for the construction of our individual and group identities within the broader context. The concept of culture is an important element of human identity but defining it has been a difficult task over the years, as scholars recognized that it is a concept that is broad and difficult to interpret (Lenard 2020). The root of the difficulty in defining culture is that the term "culture" encompasses a wide range of meanings and contexts, making a single, all-encompassing definition impossible to establish as elements such as customs, traditions, language, art, *cuisine*, and a variety of other variables all belong under the umbrella idea of culture, which varies from one group or society to the next. What is important to note about the notion of culture is that in as much as defining it is a complex task, Lenard asserts that a considerable agreement among scholars who have dedicated time to exploring this term is that "whatever it is, it matters to people and the meaning and value it provides to the lives of individuals are among the most important reasons, if not the most important ones, to defend and protect it in legal and political spaces" (Lenard 2020). Moreover, while defining culture is complex, delineating a satisfactory notion of culture is indispensable to the conversation about food and justice. Important to note is that the delineation of what culture entails will be solely to demonstrate how food has a cultural nature. For this reason, I will not look into the critiques of the conception of culture where scholars debate about the existence of culture. I will be working from the assumption that culture exists. I will use basic descriptions of what culture is to delineate one description that will be adopted in this section.

The first description of culture is a formal definition which assert that culture is:

1. A pattern of shared basic assumptions.
2. invented, discovered, or developed by a given group,
3. as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration
4. that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore,
5. is to be taught to new members of the group as the

6. correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein 1991: 313).

One author describes it as a “set of social meanings that shapes and filters how we think and act” (Haslanger 2017: 149). The second description of culture is it being described as a phenomenon that is used to differentiate groups of people based on a variety of elements such as language, customs, morality, *food*, education systems, upbringing, *race/ethnicity* and so on (O’Hear 1998). Similarly, the term “culture” can also

refer to the set of norms, practices and values that characterize minority and majority groups, for example by noting that the Hasidic Jewish communities in New York practice a unique “culture”, or by describing Italian or Senegalese culture. But it is also used in other ways, for example, to refer to “bro” culture or “hipster” culture, or the culture of British football fans. Moreover, any one person can be a member of multiple cultures—someone (like this writer!) can be a member of the Canadian culture, the Ottawa culture, the Jewish culture, and the academic culture at the same time (Lenard 2020).

This description of culture shows the versatile nature of culture where culture does not only encompass national and ethnic identities but is inclusive of subcultures as well where an individual can be subscribed to multiple cultures at the same time.

When analyzing the definition and descriptions of culture above, what can be drawn is that broadly, culture entails shared beliefs, values, and assumptions within a group (Lenard 2020). These elements of culture serve to inform how the group perceives the world and interacts with it. Shared beliefs refer to the convictions, ideas, and principles held by a group such as those that relate to religion and moral beliefs. These beliefs are shared in the sense that they are collectively held by individual members of that group, or they are practiced by the individual members in a way that performs the belief. For instance, a belief that is collectively held by the majority of Black people is that mirrors need to be covered when there is thunder and lightning. As a Black person who grew up in a setting where that belief was collectively held, even though I do not share the belief, I perform it by covering mirrors when there is thunder and lightning. Shared values communicate things that are deemed or treated as important by a cultural group. These values are there to guide the decision-making of the individuals within a cultural group, how they behave, and how they interpret things. For instance, within a cultural group where respect is highly valued, the teachings would be centred around teaching all individuals different ways to carry themselves respectfully. Shared assumptions entail the unspoken

beliefs held by a group that inform their perceptions and interpretations of the world (Schein 1991). These cultural differences show how culture is not something inherent in that people are born with it, but it is created, learned, and developed by a specific group of people over time. It is not universal to humanity, and it changes over time as the experiences of the individuals within that cultural group refine it to the suitability of the cultural group. For instance, if we look at cultural clothing, some pieces are conducive to warm weather and when the cold comes, the cultural groups adopt and refine their clothes to be fitting for such conditions. In essence, culture is not a rigid concept, it is multi-layered and communicates different values and beliefs to different types of people giving them a cultural identity. While culture is not rigid and may change over time, its fundamental importance in shaping societies and individuals remains constant. Culture provides individuals with a sense of identity and belonging.

When we investigate the notion of cultural identity, it refers to the practice of depicting individuals or groups primarily in terms of a specific culture, with that culture serving as a defining feature of their identity (Cohen 1993: 195). Here culture is a central and defining aspect of the individual or group's identity as it informs how they perceive, are perceived, treated, and are treated by others. For instance, if one communicates that they are part of the isiXhosa culture this informs the parties in communication with them of the language the person speaks and the food they are likely acquainted with.

In this context,

culture is represented as identity through symbols: simple in form, complex in substance because of their malleability, imprecision, multivocality. One can easily posit the icons of a culture--tartanry, cuisine, costume, music but what this mean is unspecifiable, because their meanings vary among all those who use them. Intrinsically meaningless, then, but powerfully eloquent, so much so that their loss or proscription may be experienced as an utter silencing of the cultural voice (Cohen 1993: 201).

In this passage it is noted that culture as identity is often perceived and expressed through the use of symbols. The symbols serve as powerful tools of demonstrating the collective identity of a cultural group. These symbols at first glance may appear to be simple in their physical form. In as much as these symbols appear to be simple in nature, their concealed complexity arises from them not being static but evolving over time. These symbols are not rigidly defined, individuals within a cultural group interpret them differently. At first glance, they seem meaningless, but they are imbued with a rich history of its people to the extent that, should the

cultural symbol be lost or misrecognised, that can be seen as the silencing of the voice of a cultural group resulting in that cultural group to be disconnected from their culture (Cohen 1993: 201).

As an illustration of the claim above regarding the silencing of a cultural group, let us explore isiXhosa cultural clothes as a symbol of identity. When looked at the clothes seem simple in their physical form as they can be differentiated using colours, patterns and designs depending on gender of the individual the attire is for. However, the complexity of these cultural clothes is in that they are not rigid, but they evolve over time as new generations add their creativity onto the clothes by using things such as beads as so on. Furthermore, the meaning and importance of the clothes varies among the people who wear them. For some people because the clothes are inherited from an ancestor in their blood line, they carry personal meanings. For some people the clothes are just a traditional attire, and they do not attach any significance to them. What Cohen argues is that, despite the potential for diverse interpretations of these attires, as cultural symbols, the clothes are intrinsically meaningful. Should the amaXhosa people lose their traditional attire or have it misinterpreted, this will feel like a silencing of their voice and can result in them being disconnected from their cultural roots (Cohen 1993: 201). The significance of these symbols in this interplay is rooted in their ability to change, adapt, and resonate with varied perspectives, functioning as bridges connecting generations. However, the multiplicity of interpretations of cultural symbols can easily become a point of contention and political debate.

In essence the concept of culture has two broad characteristics: it entails collectively held and performed assumptions, beliefs, values, behaviours, interpretations of the environment ; and it serves to differentiate groups of people without being rigid. In application to the food context shared assumptions and beliefs entail a cultural assumption about table manners which may determine if people speak or do not speak with food in their mouths. For some cultural groups speaking with a mouth full of food is an abominable act but for some cultural groups it is an act they are indifferent to. An instance of shared values and behaviours would be within a cultural group where respect is highly valued, the teachings are centred around teaching all individuals different ways to carry themselves in a respectful manner. This would entail the normalisation of saying ‘thank you’ after being given a meal. When it comes to interpretation, a cultural group may have the same view of what is tasty and what is not tasty, but this can be viewed differently by another group as there are different ways of preparing cuisines, making

it easy for people to argue about the appropriate way to prepare a cuisine not paying attention to the subjectivity of taste and cultural significance of recipes. This then highlights the importance of respecting cultural food within their authentic state and not trying to assimilate them into other cultural food standards as,

food is neither good nor bad in the absolute, though we have been taught to recognize it as such. The organ of taste is not the tongue, but the brain, a culturally (and therefore historically) determined organ through which are transmitted and learned the criteria for evaluations. Therefore, these criteria vary in space and in time. What in one epoch is judged positively, in another can change meaning; what in one locale is considered a tasty morsel, in another can be rejected as disgusting. Definitions of taste belong to the cultural heritage of human society. As there are differing tastes and predilections among different peoples and regions of the world, so do tastes and predilections evolve over the course of centuries (Massimo 2006: 61).

What is underscored in the statement above is that food and our perceptions of it are complex and influenced by a wide range of cultural, historical, and societal factors. This then challenges the notion of objective food quality and encourages us to consider the cultural and historical context when discussing food preferences and judgments as foods are good for differing groups of people and there can never be a universally agreed upon definition of what good food tastes like. The attempt to universalise food norms opens the door for cultural injustice as this act adopts the food norms of White people and necessitates assimilation on the end of Black people's cuisine in order for it to be treated as acceptable.

In the following section I will explore the conditions of what makes something cultural which will help us understand how then food becomes/is cultural or what it means to say that food is cultural.

### **2.2.1 Food as Cultural**

In this In this section, I will explore the cultural nature of food. This will be followed by a discussion of what race entails and thereafter a demonstration of how food has a racial nature. Food is a powerful cultural symbol that reflects the history, traditions, and values of a particular racial or ethnic group. It is cultural in that when we explore "food production, distribution, and consumption, they are all shaped by cultural codes, but how we analyse them varies across many dimensions, including scale and context" (Counihan and Van 2019: 2). This means that

food is undeniably cultural as it is a lens through which we can understand the diversity and richness of human cultures. When we analyse food in relation to culture, food first becomes cultural when it is produced (Massimo 2006: xi). This is because humans unlike animals who do not cherry-pick what they eat from what nature presents them with, humans seek to create food that is specific to them and their culture (Massimo 2006: xi). Secondly, food also becomes cultural when it is prepared because humans can transform ingredients into a meal using technological devices or fire (Massimo 2006: xi). This transformation of ingredients into a meal speaks to the significance of recipes as these are "complex social artifacts, which speak to culture, politics, and socioeconomics" (Borghini 2020: 4). Their cultural significance comes from the fact that they serve to recount the history of the cultural groups they are linked with as they are passed down from generation to generation (Borghini 2020: 7). In other words, altering a recipe has an impact on the authenticity and accuracy of the history being passed down to the next generation.

When this principle is applied to the notion of the existence of African cultural cuisine, Borghini would argue that altering an African cultural cuisine's recipe to meet Eurocentric cultural food norms would result in African cuisine losing its historical significance as part of African culture. Lastly "food is cultural when eaten because man, while able to eat anything, or precisely for this reason, does not eat everything but rather choose his food, according to criteria linked either to the economic and nutritional dimensions of the gesture or to the symbolic values with which food itself is invested. Through such pathways food takes shape as a decisive element of human identity and as one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating that identity" (Massimo 2006: xi-xii). This illuminates how food plays a crucial role in shaping human identity. For instance, within the African context someone who eats 'tripe' which is a type of meat "derived from the stomach lining of farm animals such as cows, pigs, sheep, and goats" (Firenze 1997:1), that person is likely to be South African as tripe is a staple food for Black South Africans. Someone who eats jollof rice is likely to be from West Africa as this is their cultural food. These foods are introduced to individuals at a young age, and they are a symbol of affiliation with one's cultural group making them to be closely tied to feelings of security and cherished memories. Eating them in this context, becomes a daily reaffirmation of one's cultural identity as they hold a significant value for the individual, even if they have adopted other diets due to changes in their living circumstances or personal choices (Kittler, Sucher and Nelms 2016: 5).

In essence, the takeaway from this section is that what people eat, and how they eat it, reflects who they are, where they come from, and what they believe in. "Like spoken language, the food system contains and conveys the culture of its practitioner; it is the repository of traditions and collective identity" (Massimo 2006: 133). This highlights how food serves as an important aspect of cultural identity and a way for people to connect with their heritage and identity. The other aspect of food is that it is racial, and this will be discussed in the following section. This will be discussed to further emphasize the multifaceted nature of food and its depth and also to show that there is an identifiable African culture.

### **2.3 Race**

Race is a complex and contested concept within the discipline of philosophy as scholars have different beliefs about the existence and basis of racial categories. Nevertheless, similarly to culture, delineating a satisfactory notion of race is indispensable to the conversation about food, culture, and justice. In this section, I will limit my discussion to Sally Haslanger and Charles Mills to delineate a notion of race and racialization that will be adopted in this study. I use these two scholars because firstly, both scholars are critical of racial inequalities and injustices. They highlight how racial categories have been used to perpetuate systems of privilege and oppression. They are concerned with the social and political consequences of this construction. Haslanger's conception of racialization is developed to account as an "effective tool in the fight against injustice" (Haslanger 2000: 36). This means that I can use her conception to illuminate the injustices that come as a result of racializing things. Secondly, I use Mills because his conception of race is a central and defining concept for understanding social and political systems, particularly in the context of Western societies and colonial histories (Mills 1998). Here Mill's conception will help to contextualise the roots of injustices that take place within the dimension of race. I believe that these conceptions will be useful in this research also because,

[e]ssential to the food justice movement is an analysis that recognizes the food system itself as a racial project and problematizes the influence of race and class on the production, distribution, and consumption of food. If we understand race as both embodied experience and social relations that shape access to resources, opportunities and power, then examining Black food politics allows for an understanding of how racialized experiences are produced (Navarro: 2022: 203).

This quote underscores the significance of recognizing that there is an intersection between race, class, and the justice food movement. The food justice movement refers to a social justice system that mainly has the task of fighting and resisting oppressive systems in the production, distribution, and consumption of food (Stray Dog Institute 2022). What Navarro is arguing is that the food justice movement must go beyond resisting oppressive food systems only in the economic sense. It needs to recognize the complex interplay of race and class within the food system and examine how these factors influence access to resources, opportunities, and power (Navarro 2022: 203). This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how racialized experiences are produced within the food system and lays the foundation for exploring ways in which the injustice of racialization of food can be potentially remedied. Furthermore, when examining the marginalization of South African cuisine, it becomes evident that the intersection of empire and race adds a layer of complexity to the manifestation of cultural injustice. Imperial forces, historically intertwined with racial dynamics, have significantly shaped the culinary landscape in South Africa. The historical imposition of imperial powers has influenced not only access to resources but also the very definition of what is considered 'authentic' or 'traditional.' Eurocentric standards imposed by imperial forces have often marginalized indigenous practices, perpetuating racial hierarchies and contributing to the erasure of Black contributions to South African cuisine.

The dual burden of racialized experiences within the food system and the impact of imperial forces complicates efforts to address cultural injustice within South African culinary traditions. As the food justice movement endeavours to resist oppressive economic structures, it must also confront imperial narratives that continue to marginalize and undermine the authenticity of indigenous food cultures. Recognizing the entwined nature of empire and race is crucial for fostering a truly inclusive and equitable approach to dismantling cultural injustice. Haslanger describes race as "the social meaning of the geographically marked body, familiar markers being skin colour, hair type, eye shape, physique" (Haslanger 2000: 44). She asserts that to classify a person as racialized entails them being "defined in terms of physical features associated with places of origin, and insofar as membership in the group functions socially as a basis for evaluation" (Haslanger 2000: 44). For instance, an individual is racialized when they are called Black because they are African and African people are associated with a dark skin tone which is labelled as Black. This is insofar as that person being labelled as Black determines the treatment they get in society. These markers are used to categorize people into different races. How these markers came to be is that in the past, "racial categorizations were intended

by Anglo colonialists to function as a system of supremacy where one group specifically Anglo-Whites, dominated and oppressed others" (Burdick 2014: 2). This hierarchy was used to rationalize unequal resource, opportunity, and power distribution.

As an illustration of how racial categories were used as tools to rationalize unequal resources, opportunity, and power distribution and to marginalize other racial groups. Mills (1998) discusses how European societies operate based on an implicit, unwritten contract, creating a racial hierarchy that shapes people's views and understanding of race while perpetuating racial injustice in societies (Mills, 1998). This unwritten contract entails a "set of meta-agreements between Whites to categorize all non-Whites as sub persons of inferior moral, cultural and legal status in relation to Whites" (Burdick 2014: 2). Of particular interest to me is the inferiorization of the cultural aspect of non-White people as this relates to an identity element of a group as described above where I demonstrated how culture forms part of identity. What the inferiorization of culture entails in this context is the negative effect of it being perceived as inferior as compared to other cultures. This encompasses the attachment of low value which is then associated with the culture and its members. For instance, this can result in certain elements of that culture such as their traditional attire being stereotyped based on its association with Black people. What the racialization of things does is that it opens up the platform for injustice to take place and I will illustrate how this happens in the food context in the following section as a way of problematizing the racialization of food.

### **2.3.1 The Racialization of Food**

When applying Haslanger's notion of racialization in the food context it would look like this: A cuisine would be racialized when it is labelled with names that have connotations associated with a specific racial group. These connotations or stereotypes because they are associated with a specific racial group determine the treatment the cuisine gets in society. For instance, the racialization of tripe would entail it being associated with Black people and because of that association the cuisine would be treated with no respect. Burdick likens this racialization to the inferiorization of the culture of Black people which is a form of undermining their identity and thus classifying their cultural symbols such as cuisine as inferior and not worthy of recognition which deeply affects how their cuisines are perceived. This is because "decisions about what to eat are of utmost importance to preserving cultural

and racial identity across geographic spaces and temporalities" (Burdick 2014: 4). As Burdick (2014: 6) explains,

During slavery, in the postbellum era African Americans utilized cooking and eating as a means to maintain the African American community and diasporic connections, as a form of cultural resistance and as a means of creatively subverting White cultural domination. However, during this time, White Americans found ways to associate African Americans with certain foods, in particular chicken and watermelon, as a means to correlate Blackness with inferiority and demeaning tropes such as laziness, buffoonishness and propensity for criminal activity.

As a response to White cultural dominance in the food context, Black people articulated Black culinary epistemology. This was to affirm the existence of their cuisines, preserve their cuisines and resist assimilating to White food culture.

Black culinary epistemology is comprised of three constitutive parts (Navarro 2022: 202): Firstly, it is "rooted in the Black radical tradition of resistance where Black people celebrate their recipes, dishes, and cooking practices to resist racial oppression and injustice" (Navarro 2022: 202). This aspect of articulating Black cuisine highlights how this type of cuisine is connected to a tradition of resistance whereby Black people made use of their food to resist racial oppression and injustice. For instance, "after the introduction of Black-eyed peas and other seeds into their country, Blacks declared that they would maintain an African ethnic identity in American cultures; soul food became one of the ways Black cultures were preserved," (Hughes 1997: 273). Secondly, "Black culinary epistemologies highlight the nutritional and healing benefits of cooking and consuming Afro-diasporic foods for Black communities. The popular "food is medicine" perspective points to how food has the potential to improve poor health" (Navarro 2022: 202). This aspect serves to show Black cuisine also does adhere to health standards showing that cultural foods can also be healthy even though they might not look presentable. Within the food discourse, "Black foods and foodways have been represented as pathological, through the overconsumption of food high in sugars, calories, and calories and the under-consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods. As a result, Black foods are thought of as counter to or outside of alternative food movements" (Navarro 2022: 208). "Lastly, Black culinary epistemologies imagine a future for Black people. They do so by engaging in life-making practices within death-producing spaces. This refers not only to sites where Black people are subject to premature death but also where Black foods, voices, experiences, and histories are deemed illegitimate" (Navarro 2022: 202). This aspect

highlights the dynamic and forward-looking nature of Black cuisines. It underscores how Black cuisine outside of it is being developed for sustenance and demonstration of cultural heritage. It is also a symbol of resilience, identity, and envisioning a future where Black communities can flourish and assert their legitimacy in the face of historical and contemporary challenges. This often applies in spaces "where Black people are physically subject to premature death as well as food apartheid in which the food expertise, knowledge, and skills of Black people are discounted, ignored, or deemed less legitimate than White voices" (Navarro 2022: 211).

This articulation of Black cuisine highlights the problem that comes with the racialization of food as Black people have to fight a second struggle to affirm the legitimacy of their foods after they have been in a long continuous fight of affirming their personhood in spaces where their race results in them being seen as less persons than White people which is now an issue that is happening with their cuisines as well.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued that there is such a thing as an African food culture. I made an essential disclaimer that, when reference is made to African cuisine throughout the dissertation, the reference will be to African foods that are associated with Black people. To begin, I laid the foundation for the conversation by giving an overview of what the subject of food entails. Subsequently, I gave an overview of what the subject of culture encompasses. This paved the way to the discussion of the cultural nature of food which served to help us understand how food becomes/is cultural or what it means to say that food is cultural. To further emphasize the multifaceted nature of food and its depth, I briefly discussed the race and racial nature of food which served to illuminate the gravity of the injustice of racializing food. In the following chapter, I will explore cultural injustice.

### **3. Cultural Injustice**

In the previous chapter, I argued that there is such a thing as African food culture, and it has a racial and cultural nature that connects it to the identity of African people. This chapter lays the foundation for the main contention of this dissertation that African cuisine is often subjected to cultural injustice. I begin by addressing the question of what cultural injustice entails. To do this, I first explore the concept of cultural injustice and its components. Secondly, I use Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression as a framework that highlights injustice in which some of its elements align with the manifestation of cultural injustice. This lays the foundation for the following chapter in which I demonstrate how African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice and what perpetuates the cultural injustice.

What is essential to the discussion of what cultural injustice entails is the understanding of the concept of injustice as it is foundational to the in-depth understanding of cultural injustice. Miranda Fricker makes the argument that "one misses a great deal by only looking at justice" (Fricker 2007: 7). This is because, when justice is viewed in isolation, it can lead people to have an incorrect perception that the absence of justice is the only definition of injustice. However, Fricker notes that this viewpoint disregards the fact that injustice is not just a mere absence of justice but a reality that exists as a force in and of itself outside of justice. Injustice is not simply a lack or deficiency of justice, but a manifestation of a complex and systemic structure of power and inequality. This understanding of injustice as a separate entity, rather than just the absence of justice, demands a more nuanced and critical examination of the social, political, and economic systems that perpetuate it. It necessitates an active and ongoing struggle to not only achieve justice but also to challenge and disrupt the systems of oppression that perpetuate injustice (Fricker 2007: 7). Iris Marion Young makes the contention that injustice is a multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses two forms of disabling constraints: oppression and domination (Young 2014: 174). She defines oppression as a structural problem that arises when certain social groups are systematically disadvantaged and marginalized (Young 2014: 176). For Young, oppression cannot be reduced to individual acts of discrimination or prejudice but must be understood as a systemic issue deeply ingrained in social institutions and practices (Young 2014: 176). She further identifies five distinct types of oppression which will be discussed in-depth in the sections below: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young 2014: 183-197). Domination entails the imposition of a group's will on another group resulting in the limitation

of the agency and autonomy of the inferior group (Young 2014). These insights into the conception of injustice highlight the importance of recognizing its complex and systemic nature and the need for ongoing efforts to challenge and disrupt the systems that perpetuate injustices such as cultural injustice.

### **3.1 Cultural injustice**

Cultural injustice is categorized as a form of oppression that is often overlooked or dismissed but it is just as important as other forms of social injustice such as economic and political inequality. When it comes to the examination of cultural injustice,

the injustice is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Examples include cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); nonrecognition (being rendered invisible using the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/ or in everyday life interactions) (Fraser 1997: 14).

In essence, cultural injustice comprises the unfair treatment and marginalization of certain cultural groups within societies. This injustice has three key components: cultural domination, nonrecognition, and disrespect. The dominance within cultural domination is a manifestation of cultural hegemony in which ‘cultural hegemony’ refers to the capacity to shape and dictate the prevailing norms and beliefs within a society, thereby constructing the widely accepted “common sense” or “doxa”(Fraser 1997: 153). This encompasses “the power to determine authoritative interpretations of social circumstances and necessities, to delimit the realm of acceptable dissent, and to influence the political discourse” (Fraser 1997: 153). In essence, cultural hegemony holds the power to define and influence the very fabric of a society's collective consciousness and can result in the marginalization and oppression of other cultural groups and their perspectives, creating an unequal power dynamic within that society (Fraser 1997: 153).

Nonrecognition occurs when a group's culture is rendered invisible within society by the dominant cultural group ignoring the existence of the inferior cultural group. This “nonrecognition can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, reduced mode of being. Beyond simple lack of respect, it can inflict a grievous wound, saddling

people with crippling self-hatred" (Fraser 1997: 14). The last component of cultural injustice for Fraser is disrespect, which refers to being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions" (Fraser 1997: 14). Fraser makes the argument that this element of disrespect is a form of injustice that involves the denigration of individuals or groups. It can take the form of ridicule, for instance, mocking unique or unfamiliar ingredients used to prepare certain cultural dishes. Contempt, for instance, expressing a strong dislike of a cultural cuisine by communicating negative stereotypes about it. Denial of recognition, for instance, refusing to recognize a certain cultural cuisine and by so doing, rendering it invisible. Fraser asserts that disrespect can be a more insidious form of oppression than material deprivation, as it can undermine people's self-respect, dignity, and sense of identity. Fraser also notes that disrespect can interact with and reinforce other forms of oppression, such as gender, race, and class discrimination.

In the following section, I explore the five faces of oppression as a framework that highlights injustice in which some of its elements align with the manifestation of cultural injustice.

### **3.1.2 Oppression as the manifestation of cultural injustice**

Oppression is an injustice that is categorized as the second horror of human existence (Young 2014). It entails the structural and systematic disadvantaging and marginalization of a group (Young 2014: 176). When conceptualized, oppression cannot be reduced to individual acts of discrimination or prejudice but must be understood as a systemic issue deeply ingrained in social institutions and practices (Young 2014: 176). In this context firstly, oppression encompasses more than just individual acts of discrimination or prejudice. It is embedded in the structures and systems of the society meaning that individuals do not perpetuate the oppression, but it is perpetuated by the broader system. This then means that it cannot be easily addressed through the correction of discriminatory or prejudiced individual acts but the systems as a whole need to be examined and deconstructed if necessary. Secondly, oppression entails the marginalization of certain groups based on aspects of their identity such as their race, gender sexuality, etc. These groups of people end up occupying the outskirts of their society and thus become excluded from community engagements. Thirdly oppression thrives because what sustains it is the fabric of the society: the societal norms, laws, policies, and practices that, either intentionally or unintentionally, perpetuate the disadvantages faced by marginalized

groups. These may include, for instance, the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of certain cultural foods such as labelling the foods they consume with derogatory labels.

Furthermore, to expand on the notion of oppression, Young discusses five faces of oppression namely: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young 2014). The first face is exploitation: this face of oppression refers to the economic and material aspects of oppression (Young 2014). The economic aspect of exploitation involves one group taking advantage of another group economically. It typically includes situations where a dominant or privileged group extracts wealth, resources, or labour from a marginalized or oppressed group without providing fair compensation. It can manifest in various forms, such as low wages, unfair labour practices, or economic disparities that disproportionately affect the disadvantaged group (Young 2014). The material aspect of exploitation is closely related to economic exploitation but extends beyond monetary concerns. It encompasses the unfair distribution of resources and opportunities that results in material deprivation for the oppressed group. This can include limited access to necessary resources people need to lead a decent life such as education, healthcare, housing, etc (Young 2014). As a measure to remedy exploitation, Young asserts that "the injustices of exploitation cannot be eliminated by redistribution of goods, for as long as institutionalized practices and structural relations remain unaltered, the process of transfer will re-create an unequal distribution of benefits. Bringing about justice where there is exploitation requires reorganization of institutions and practices of decision making, alteration of the division of labour, and similar measures of institutional, structural, and cultural change" (Young 2014: 18).

Differently articulated, exploitation cannot be remedied through the distribution of goods, and this is because, firstly, exploitation as described by Young is a structural injustice. This makes it not solely a matter of unequal wealth distribution but to be deeply rooted in the structures and institutions of society. These structures perpetuate exploitation by enabling one group to benefit at the expense of another. The redistribution of goods, while important, does not address the underlying structural injustices that allow exploitation to persist hence its failure to remedy this injustice. Secondly Young contends that true justice in cases of exploitation requires a more comprehensive approach (Young 2014). What this means is that the transferring of resources or wealth from one group to another is an inadequate solution as it may only temporarily alleviate some inequalities, but it does not address the root causes of the inequalities. Young notes that, alleviates the injustice of exploitation and finds justice for the

individuals and groups subjected to it. What is essential for this to happen is that the institutions and practices that enable the exploitation of people need to be reorganized and transformed to make them inhabitable to the injustice of exploitation. An essential distinction to note is that the term "structural violence" is not explicitly applied to exploitation, but rather the focus is on the need for institutional, structural, and cultural changes to address it. Young notes that alleviating the injustice of exploitation and finding justice for the individuals and groups subjected to it require reorganizing and transforming the institutions and practices that enable the exploitation of people. Thirdly, when examining the division of labour, it plays a significant role in exploitation. Young contends that making changes to the division of labour is one of the necessary measures to avoid exploitation (Young 2014: 18). This may involve reevaluating who does what kind of work and how the labour benefits and labour burdens are distributed within society. Lastly, in addition to institutional and structural changes that need to be implemented, Young also highlights the importance of cultural change. This involves but is not limited to challenging and transforming the cultural norms, beliefs, and values that may contribute to or justify the exploitation of certain cultural groups. Important to note is that cultural change is essential for addressing the attitudes and beliefs that sustain oppressive systems.

The second face of oppression is marginalization. Marginalization is described as the process by which certain groups are pushed to the outskirts of society and are denied equal access to resources and opportunities compared to everyone else (Young 2014: 18). This involves the exclusion and the denial of full participation in social, economic, and political life and Young asserts that it "is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression" (Young 2014: 18). Social life in this context refers to an individual's or a group's ability to participate in societal social activities. When a group is subjected to marginalization, they may be excluded or have limited access to these social activities, resulting in them feeling isolated or excluded. This fosters a sense of not belonging within their society. Political life encompasses the ability of an individual or group to participate in the political matters of the society they are a member of. It encompasses the ability to vote for the party one an individual's choosing, express political opinions without being silenced, and have a say in government policy development to promote inclusion (Young 2014). Marginalization in the political sphere can manifest in exclusion from political processes or even underrepresentation. Economic life encompasses an individual's or group's participation in the economy. It entails the ability of an individual to access employment, earn a living, and have economic security of some kind in which an individual

can take care of their living expenses and health care. When marginalization takes place in the economic sphere, it can result in limited employment opportunities, lower income, and a higher likelihood of poverty and economic insecurity for the individuals or groups affected. Young notes that marginalization also “involves the deprivation of cultural, practical, and institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction” (Young 2014: 20). This highlights the multifaceted nature of marginalization and making the provision of comfortable material life inadequate to remedy marginalization as the marginals will still experience "uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect" (Young 2014: 20).

The third face is powerlessness which refers to the lack of influence and decision-making capabilities that oppressed groups experience (Young 1990: 56). These groups often have limited or no control over the institutions and policies that affect their lives thus they remain powerless in their societies and cannot do much about it. In essence in Young’s context, the injustice associated with powerlessness encompasses inhibitions in capacity development, limited decision-making power in the workplace, and exposure to disrespectful treatment based on one's social status. These injustices are fundamentally tied to the division of labour in industrial societies, where there is a separation between those who plan and those who execute. The oppression of powerlessness raises questions about the fundamental societal division of labour (Young 1990: 56).

The fourth face is cultural imperialism which occurs when the dominant culture in society imposes its values, beliefs, and norms on oppressed groups, suppressing their own cultures and identities. This can lead to a loss of cultural autonomy. Cultural imperialism is a form of oppression that undermines the cultural autonomy of the dominated society and erodes its traditions, values, and practices, replacing them with those of the dominant culture (Young 2014: 192-195). For Young, "[t]o experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other" (Young 2014: 193). The invisibilization speaks to being excluded and marginalized as these "can be understood as processes of silencing and invisibilizing social groups" (Herzog 2017: 13). This alludes to how individuals or groups are excluded and treated differently based on characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality, class, or ability (Young 2014). This results in the dominant group's perspectives being marked out as the universal standard. This dominant group often has exclusive control over the means of interpretation and communication in a society, and this

results in the promotion and dissemination of cultural products that reflect the perspectives, values, and experiences of the dominant group, while suppressing or marginalizing the cultures and experiences of other groups (Young 2014: 193). Cultural imperialism can result in the paradoxical experience of being both invisible and marked as different for individuals from marginalized cultures (Young 2014: 193). On one hand, the dominant culture may not acknowledge the unique perspectives and experiences embodied in the expressions of these marginalized cultures, effectively rendering them invisible; On the other hand, the individuals from these cultures may be visibly marked by their difference from the dominant culture, making them the target of prejudice and discrimination (Young 2014: 193).

The last face is violence which is the most visible and extreme face of oppression. It includes not only physical violence but also structural violence, which encompasses the harm done to individuals and groups through discriminatory policies and practices (Young 2014). The sole purpose of this face of oppression is to cause harm, humiliation, or destruction (Young 1990). The five faces of oppression encompass aspects related to cultural injustice hence my contention that some of the faces directly align with manifestations of cultural injustice.

**Exploitation:** Cultural injustice can be seen as a form of exploitation when one culture is unfairly benefiting from the cultural practices, knowledge, or resources of another culture. This can occur through cultural appropriation, where elements of one culture are commodified and profited from by a dominant culture, often without proper acknowledgment or respect for the original culture. For instance, if a dominant culture appropriates things from marginalized cultures and profits from them, the original culture may receive no credit or economic benefits.

**Marginalization:** The concept of nonrecognition in cultural injustice closely aligns with Young's idea of marginalization. When a cultural group is rendered invisible or ignored by the dominant culture, they are marginalized. This exclusion from the cultural discourse and representation perpetuates their oppression and can lead to self-hatred, as described in the text.

**Powerlessness:** The notion of cultural domination within cultural injustice parallels the idea of cultural imperialism in Young's framework. Cultural domination refers to the imposition of one culture's patterns of interpretation and communication onto another culture. This imposition of power can result in cultural imperialism, where the dominant culture wields significant influence over the prevailing norms and beliefs, effectively disempowering and silencing the marginalized culture. This unequal power dynamic contributes to the powerlessness of the oppressed cultural group.

**Cultural Imperialism:** As mentioned above, cultural imperialism, a face of oppression in Young's framework, is evident in cultural injustice. The ability of one

culture to shape and dictate the "common sense" or prevailing norms within a society reflects the dominance of one culture over others, leading to cultural imperialism and the suppression of diverse cultural voices. Violence: Although not explicitly mentioned by Fraser in her description of cultural injustice, cultural injustice can also lead to physical and symbolic violence. Disrespect, as described by Fraser, can manifest in negative stereotypes and prejudices, which can contribute to discriminatory actions and hate crimes against members of marginalized cultural groups. Disrespect, ridicule, and contempt can lead to psychological and emotional violence, undermining the dignity and self-respect of individuals. In essence, the five faces of oppression are a manifestation of cultural injustice.

Moreover, the interconnected nature of the five faces of oppression elucidates their collective contribution to the broader issue of cultural injustice, particularly in the context of the misrecognition of African cuisine. Exploitation becomes evident as Western cultures disproportionately benefit from the richness of African culinary traditions, often appropriating ingredients, recipes, and cooking techniques without proper acknowledgment or compensation. Marginalization manifests when African culinary contributions are overlooked or diminished, rendering them invisible in the global culinary discourse. Powerlessness is entrenched in the unequal dynamics of influence, where Western cultural norms dominate the representation and interpretation of culinary practices, disempowering African voices in shaping their narrative. Cultural imperialism is apparent as Western culinary perspectives dictate what is considered "common sense" in the culinary world, suppressing the diversity and authenticity inherent in African cuisines. The violence faced is reflected in the disrespect and stereotypes surrounding African food, contributing to discriminatory actions such as the dismissal of its complexity and richness. Collectively, these faces of oppression reinforce and perpetuate the broader issue of cultural injustice, deepening the misrecognition of African cuisine on a global scale.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter lays the foundation for the main contention of this dissertation that African cuisine is often subjected to cultural injustice. I began by addressing the question of what cultural injustice entails. To do this, I first explored the concept of cultural injustice and its components. Secondly, I made use of Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression as a framework that highlights injustice in which some of its elements directly align with the manifestation of cultural injustice. This laid the foundation for the following chapter in which I demonstrate

how African cuisine (food associated with Black people) specifically South African cuisine (South African dishes associated with Black people) is subjected to cultural injustice.

## **4. South African Cuisine: A Case Study of Cultural Injustice**

In the previous chapter, I aimed to establish the foundation for my argument that African food is subjected to cultural injustice. In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate how South African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice. I do this by using tripe as a site of illustration. This is then followed by the discussion of Eurocentrism and White supremacy as forces that perpetuate the cultural injustice subjected to South African cuisines associated with Black South Africans. This chapter lays the foundation for the chapter that follows in which I explore the politics of recognition as a possible just remedy to misrecognition experienced by Black people's cuisine as a result of cultural injustice.

### **4.1 Conditions for Cultural Injustice**

Examining how South African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice entails the application of what cultural injustice would look like for South African cuisine. This includes the delineation of conditions of cultural injustice from the descriptions of what culture and cultural injustice entail as discussed in the previous chapters to establish if South African cuisine meets the conditions I consider in this study to be necessary for it to be considered as subjected to cultural injustice. Should South African cuisine meet these conditions, it means that it is not only subjected to cultural injustice, but it is misrecognised as I will demonstrate how cultural injustice results in misrecognition. To commence the task, I will give a list of the conditions and make use of the tripe dish as a site of illustration.

Cultural injustice is systemic and structural in nature as it is embedded in the structures and systems of a society. This injustice is subjected to certain cultural groups based on their shared beliefs, values, traditions, and assumptions which are contrary to what is deemed or treated as acceptable. The injustice is deeply ingrained in the social institutions and practices of a society meaning that it goes beyond individual acts of discrimination or prejudice. Its main aspects are domination, non-recognition, and disrespect. It manifests through some of the five faces of oppression: Exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

The conditions for categorizing South African cuisine as a victim of cultural injustice can be outlined as follows:

1. **Systematic and Structural Nature:** To qualify as cultural injustice, it must be systematic and deeply rooted in the structures and systems of a society. This means that injustice should not be limited to isolated instances of oppression or individual prejudices but should be pervasive and ingrained in the very fabric of society. It manifests through the various faces of oppression, emphasizing that it is not merely about isolated acts but rather a structural and systemic issue.
2. **Shared Beliefs, Values, Traditions, and Assumptions:** The injustice is rooted in the targeting of cultural groups based on their shared beliefs, values, traditions, and assumptions. This implies that cultural injustice goes beyond mere discrimination; it encompasses the deliberate marginalization of cultural groups due to their adherence to beliefs, values, traditions, and assumptions that differ from what is conventionally considered acceptable in the dominant culture.
3. **Manifestation through Cultural Imperialism:** Cultural imperialism is a significant facet of this injustice. It involves the exertion of dominant cultural influence, often at the expense of other cultures. In the case of South African cuisine, cultural imperialism might manifest as the imposition of White culinary norms, thereby marginalizing and undermining the richness of Black food culture.
4. **Disrespect:** The injustice manifests in negative stereotypes and prejudices, which can contribute to discriminatory actions and hate crimes against members of marginalized cultural groups.

In essence, for South African cuisine to be categorized as a victim of cultural injustice, it must meet these key criteria: being deeply ingrained in societal structures, targeting cultural groups based on their shared cultural elements, prominently featuring cultural imperialism as a facet of the injustice and being disrespected which alludes to “being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/ or in everyday life interactions” (Fraser 1997: 14). Misrecognition and cultural injustice share a symbiotic relationship, each reinforcing and perpetuating the other in a complex interplay. Misrecognition, as a social phenomenon, involves the systematic denial of recognition and respect for crucial aspects of individuals' or groups' identity, particularly their cultural identity. This denial of recognition, in turn, becomes a foundational element of cultural injustice. When certain cultural practices or traditions are consistently overlooked, stigmatized, or marginalized, it results in a form of cultural injustice. The conditions outlined for cultural injustice, such as systematic and structural nature, shared beliefs, values, traditions, assumptions, manifestation through cultural

imperialism, and disrespect, align closely with the outcomes of misrecognition. The invisibilization, marginalization, and disrespect experienced by Black South African cuisines, exemplified through the case of Tripe, showcase how misrecognition serves as a precursor and catalyst for broader cultural injustice. By denying recognition to specific cultural elements, societies contribute to the perpetuation of systemic inequalities and power imbalances, making the exploration of remedies, such as the politics of recognition, imperative for addressing these intertwined issues.

#### **4.2 Tripe dish as a site of illustration**

In South Africa, “meat forms an integral part of the South African cuisine. In fact, for most South Africans, a meal without meat is considered not to be a meal at all (Erasmus and Hoffman 2017: 71). Part of South Africa’s meat dishes is “offal, a Black South African stewed tripe dish Mala mogodu, which is made from animal intestines (mala) and stomach lining (mogodu)” (Erasmus and Hoffman 2017: 71). This dishes history "dates back to the early settlers in South Africa, who utilized every part of the animals they raised for sustenance. The concept of utilizing offal reflects a practical approach to cooking and eating, where nothing goes to waste. Over time, offal became a cultural and culinary tradition, passed down through generations as a symbol of resourcefulness and culinary heritage" (Jacobs 2023). This cuisine "was eaten only by the lower class and was not something that the elite would indulge in. Hence, the word was often used to describe something or someone as worthless or stupid" (Kiani 2022). Important to note here is that the tripe dish was only eaten by the lower class, and it was not a dish that the elite people would indulge in. The cuisine was only consumed by a specific group of people, Black people, and because of this, it was labelled as a worthless dish which has connotations to how Black people were viewed by White people in South Africa during the apartheid era. This illuminates the racialization of cuisines where a cuisine is treated and perceived either as valuable or disgusting based on who consumes it.

The racialization and stereotyping of the tripe dish underscore some conditions of cultural injustice. it underscores the condition of disrespect as the tripe dish was perceived and stereotyped as unworthy. It also highlights how the shared beliefs, values, and traditions of Black people were disparaged because tripe is a dish that is contrary to what is considered acceptable by the white class, White people. This also exemplifies the marginalization of certain groups within South African society based on their culinary traditions.

Tripe, a cultural cuisine in South Africa, presents a unique challenge when it comes to accessing it in its authentic form at an affordable price, particularly for the Black population. This challenge becomes even more pronounced when attempting to find it in upscale dining establishments like Kream, known for its prestigious status. To illustrate the difficulties faced by Black South Africans in sourcing cultural foods outside of townships, consider the example of Cape Town, the country's second-largest city and a hub for wine and fine dining, drawing international attention. Surprisingly, the city's restaurant scene lacks African food, including tripe, as noted by Greenblatt in 2016. This scarcity highlights the broader issue of cultural food accessibility for Black South Africans, even in urban areas. This is concerning given that the large population of South Africa and even that of Cape Town is comprised of people who consume African cuisine. It is noted that "the lack of African eating choices reflects a simple fact about Cape Town, some residents complain: It's a place that caters more to tourists than locals" (Greenblatt 2016).

The marginalization of African food which is inclusive of tripe within the fine dining scene in Cape Town and in other places in South Africa reflects systemic and structural injustice of African food. This is because it brings to light "[t]he belief in the technical, if not overall, superiority of French cuisine carried into the restaurant business which results in the homogenization of high cuisines worldwide. Chefs who are trained in the French style prepare dishes from all kinds of cuisines using French techniques convinced that by doing so they are improving what they call traditional recipes. The effect of this is that when we dine in their 'Mexican' or 'Indian' restaurants we are still eating French-style dishes" (Janer 2007: 293). In the context of South Africa, when South Africans are dining in restaurants that claim to be selling cultural foods, the food is prepared in French style in which the French style of cooking entails a reinterpretation of foods that is influenced by Western culinary trends. Instances of this are many in South Africa where one enters a restaurant, orders a traditional cuisine such as pap and they are served balls of pap mixed with bacon cubes and coated with breadcrumbs or tripe and they are served a bleached version of tripe with many condiments compared to the traditional South African way of preparing the dish. This demonstrates a lack of representation of authentic South African cuisines in these establishments which is indicative of cultural injustice, as it goes beyond individual acts of discrimination where people would have certain reservations about a cultural dish such as the tripe dish. It is now embedded in the structures and systems of the culinary industry as it is not offered in fine dining establishments or when

offered it is assimilated into French cuisine, communicating that it is not worthy to be served in such places.

To demonstrate how the unavailability of Black South African dishes in high-end establishments reflects systemic racialization of cuisines which renders Black cuisine non-recognized. It is noted that,

"more than 20 years after the end of apartheid, there are lively protests and ongoing debates in South Africa about how various aspects of society — universities, textbooks, the national anthem, even hairstyles — appear to embrace White or Eurocentric values while minimizing or suppressing Black ones. No one is treating restaurants as a civil rights issue, but the lack of African options speaks to the same concerns" (Greenlatt 2016).

Here recognition and cultural imperialism are visible in that Black South African cuisine, firstly is “rendered invisible using the authoritative, representational, communicative, and interpretative practices” of the White culture (Fraser 1997: 14). Secondly, it is marked as different due to its distinct manner of preparation, ingredients, and customs, making the food the target of prejudice and discrimination. For instance, "Gxolo recalls that when she set up a stall at the Cape Town Street Food Festival offering tripe — a standard dish of the Xhosa ethnic group — passers-by reacted either with horror or glee. Some people may be "grossed out by it," she concedes" (Greenlatt 2016). This underscores the subjectivity of food aesthetics and taste. What one person considers a delicacy; another person may find unappetizing. This subjectivity is a common aspect of culinary experiences and is influenced by personal, cultural, and other factors. This then justifies the glee and horror reaction. What is unjustifiable is the negative labelling of Black cultural foods or just food in general because they do not adhere to conventional food standards.

An assertion is made that "classifying insects or offal as 'disgusting' might seem innocuous or even amusing, but disgust is not innocent" (Plakias 2021: 8). This statement illuminates that labelling certain foods as disgusting or with any negative label may appear harmless or even funny, but the labels carry deeper and more significant implications. The deeper and more significant implications reflect cultural and societal bias. This is because our perception of what is "disgusting" is often shaped by cultural and societal norms. What one culture finds disgusting; another may consider a delicacy. For instance, while some people in Western societies may be repelled by the idea of eating insects or offal (organ meats), other cultures

may consider these foods as valuable sources of nutrition. This highlights how the concept of disgust is subjective and can lead to cultural biases. These labels can also result in social exclusion because when we label something as disgusting, we not only express our personal preferences but also run the risk of stigmatizing or excluding those who consume or engage with those things. For example, if we mock a cultural group for eating insects or offal, we might unintentionally alienate them or make them feel inferior. This kind of social exclusion can perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. The exclusion is also closely related to marginalization as marginalization "involves the deprivation of cultural, practical, and institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction" (Young 1998: 20). In this context the negative labels of a cuisine render the people who consume it marginalized as they are deprived conditions necessary for them to leave an autonomous life. This also underscores how the individuals, or the group is left powerless as the group often has limited or no control over the institutions and policies that affect their lives thus they remain powerless in their societies and cannot do much about it even when the food they eat is derogated (Young 2014: 21).

Additionally, this perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices which reinforce discriminatory attitudes and behaviours brings to light the cultural imperialism experienced by African dishes which results in feelings of cultural erasure and displacement, as traditional food practices and ingredients are replaced by dominant Western foods. The dominant culture is given its characteristic of being viewed as prestigious as shown in the Michelin star system discussed in the introduction chapter. It may not recognize the significance of these food traditions and may instead view them as inferior or primitive. This further perpetuates the invisibility of marginalized food cultures and undermines their cultural identities. In essence, when we assess the conditions for cultural injustice established earlier, it can be seen that they do align with the experiences of tripe within the South African food context. Tripe's historical significance, marginalization, limited representation in fine dining, stereotypes, invisibility, and cultural erasure collectively illustrate how this traditional dish is a victim of cultural injustice, leading to its misrecognition.

Misrecognition for Charles Taylor occurs when a group within society is denied recognition and respect due to them often because of factors such as their cultural, racial, and ethnic background (Taylor 1994: 26). He considers it to be "a form of oppression, imprisoning someone a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor 1994: 25). It can manifest in

various ways such as cultural identity, racial and ethnic identity, gender identity, religious identity, and linguistic identity. For my study, I will only expand on cultural identity which entails a group within society having a "distinctive set of traditions and practices and a distinctive intellectual and aesthetic history" (Taylor 1994: 75). The harm in denying people recognition of their cultural identity lies in that, "the members of the unrecognized cultures will feel deracinated and empty, lacking the sources for a feeling of community and a basis for self-esteem, and, at the worst, that they will be threatened with the risk of cultural annihilation" (Taylor 1994: 75-76). For Taylor, misrecognition is not a matter of individual preferences, but it has significant implications for an individual's or group's social and political status. This therefore makes recognition important. Fraser conceptualizes misrecognition as non-recognition which refers to "being rendered invisible using the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture" (Fraser 1997: 14). For her misrecognition is often tied to economic and social inequalities. Honneth conceptualizes misrecognition as disrespect in which an individual or group is denied mutual recognition resulting in their freedom being constrained and them not having a positive self-understanding (Honneth 1996).

In the incorporation of the different conceptions of what misrecognition entails, in this study the conception I adopt is as follows: misrecognition refers to a social phenomenon in which individuals or groups within a community are systematically denied recognition, and respect of crucial aspects of their identity, particularly their cultural identity. It results in the reinforcement of inequalities and marginalization of individuals or groups within societies for the benefit of the dominant group.

As a result of the misrecognition subjected to the tripe dish, the question at hand is how we arrived at a point where such a cultural injustice could persist. Answering this question is crucial as the answer will serve to assist in determining the most promising remedy to this kind of injustice as "food has been deemed as possessing an inherent symbolic power, serving as a daily declaration of cultural identity" (Kittler and Sucher 2004: 4). Therefore, by addressing misrecognition within the food context, this will not only give a voice to the underrepresented Black people's cuisine, but it will also allow Black people to reclaim their cultural identity through their cuisine. I contend that the misrecognition of Black people's cuisine is a result of White supremacy and Eurocentrism and remedying this injustice requires us to examine these underlying factors to arrive at a suitable remedy.

### **4.3 Eurocentrism and White Supremacy as forces that perpetuate Misrecognition.**

The underlying factors for the misrecognition of Black people's cuisine are as a result of coloniality. "Three instances in which the effects of coloniality in the food cultures of the New World can be observed are (1) the degradation of indigenous culinary knowledge as a response to the challenge that American nature and indigenous culinary practices posed to Europe, (2) the enduring hegemony of French cuisine as the highest standard of European culinary modernity-rationality against which all other cuisines are measured and (3) the practice of a fusion cuisine structured by European culinary values and that incorporates other cuisines only to reduce them to sources of natural ingredients devoid of a culture of their own" (Janer 2013: 285). During the era of European colonial expansion, indigenous culinary practices in the New World were often devalued and denigrated. This is a result of the Eurocentric perspective that considered European food culture as superior. Indigenous culinary knowledge was not only disregarded but also suppressed or replaced by European culinary practices. This degradation of indigenous culinary knowledge is rooted in the colonial notion that European culture and knowledge were more advanced, setting the stage for Eurocentrism. The enduring hegemony of French cuisine as the highest standard of European culinary modernity-rationality is an example of Eurocentrism in the culinary world. French cuisine was considered the pinnacle of culinary excellence, and it served as the benchmark against which all other cuisines were measured. This Eurocentric perspective perpetuated the idea that European cultures, especially French, were superior, and it marginalized non-European culinary traditions, including those from Africa. The practice of fusion cuisine structured by European culinary values, which incorporates elements from other cuisines but often reduces them to sources of natural ingredients devoid of their cultural context, exemplifies a Eurocentric approach to food. In this process, the richness and diversity of cuisines from colonized regions, including Africa, were diminished, and their cultural significance was often ignored. This practice reflects the Eurocentric tendency to view non-European cultures and cuisines as bizarre or inferior as compared to their cultural cuisines.

All of these instances are interconnected to White supremacy and Eurocentrism because they reinforce the notion that European culture, particularly in the context of colonialism, was/is superior to other cultures, and they contribute to a global hierarchy that places European

cultures at the top. How White supremacy and Eurocentrism perpetuate the misrecognition of African cuisine will be discussed in-depth below.

Eurocentrism entails "the arguments or assumptions, implicit and explicit, that the West is superior to the rest of the world or the tendency to take Western experiences as the norm by which the rest of the world should be judged" (Marjet, de Bruin, and Lok 2019: 12). It is the practice of viewing the world from a European perspective and, as a result, seeing the world's centre in Europe and the periphery in the rest of the world (Marjet, de Bruin, and Lok 2019). It is also "Eurocentric domination, that is through the imposition and universalization of the diverse yet distinctive interpretative frameworks of European Americans" (Schiele 2005: 803). This way of thinking marginalizes and oppresses non-Western cultures and people as Western culture, history, and values are viewed as the norm and standard. On the other hand, White supremacy is an ideology that advocates for the superiority and dominance of the White race over other races, often through the enforcement of institutionalized racism and cultural domination (Mills 2015: 69). Differently stated, "it is the formal or juridical domination of the planet by White people" (Mills 2015: 69).

When analyzing the conception of misrecognition adopted in the study which states that: misrecognition refers to a social phenomenon in which individuals or groups within a community are systematically denied recognition, and respect of crucial aspects of their identity particularly their cultural identity. It results in the reinforcement of inequalities and marginalization of individuals or groups within societies for the benefit of the dominant group. A clear illustration of misrecognition is the injustice of cultural imperialism. According to Young (2014:55), cultural imperialism involves two features. First, it involves "the universalization of a dominant group's experience, culture, and its establishments as the norm" (Young 2014:54). This indicates that the inferior group's experiences, culture, and institutions are not valued equally but are rather undermined or made invisible. Paradoxically, even as their culture is invisibilised so is their race, which gives rise to the second characteristic, where the inferior group is "made visible" as "other" because the dominant group identifies them with particular stereotypes (Young 2014:55). Their visibility is negative because it is interpreted through the dominant culture's perspective. In this way, it is a negation of the dominant culture. To deduce that misrecognition is a consequence of Eurocentrism and White supremacy, I will employ Young's concept of cultural imperialism. Young's approach to cultural imperialism as established above given that it is a form of cultural oppression identifies misrecognition as an

outcome. Using it will allow me to investigate whether Eurocentrism and White supremacy similarly lead to misrecognition which will support my contention that the misrecognition of African cuisine is a result of White supremacy and Eurocentrism.

When employing Young's notion of cultural imperialism to Eurocentrism and White supremacy, The misrecognition of Black people's cuisine can be attributed to the intertwined dynamics of Eurocentrism and White supremacy. With regards to Eurocentrism, it entails the imposition of European culture, values, and perspectives as the norm or standard for the rest of the world. This speaks to a feature of cultural imperialism in which there is a "universalization of a dominant group's experience, culture, and its establishments as the norm" (Young 2014:54). This indicates that the inferior group's experiences, culture, and institutions are not valued equally but are rather undermined or made invisible. This universalized dominant culture, which is the Eurocentric culture in this context, which renders non-European cultures invisible meaning that they are not recognized also marginalizes the non-European cultures, contributing to their oppression and a lack of representation. Translating this to the food context, it means that European food culture as the dominant food culture is universalized which results in the marginalization and invisibilization of African food culture. Not only does it marginalize African food culture, but it also leads to a distorted understanding of the history of the cuisine, perpetuating systems of power and inequality. This is done through the visibility and invisibility paradox where non-European food cultures are "made visible" as "other" because the dominant group identifies them with particular stereotypes (Young 2014:55). Their visibility is negative because it is interpreted through the dominant culture's perspective which results in its misrecognition.

Similarly, to Eurocentrism, the injustice of the misrecognition of African cuisine is a consequence of White supremacy. This is because, White supremacy shares similarities with cultural imperialism, which influences food practices and erases local culinary traditions while imposing foreign dietary practices. Both White supremacy and cultural imperialism reinforce existing power structures and maintain the oppression of marginalized groups, particularly people of colour and other minority communities. The systemic and historical reinforcement of White supremacy and cultural imperialism has led to the misrecognition of African cuisine as it illuminates a broader injustice in which the rights, identities, and experiences of African people are not recognized resulting in the perpetuation of social injustices and inequalities. For instance, In the South African context, colonialism further exacerbated the influence of

Eurocentrism and White supremacy on food culture. The apartheid era disrupted historical foodscapes, leading to racial and class divisions in food practices. Colonial powers imposed their culinary traditions on colonized people, erasing local culinary knowledge and cultural identity. These influences persist in contemporary food systems, particularly noticeable in practices like bleaching tripe to align it with Western standards. With regards to colonialism is described as the political, economic, and social domination of one country over another, typically involving the exploitation of resources and the subjugation of indigenous people (Dey and Maart 2020); it is considered one of the most significant forces that have shaped food culture globally (Dey and Maart 2020). This is evident within the South African context where the direct outgrowth of colonialism, the "apartheid era disrupted historical foodscapes such that food and food practices became raced and classed" (Gysman 2021). When the structures that were put in place are assessed, it can be seen that were designed in such a way that the supremacy of White people in South Africa could be maintained and this would systematically suppress the Black majority in all aspects of life, including eating habits. What the colonial powers did is that they imposed their culinary traditions on the colonized people (African people), often resulting in the erasure of local culinary traditions and the imposition of foreign dietary practices. The act of imposing one culture's food or dietary practices on another is an exercise of power, and it is a major contribution to the erasure of traditional knowledge and cultural identity (Borghini 2020: 7). This process can be particularly damaging for marginalized communities whose food practices and traditions have already been under threat due to the various ways in which culture is used as a tool of power and dominance (Young 2014).

In essence, the misrecognition of Black people's cuisine is deeply intertwined with Eurocentrism, White supremacy, and cultural imperialism, which contribute to the marginalization and oppression of non-Western food cultures. This raises complex questions about how to rectify these issues and challenge negative connotations attached to dishes like unbleached tripe. What White supremacy and Eurocentrism does is that they exert a dominant influence on food system policies and food standards. They result in the Whitewashing of foods that fall in the margins so that they can be assimilated into what is labelled as the standard. This is especially noticeable in the context of tripe, particularly "dressed tripe," also known as "washed tripe," which undergoes a bleaching process that would make tripe a foreign dish to most South Africans who prefer to consume it in its natural unbleached state. The bleaching is done to obtain notoriety, demonstrating how cultural imperialism acts in the realm of food. The

comparison of tripe with tripes à la mode de Caen (bleached tripe in France) raises an important question regarding dealing with cultural imperialism. This inquiry pertains to developing an epistemology of food that recognizes the value and distinctiveness of African cuisine within the context of culture while also addressing the systematic injustices that perpetuate such cultural hierarchies. A critical consideration emerges: could rectifying this issue involve challenging the negative connotations attached to Black people's dishes such as unbleached tripe? The answer to this intricate question is far from straightforward. In the following chapter, I will examine conceptions of recognition as potential remedies for the injustice of misrecognition subjected to Black people's cuisine.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I aimed to demonstrate how South African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice. I did this by using tripe as a site of illustration. This was then followed by the discussion of Eurocentrism and White supremacy as forces that perpetuate the cultural injustice subjected to South African cuisines associated with Black South Africans. This chapter laid the foundation for the chapter that follows in which I explore the politics of recognition as a possible just remedy to misrecognition experienced by Black South African cuisines as a result of cultural injustice.

## **5. Conceptions of Recognition**

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Black South African cuisine is a victim of cultural injustice resulting in its misrecognition.

In this chapter, I aim to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the recognition concepts proposed by Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, and Nancy Fraser. The purpose of this examination is to lay the foundation for the subsequent chapter, where I will perform a comparative analysis of these theories. Through this analysis, I aim to develop a recognition framework that can facilitate the understanding and rectification of cultural injustices experienced by Black people in South Africa, particularly in relation to their cuisine, which often remains invisible. Firstly, I will delve into Charles Taylor's recognition theory (1994), examining how it offers insights into addressing cultural injustices. Subsequently, I will turn my attention to Axel Honneth's recognition theory (1995), assessing its potential to address cultural injustice and lastly, I will discuss Fraser's theory of recognition (1997) examining how it offers insights into addressing cultural injustices. It is crucial to highlight that in this chapter, I conduct a brief assessment of the theories to gauge their suitability for addressing cultural injustice. This preliminary examination is a means of thoroughly exploring these theories. However, it is important to clarify that the in-depth analysis, focusing on determining which theory is most appropriate and can be adopted for this dissertation, will be conducted in the following chapter.

When a layperson thinks about the subject of recognition, it is most likely that the person would be inclined to perceive it as the act of identifying, remembering, or acknowledging someone or something based on previous knowledge or familiarity. For instance, when a person poses the statement: 'I remember you from somewhere', this communicates that the person remembers and thus acknowledges the presence of the other person. This entails perceiving or recalling information about a person, object, or concept and connecting it to existing memories or experiences like having attended the same school with the person earlier on in life. However, with time people come to realize that recognition encompasses more than just mere remembrance; it holds a deeper significance that intertwines with their sense of self-worth and their interactions with others (Taylor 1994). When one is granted recognition, in a sense, their personhood is affirmed as they get to feel valuable, belonging, and as an equal to whom the recognition comes from. The denial of recognition results in feelings of being inferior, less valuable, and marginalized.

Outside of the realm of a layperson's understanding of what recognition entails, the subject of recognition holds a significant place within the field of philosophy. This is evident in claims made by scholars such as Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher F. Zurn (2010) who assert that recognition has emerged as a prominent theme in philosophical discourse, catalysing promoting equality and fostering respect for diversity. Two influential figures who have contributed to the discourse on recognition are Axel Honneth and Charles Taylor hence the exploration of their theories in this chapter. In the following section, I will explore the conception of recognition put forth by Charles Taylor.

### **5.1 Charles Taylor's conception of recognition**

To contextualize Taylor, In his book "*Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (1994)" Charles Taylor explores the complexities of achieving justice within a multicultural society. His exploration emerges within the context of Canada's evolving social and political landscape. In the 1960s and 1970s, Canada experienced a significant wave of immigration from diverse regions including Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean which joined Canadian indigenous people Métis, and Inuit (Troper 2022). The influx of immigrants in Canada made it a culturally diverse country which necessitated the government to adopt policies which were aimed at acknowledging and including the cultural identities and rights of various communities. Before these policies were enacted, some groups of people in Canada experienced marginalization and exclusion. These groups include but are not limited to Black Canadians who faced systematic discrimination and exclusion; Indigenous people who endured the impact of colonization as they lost their land, had their cultures suppressed and attempts were made to assimilate their languages and traditions; and the LGBTQ+ community which faced discrimination and persecution as homosexuality was considered a criminal offense before its decriminalization (Trope 2022). Given the exclusion and marginalization at varying degrees, the Multiculturalism Act was passed by the Canadian government in 1988 which states: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" Section 3(1) of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. This act acknowledges multiculturalism as a core characteristic of the Canadian country and has the aim of rectifying some of the historical injustices experienced by Canadian citizens by promoting equality and

inclusivity meanwhile preserving and not tempering with cultural diversity by enforcing homogeneity. Given that Canada was grappling with the challenges of a multicultural society, Taylor wrote on this and arguably his ideas did play a vital role in shaping the discourse and policy landscape surrounding multiculturalism.

In his exploration of the complexities of justice within a multicultural society, Taylor discusses the recognition of these diverse cultures as justice. For him, recognition involves the acknowledgment and validation of an individual's identity, culture, and particularity within a society (Taylor 1994). Here for recognition to be regarded as justice, the norms of society and policies of the government need to create a space that is conducive for an individual's identity, culture, and particularity to be recognized. This recognition is not merely a matter of individual self-esteem or psychological satisfaction, but instead, it is a fundamental aspect of human flourishing and the development of personal and collective identities (Taylor 1994: 25). It extends far beyond personal fulfilment, particularly for individuals belonging to minority cultures or marginalized groups in diverse societies as their diverse cultural backgrounds become affirmed and they are granted an opportunity to participate fully in society outside the bounds of discrimination and marginalization. This recognition for Taylor holds the key to social justice and equality for the multicultural community (Taylor 1994). For recognition to be just, the necessary condition is mutuality. This means that the recognized and the recognizer both need to experience the acknowledgment and validation of their identity, culture, and particularity within the process. Taylor contends that this mutuality assists individuals to cultivate a sense of self-worth and identity grounded not only in their subjective feelings but also in the acknowledgment by others (Taylor 1994: 26). The inverse of this is that misrecognition or denial of recognition, which Taylor characterizes as a sort of injustice that takes place when people or organizations do not receive the recognition they require (Taylor 1994: 25-26) can lead to severe negative consequences such as "grievous wounds, sadness, and crippling self-hatred" (Taylor 1994: 26). The presence of the effects of misrecognition makes, recognition to cease to be "just a courtesy owed to others; rather, it becomes a vital human need" (Taylor 1994: 26). The reason for this, Taylor explains, is that there is an intrinsic link between recognition and identity (Taylor 1994: 25). His thesis is that:

Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.

Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, and imprison someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor 1994: 25).

For instance, Taylor writes that "when it comes to African Americans, the White community has consistently portrayed them in a derogatory manner, leading some individuals from within that community to internalize these negative perceptions" (Taylor 1994: 26). The negative perception of their Africanness defines their identity and keeps them trapped in a cycle of self-hatred where they unknowingly help to perpetuate the oppression that was psychologically ingrained in them. This for Taylor is an act of injustice and necessitates redress.

The transition to democratic societies in contemporary times, or the emergence of a democratic Canada in Taylor's context, made it urgent to address injustices such as misrecognition (Taylor 1994: 26–27). Taylor identifies two shifts that happened following the implementation of democratic principles in Canada. First, the social hierarchies that formerly governed society disintegrated and were replaced by a universal and egalitarian idea of dignity that emphasized the equality of all individuals and promoted equal recognition. The second is the idea of authenticity, which called for a new understanding of personal identity. According to Taylor (1994: 28), it became conceivable to speak of a "personal identity" that is discovered internally and is specific to the individual. The ideal of authenticity emerged together with the idea of staying true to oneself and embracing one's unique way of existence. What it suggests is that individuals are not merely shaped by external influences or societal expectations, but they possess an inherent essence or core self that should be acknowledged and honoured. This conception of being true to oneself was introduced by Johann Gottfried Herder, an influential German philosopher and thinker of the late 18th century who wrote from a similar context as Taylor. Herder's context was a Germany that was not a unified nation but consisted of multiple fragmented territories with their cultural traditions. Many citizens at the time identified strongly with their local culture and in an attempt to maintain their unique identities, Herder argued for the significance of preserving and nurturing diverse cultural expressions of various German territories (Schmidt 1956). His ideas were rooted in romantic nationalism which promoted the celebration of the unique cultural and historical roots of a nation's people. This was all to build a collective German identity based on shared cultural elements and promote historical continuity. Herder did not only contend for the preservation of cultures, but he contended for their preservation within their original state (Schmidt 1956). He believed that every individual possessed a distinct manner of being human, emphasizing that each person had their unique

measure or standard and this also applied to cultural groups (Taylor 1994: 30). This implied that in the same manner in which individuals ought to be true to themselves, so should cultural groups (Taylor 1994: 31). When both the individual and the cultural groups are true to themselves, they uphold the ideal of authenticity as they are striving to live a life that is genuine to their own identity, rather than conforming to societal expectations (Taylor 1994). This notion of preserving differences within cultures in Germany was the same in Canada within Taylor's time and the preservation of differences was important because it did not promote assimilation and it met the standards of just recognition in a social setting for Taylor in which just recognition entails acknowledging and respecting the uniqueness of individuals and cultures (Taylor 1994).

Looking beyond the social context, the politics of recognition in the public sphere are contested especially in liberal democracies due to differing perspectives about the nature and scope of individual rights and cultural diversity. Taylor investigates what is recognized in the public space of then-developing democratic Canada entailed. He observes two contrasting notions of recognition that came as a result of the shift of Canada into a developing democratic country. These two notions are intimately linked to the two shifts discussed above which promoted the notion of equal recognition. Firstly, in the shift from honour to dignity, a profound political paradigm of universalism materialized, casting its focus upon the intrinsic and equal dignity inherent within every human being (Taylor 1994: 37). At its core, this political framework strives to harmonize the rights and entitlements granted to each citizen. Here recognition entails affording all the citizens equal treatment and rights regardless of their diverse backgrounds. Second, the shift to the modern notion of identity, in which individuals may subscribe to an identity that is unique to them, gave rise to a politics of difference (Taylor 1994: 38). In the politics of difference,

what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, and assimilated into a dominant or majority identity. And this assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity (Taylor 1994: 38).

In this political framework, recognizing individuals and cultural groups entails respecting and acknowledging differences within their identities. The politics of difference and the principle of equal dignity are difficult to reconcile (Taylor 1994: 39). This is because the politics of

difference calls for the acknowledgment and granting of equal status to aspects of individuals and cultural groups that are not universally shared and this conflicts with the politics of dignity (Taylor 1994: 39). In the context of South African food culture, the politics of dignity would demand the recognition and equality of foods consumed by the South African population as a whole. This would imply acknowledging and granting equal status to foods belonging to the Black and White races. Tripe, for example, is a food enjoyed by Black South Africans while escargot is consumed by the majority of White South Africans. The politics of difference, on the other hand, would call for a nonblind approach to the equitable treatment of diverse ethnic meals. What would need to be acknowledged is that tripe and escargot do not have the same status and so cannot be equated and treated similarly. While tripe and escargot are both slimy, spongy, and squishy, Steyn (2020) claims that the adjectives "junk, trash, and rubbish" are used to describe tripe, which communicates the stigma and value linked to the tripe meal. This emphasizes how "foods are classified as healthy or valuable not only for what they are but also for what they represent and who has historically produced and consumed them" (Fielding-Singh 2021:123). This means that equal status for the two foods is unachievable until equal status is accorded to the ethnic communities to which they belong. As a result, whereas the politics of universal dignity would advocate for a non-discrimination approach that ignores the multiple ways in which tripe and escargot differ, the politics of difference take a different stance. It redefines non-discrimination by highlighting the importance of identifying and accepting these distinctions as the basis for unequal treatment (Taylor 1994: 39). What is highlighted is that true non-discrimination within the cultural food context entails actively considering and addressing the particular qualities and demands of certain foods, rather than taking a "blind" approach that ignores their unique identity. The criticism levelled at the principle of dignity, which advocates for equal treatment of both tripe and escargot, is that it disregards their identities by forcing cultural groups to conform to a homogeneous mold that contradicts their authentic selves (Taylor 1994: 43). Advocates for politics of difference assert that,

the assimilation would be bad enough if the mold were itself neutral, nobody's mold in particular. But the complaint generally goes further. The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity reflects one hegemonic culture. (Taylor 1994: 43).

What then happens is that only the suppressed cultures are being forced to take alien forms in which in the South African context the alien form is the Eurocentric culture. Consequently, the

supposedly fair and difference-blind society is not only inhuman because of suppressing identities but also, subtly and unconsciously, it is highly discriminatory and promotes cultural injustice. The politics of dignity do not only face practical challenges from the advocates of the politics of difference but there are also debates on how they struggle to recognize cultural groups in a just way. Amy Gutmann highlights that "[q]uestions concerning whether and how cultural groups should be recognized in politics are among the most salient and vexing on the political agenda of many democratic and democratizing societies today" (Taylor 1994: 5). In the context of the United States, the main point of contention centres on meeting the needs of African Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and women (Taylor 1994: 3). This is not only a problem that is faced by the United States, but it is observed that, presently, it is difficult to find any democratic society, whether already established or undergoing democratization, that does not grapple with substantial discussions regarding how much their public institutions should recognize the cultural identities and challenges faced by marginalized minorities (Taylor 1994: 3). These challenges are endemic to liberal democracies as the principles it upholds are committed to equal representation of all. As a result, liberal democracies must investigate how individuals with distinct identities, shaped by characteristics such as ethnicity, race, gender, or religion, may attain equality while appreciating their uniqueness. Advocates for politics of difference would contend that achieving this goal necessitates recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by these individuals. Their contention is contradictory to the principle of equal treatment upheld by liberal democracy because "[I]n liberal democracies, all citizens should be treated equally under the law by abstracting the common identity of citizen from the real social, cultural, political, and economic positions and identities of real members of society" (Eagan 2023: 1). This becomes difficult since people come from a variety of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Abstraction of a universal identity makes it appear as if their identity has no influence on how they are treated, which is not the case. As much as liberal democracy would like to ignore these differences, the task is ideal but unachievable. Liberal democracy critics argue that liberal democracy's public institutions frequently fail to "recognize or respect the particular cultural identities of citizens" (Taylor 1994: 3).

Considering the complex nature of reconciling the principle of dignity and navigating the intricacies of the politics of difference to find a common ground as to what just recognition would entail; multiculturalism emerges as an additional approach employed to try and achieve recognition for different cultural groups. It entails addressing the dilemma of harmonizing a

shared collective identity with the recognition and preservation of the rights and identities of individuals coming from diverse cultural backgrounds. Multiculturalism is “the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences within a dominant political culture” (Eagan 2023: 1). This approach serves as both a reaction to the reality of cultural diversity in contemporary democracies and a means of redressing historical exclusion, discrimination, and oppression faced by cultural groups (Eagan 2023: 1). What is argued for is a just multicultural society that strives to value and preserve the unique identities of various cultural groups.

Multiculturalism similar to the politics of difference poses a challenge to liberal democracies. Advocates for liberal democracies level two main critiques against the approach of multiculturalism. Firstly, they argue that multiculturalism gives preferential treatment to specific groups at the expense of the common good, potentially undermining unity within a nation (Eagan 2023: 3). This is because when individuals primarily identify with their ethnic or racial groups rather than as citizens of a shared country, national unity becomes challenging (Eagan 2023: 3). Secondly, multiculturalism is seen as eroding the concept of equal individual rights, as it may prioritize group rights over the principle of equal treatment (Eagan 2023: 3). This could lead to the disregard or devaluation of individual rights in favour of rights held by specific groups (Eagan 2023: 3). In response to these, Taylor argues that recognizing and accommodating cultural diversity within a society does not necessarily lead to the fragmentation of national unity; instead he suggests that a robust and inclusive multiculturalism rooted in 'deep diversity' can foster a sense of belonging and shared citizenship among diverse cultural communities as it is a space in which individuals can maintain their cultural identities while also embracing a broader sense of citizenship (Redhead 2003: 62). From the analysing his work, his response to the second critique would be that multiculturalism enhances and protects individual rights for all members of the society and does not prioritize group rights over them; what happens is that in a robust multiculturalist society, there is balance where both individual right and cultural group rights are upheld and there is no disregard or devaluation of individual rights (Taylor 1994).

Based on the preceding discussion, Taylor's notion of recognition for addressing cultural injustice would entail the acknowledgment and validation of a cultural group's identity and differences. This includes preserving its authenticity by not imposing assimilation into a dominant culture. The objective of this research is to find a solution to the cultural injustice of

Black ethnic food. In a nutshell, I am looking for a plausible recognition theory for Black cultural foods that have been "rendered invisible by White authoritative, representational, communicative, and interpretative practices; and disrespected which entails being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions (Fraser 1997: 14). Applying Taylor's perspective to cultural injustice would imply acknowledging and validating cultural groups who have experienced cultural injustice. This would imply that cultural norms would need to provide a place favourable to the recognition of the uniqueness of Black food culture. This place would allow Black cultural groups to express and engage in their cultural food practices without fear of assimilation or marginalization.

A critique of how Charles Taylor would go about addressing cultural injustice is that recognition alone may not fully address the role of material inequalities and economic factors faced by cultural groups who face cultural injustice (Fraser 1997). Fraser argues that cultural recognition alone may not be sufficient as it prioritizes cultural recognition at the expense of economic and social disparities. Fraser contends that economic justice and redistribution should be considered alongside it to address the underlying causes of cultural injustice (Fraser 1997). What Fraser is emphasizing is that it is critical to recognize that to overcome the systemic problems that have contributed to cultural injustice and marginalization of Black food culture, it will take more than just changing legislation, as these are embedded in the system's roots and will necessitate some sort of systemic deconstruction. Their persistence has been significantly influenced by structural and economic reasons. An in-depth analysis of Taylor's theory to assess it for potential contribution to the remedying of cultural injustice will be explored in chapter six.

## **5.2 Axel Honneth's conception of recognition**

In Canada, Taylor talks about the complexities of achieving recognition in a diverse and multicultural society. Over in Germany, a similar conversation was happening in the Frankfurt school in which Axel Honneth explores the dynamics of recognition and the potential for achieving justice in societies characterized by various forms of injustice and social struggles. He defines recognition as the acknowledgment and validation of an individual's worth, dignity, and unique identity by others and society at large (Honneth 1996). It involves being seen, respected, and included in social relations and institutions, providing individuals with a sense

of self-esteem, social integration, and a foundation for personal and collective identity formation (Honneth 1996). For Honneth, individuals or groups seek recognition and validation from others as a fundamental need for their development and well-being (Honneth 1996: 92). This recognition is crucial for the development of a stable and coherent sense of identity and leading a good life in which a good life entails individual autonomy and self-realization (Gordon, Hammer and Honneth 2019: 83). In this context, misrecognition is defined as the failure to acknowledge and affirm individuals' essential worth, equal dignity, and their right to participate fully in social life (Honneth 1996). The experience of misrecognition, or being denied recognition, can have negative emotional effects, such as disrespect, denigration, and shame (Honneth 1996: 131). As a result, "the negative experience of disrespect and humiliation motivates struggles for recognition in which social groups stake their claims for the recognition of previously unrecognized or undervalued aspects of their members' personalities, rights, or contributions to social reproduction" (Gordon, Hammer, and Honneth 2019: 83). The experience of disrespect and humiliation becomes a transformative catalyst that fuels collective actions aimed at rectifying existing social injustices. These experiences create a sense of urgency and a shared understanding among marginalized groups that their identities and contributions have been marginalized or devalued. These social groupings fight for recognition to confront and overthrow the current oppressive and unequal structures. They demand that their distinct viewpoints, history, and contributions to society be acknowledged along with their value as a group and as individuals.

These injustices and social struggles revealed themselves within capitalist societies. As a result, Honneth contends that capitalist society distorts the conditions for recognition, resulting in misrecognition, as seen in emancipatory social movements for recognition (Honneth 1996). Misrecognition can present itself in these and many other ways in a capitalist society, beginning with alienation from labour, in which labour is commodified within the market. Individuals are reduced to mere instruments of labour as a result of this; there is economic inequality, in which those who are economically disadvantaged lack access to resources, opportunities, and social networks, leaving them feeling powerless, socially alienated, and not socially integrated; and, secondly, there is instrumentalization of relationships, in which relationships are reduced to instrumental exchanges in which people engage with each other for self-interest and do so as a result of this (Honneth 1996: 146-149). Honneth does not argue that capitalist societies are intrinsically pathological, but that their economic and social dynamics can contribute to social pathologies and alienation. He contends that a lack or distortion of recognition in capitalist

societies might result in negative effects and social dysfunctions. These repercussions can be viewed as societal pathologies caused by misrecognition. His work goes beyond capitalism. His investigation extends to broader social and political processes that produce forms of inequality and misrecognition. He highlights the role of social institutions, cultural practices, and political processes in determining societal dynamics (Honneth 1996). While capitalism is one aspect of his critique, Honneth's work also engages with other forms of domination, such as sexism, racism, and other forms of social exclusion.

For Honneth, the discussion of recognition is rooted in the desire "to understand and justify the struggle by lower social classes within capitalist society for social esteem and equal respect" (Van Leeuwen 2007: 181). His theory of recognition can be seen as a response to the social and economic inequalities that arise within capitalist systems and the resulting challenges faced by marginalized and oppressed groups. This is because, oftentimes, marginalized and oppressed individuals have always experienced a deliberate refusal to recognize the importance of their culture and traditions, their inherent dignity, and the safeguarding of their physical health (Anderson 1995). In many societies, dominant groups have historically marginalized and oppressed certain cultural, racial, or social groups, intentionally disregarding the importance of their culture, lifestyle, and overall existence. This deliberate refusal to recognize the value and worth of these marginalized individuals contributes to their social and structural disadvantages as misrecognition goes beyond individual interactions and extends to institutional and structural dimensions. This aligns with cultural injustice as per the definition of Fraser. Honneth argues that misrecognition is not solely a result of individual attitudes or prejudices but is deeply embedded in societal institutions and structures (Honneth 1996). In Honneth's theory of recognition, marginalized groups experience misrecognition in the following ways: firstly, they experience inadequate social integration which entails the denial of recognition and exclusion from social relationships, participatory opportunities, resources, and cultural recognition. This leads to social pathologies such as alienation, inequality, and discrimination (Honneth 1996). For instance, in the South African context, inadequate social integration can be seen in the historical and ongoing marginalization of Black South Africans. During the apartheid era, the institutionalized system of racial segregation denied Black individuals recognition and excluded them from social relationships, participatory opportunities, and resources based on their race. This resulted in social pathologies such as alienation, inequality, and discrimination, as Black South Africans were systematically denied equal rights and opportunities. Even after the end of apartheid, arguably, racial misrecognition

continues to affect marginalized racial groups in South Africa. Persistent racial disparities in access to quality education, employment opportunities, housing, and healthcare contribute to the inadequate social integration of Black South Africans (Williams 2008). This reinforces social pathologies, preventing full inclusion and exacerbating racial and economic inequities. This can be seen institutionally in policies and practices inside social institutions that perpetuate racial inequality and the exclusion of Black people. This can be traced structurally to larger societal mechanisms that promote racial hierarchies and inequities. This includes economic structures that penalize Black people disproportionately, residential segregation that perpetuates unequal access to resources and opportunities, and cultural practices that devalue or minimize Black people's identities and experiences.

Secondly, they face disrespect, stigmatization, and negative judgments based on their social identities, leading to the devaluation of their experiences and a diminished sense of self-worth (Honneth 1996). For Instance, Black people in South Africa also faced disrespect, stigmatization, and negative judgments based on their social identities. Their experiences and contributions were devalued, resulting in a diminished sense of self-worth. The pervasive racial prejudices and stereotypes perpetuated by the apartheid regime and society at large contributed to the social pathologies of discrimination, prejudice, and a sense of being undervalued and marginalized. Institutionally, these attitudes were reinforced and perpetuated through discriminatory policies and practices during the apartheid era. The apartheid government enacted laws that systematically devalued and oppressed Black individuals, institutionalizing racism and reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Thirdly, failing to give marginalized groups equal rights, opportunities, and resources is a manifestation of the misrecognition of those groups (Honneth 1996). This may involve having restricted access to jobs, medical treatment, education, and political engagement. This denial of equal rights and opportunities reinforces social pathologies such as inequality, exclusion, and the perpetuation of systemic injustices. Lastly, marginalized cultures and traditions may be devalued or dismissed within the dominant society, leading to a loss of cultural identity and heritage (Honneth 1996). This misrecognition denies marginalized groups the ability to shape and define their narratives.

Based on the preceding discussion, all of the forms of misrecognition addressed require structural and institutional support to continue and have a long-term impact on excluded

groups. To address them, institutional and structural dynamics that support and perpetuate injustice and marginalization must be challenged and transformed. This would entail creating policies and practices inside institutions that promote equality, inclusivity, and cultural diversity, as well as restructuring power relations to guarantee that underrepresented groups are recognized and respected. Honneth acknowledges the role of economic inequality in generating misrecognition, but his proposed solutions which are the three dimensions of recognition primarily centre on the realm of recognition itself. For him when conditions for mutual recognition are fostered and measures to overcome patterns of disrespect and domination are put in place, individuals can experience greater social integration and fulfilment. The three dimensions of recognition are love, rights, and solidarity as avenues through which social struggles and misrecognition can be addressed. Love is a dimension of recognition in which the inherent value and worth of an individual are acknowledged through the provision of emotional support (Honneth 1996: 129). This support aids in the development of their self-confidence, while the absence of this type of recognition jeopardizes their physical well-being (Honneth 1996: 129). Here subjects mutually affirm each other about the concrete nature of their needs and thereby recognize each other as needy creatures (Petherbridge 2011: 202). This can be seen for instance, in a child who receives love and affection from their parents and as a result develops a strong sense of self and needs (Gordon, Hammer, and Honneth 2019: 85). When love is denied or distorted, social pathologies such as alienation and emotional deprivation can arise, undermining individuals' well-being and hindering their ability to form meaningful connections. For instance, when a child experiences emotional neglect within their family or when their emotional needs are consistently ignored or dismissed, it can result in alienation and emotional deprivation. This hinders their ability to form meaningful connections and impacts their overall well-being.

Rights refer to the legal and political recognition we receive as equal members of society, such as through the recognition of our civil and political rights. This entails respect for the dignity, autonomy, and individual rights of a person (Honneth 1996: xv). What we are obligated to give to each individual is the acknowledgment and admiration of their position as a capable individual who can make decisions and act according to their reasons, taking on the role of an independent creator of the political and moral principles that apply to them (Honneth 1996: xv). Social pathologies including inequality, discrimination, and the denial of agency arise when rights are denied or violated, prolonging social inequities and hindering the quest for recognition. Solidarity refers to the cultural atmosphere where people can acquire a sense of

self-worth through being recognized as part of a social and collective structure. While some people might think that being in solidarity with someone means feeling sympathetic towards them, Honneth contends that true solidarity encompasses the recognition of individuals as members of communities, groups, or social movements and can only exist when there is a shared concern, interest, or value at stake (Honneth 1996: xvii). He is not primarily interested in the collective defence of interests or the political integration of individuals but in the presence of an open and diverse evaluative framework that allows for the attribution of social esteem (Honneth 1996: xvii). When solidarity is absent or distorted, social pathologies such as social fragmentation, division, and the exclusion of marginalized groups can arise, impeding the formation of cohesive and inclusive societies.

From the preceding discussion, arguably the three dimensions of recognition are interconnected and correlate with the broader structural logic of Honneth's theory of recognition. The dimension of love serves to counter emotional deprivation and alienation. The dimension of rights serves to address the structural inequalities and power imbalances that can result in the denial and violation of rights resulting in social pathologies such as inequality and discrimination. The dimension of solidarity serves to challenge systematic injustices faced by groups and work towards a more inclusive society. All three are concerned with the individual in various aspects of their existence. Love belongs to the personal sphere, rights to the legal sphere, and solidarity to the social sphere. All of them work together to provide an overall just acknowledgment of an individual.

Critics argue that Honneth's framework tends to idealize recognition, assuming that all forms of recognition are inherently positive (Young 2014). Young claims that not all forms of recognition are positive, in some instances inferior cultural groups are "made visible" or recognized as the "other" because the dominant group identifies them with particular stereotypes (Young 2014:55). This visibility paradox results in their visibility or recognition being negative because it is interpreted through the dominant culture's perspective. This can result in the reproduction of misrecognition and social inequalities. For Honneth to address this critique, his theory needs to engage in a more nuanced analysis of recognition processes. This involves considering the power dynamics and social structures that shape recognition, as well as the potential for recognition to reinforce existing injustices. It may require examining how certain forms of recognition can be exclusionary and oppressive, and how alternative modes of recognition can be fostered to challenge and overcome misrecognition. Critiques also note that

Honneth's theory places too much emphasis on recognition as the primary source of individual and social well-being. This is problematic because, "[a]ny account of social justice that focuses on cultural recognition to the neglect of economic redistribution will inevitably fail properly to understand the nature of injustice" Fraser "argues that, since culture and economy are closely enmeshed, any acceptable theory of justice must be able to integrate the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution" (Thompson 2005: 89). Furthermore, Fraser and other critiques also contend that other social factors such as economic inequalities, political power structures, and material conditions also significantly shape individuals' experiences and opportunities for recognition (Iser 2019). This is because "[t]here is no zone of society which is purely economic or purely cultural: every practice is simultaneously economic and cultural, albeit not necessarily in equal proportions" (Thompson 2005: 89). As a result of only focussing on recognition to address social injustice, Honneth's theory suffers from the similar limitations as Taylor's in terms of assisting in the resolution of cultural injustice, as they both fail to address the underlying roots of the problem. Similarly, to Taylor's theory, Honneth's theory will be assessed for its suitability to address injustice in depth in chapter six.

In the following section, Nancy Fraser's perspective on what recognition should entail will be examined to assess its plausibility in addressing cultural injustice.

### **5.3 Nancy Fraser's theory of recognition**

Nancy Fraser, frames recognition as a matter of justice, as she seeks to move beyond a focus on the social dimension of recognition and towards a more political understanding of the issue (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 28-29). Fraser believes that recognition should be understood primarily as a matter of justice, rather than solely as a social issue. While Taylor and Honneth also focus on the importance of recognition, they place greater emphasis on the social dimensions of the concept. Fraser contends that recognition is a political issue because institutionalized patterns of cultural value and power structures often determine who is recognized and who is misrecognized within societies (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 28). For instance, during the apartheid era in South Africa, the structures that put in place gave power to White people as the dominant racial group worthy of recognition, while Black people had to assume a place in the background and live in the shadow of White people. Here Fraser frames recognition as a problem of justice to highlight how recognition is connected with concerns of

power, dominance, and social injustice (Fraser 1997). Her theory of recognition is primarily concerned with addressing the question of how social groups that have been historically marginalized or oppressed can achieve equal recognition and inclusion in society (Fraser 1997). She critiques traditional approaches of recognition, which often prioritize individual identity over collective identities and fail to address systemic injustices. Instead, Fraser proposes a "politics of recognition" that emphasizes the importance of collective struggles for recognition and the need for societal structures that facilitate equal recognition and representation for all groups (Fraser 1997). She also argues for a "critical theory of recognition" that examines how recognition operates in society and the power dynamics that shape who is recognized and valued (Fraser 1997). This involves analyzing the institutionalized patterns of cultural value that underlie recognition processes and examining how these patterns of value are reproduced and contested in different social contexts. Through this critical analysis, Fraser seeks to develop a more nuanced and politically engaged understanding of recognition that can inform struggles for social justice and transformation. Her approach is "transformative recognition", it emphasizes the need for both recognition and redistribution in social justice movements (Fraser 1997: 24).

Fraser's view of recognition places a strong emphasis on the value of delving into the allocation of social resources and products as well as the connections between recognition and issues of social justice and redistribution (Fraser 1997: 11). She contends that redistribution and recognition are inextricably linked and interdependent processes. For her, recognition should be viewed as part of a larger battle for social transformation that aspires to establish more democratic and inclusive forms of social interaction rather than being seen as apart from struggles for economic and political power (Fraser 1997: 11). This is because she understands that recognizing social injustices does not make them go away. To alleviate economic and social inequities, redistribution of opportunities and resources is also required (Fraser 1997: 12). This is applicable, especially for bivalent collectivities that need both recognition and redistribution (Fraser 1997: 19). She contends that bivalent collectivities can experience both economic inequality and cultural misunderstandings (Fraser 1997: 19). These issues are not caused by one another, but rather are both fundamental and interrelated (Fraser 1997: 19). In such cases, neither solely addressing economic inequality nor solely addressing cultural recognition will be enough to solve the problems.

For instance, "race" and "gender" are bivalent collectivities (Fraser 1997: 19). "Race" refers to the socially built categories based on physical qualities like skin colour and lineage, whereas "gender" refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations that society gives to persons based on their perceived sex (Fraser 1997: 19). Political and financial effects of gender and "race" relate to privilege, power, and wealth. Women frequently have less access to healthcare, political representation, and economic possibilities than men, who are typically given preference (Fraser 1997: 20). Similar to this, racial minorities may encounter discrimination, exclusion, and unfair treatment as a "racial" group in the workspace, within education, and in other settings (Fraser 1997: 20). Additionally, "race" and "gender" also include cultural-valuational components that have to do with standards, ideals, and beliefs (Fraser 1997: 20). These factors affect how individuals connect, view themselves and others, and form attitudes. As an illustration, gender norms may establish standards for femininity or masculinity, and "racial" stereotypes may affect how others are perceived in terms of their skills, intelligence, or behaviour. Therefore, redistribution and recognition are implicated by both gender and "race."

Given the recognition and redistribution dilemma, Fraser argues that a more nuanced approach to addressing misrecognition is closely tied to redistribution. She suggests that recognizing group specificity must be accompanied by efforts to redistribute resources and power in ways that challenge systemic inequalities (Fraser 1997: 24). Given the limitations of Taylor and Honneth's recognition theory, Nancy Fraser's notion appears to be promising in terms of addressing cultural injustice. This is because her theory recognizes the need to not only deal with the denial of recognition on the surface level but also includes tactics for deconstructing the structures that made misrecognition possible in the first place. Fraser discusses two types of remedies that can be adopted in this study to address cultural injustice: the affirmative remedies for injustice which are "aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disrupting the underlying framework that produces them" (Fraser 1997:23); and transformative remedies which are "aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework" (Fraser 1997: 23).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I aimed to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the recognition concepts proposed by Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, and Nancy Fraser. The purpose of this examination was to lay the foundation for the subsequent chapter, where I will perform a comparative analysis of these theories. Through this analysis, I aim to develop a recognition framework that can facilitate the understanding and rectification of cultural injustices experienced by Black people in South Africa, particularly in relation to their cuisine, which often remains invisible.

## **6. Suitable conception of recognition for Black cultural cuisine**

In the previous chapter, I provided a thorough examination of conceptions of recognition to lay the ground for assessing them to see which one will effectively address the misrecognition of Black cultural cuisine.

In this chapter, I conduct a comparative analysis and critique of Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth's conceptions of recognition to determine which of these conceptions best encapsulates the recognition that Black cuisine deserves. To start, I establish the conditions that the chosen conception must satisfy to effectively address the recognition that African cuisine merits. It is important to acknowledge that these theories were not originally formulated to specifically address the cultural injustices experienced by Black cuisine, which may result in certain limitations in this context. However, the intent behind this assessment is not to undermine these theories but to seek a solution to the cultural injustices inherent in the culinary domain.

Following this, I conduct an in-depth analysis of these conceptions to evaluate whether they meet the predefined conditions. Lastly, I select a recognition theory that, in my assessment, best captures the recognition that African cuisine truly deserves.

### **6.1 Conditions for a suitable recognition theory**

The misrecognition of Black cuisine encompasses several dimensions. Firstly, it involves the systemic and structural denial of recognition of African cuisine. This speaks to the structures and systems that make it possible for African cuisine to be misrecognised. This can be observed in various ways, such as the limited availability of African dishes in fine dining establishments, a point illustrated in the preceding chapter's discussion of the Cape Town food scene. It can also be seen in the colonial legacy within the South African context where history denigrated African cuisine resulting in long-term effects that impacted its global recognition. Additionally, it is evident in the food norms that tend to marginalize African cuisine, effectively excluding it from what is recognized as acceptable in the mainstream. Moreover, this misrecognition extends to manifest as stereotypes, where African food is unfairly stigmatized with derogatory labels which make it to be viewed as bizarre or unappealing. Such stereotypes perpetuate an unjust denial of opportunities, representation, and participation that are essential for the acknowledgment and appreciation of African culinary traditions within society. Finally,

an integral aspect of this misrecognition is the manifestation of disrespect, characterized by routine belittlement or disparagement in both stereotypical cultural representations and everyday social interactions. This form of disrespect represents a fundamental injustice, as it categorizes individuals or groups as inferior, perpetuating an unwarranted hierarchy in which African cuisine and its African people are unjustly marginalized.

From this, the conditions that a theory of recognition would have to meet are:

1. Addressing of denial of recognition structurally and systematically
2. Reconceptualization of food valuation norms.
3. Reversal of stereotypes
4. Promoting respect and dignity of cultural cuisines

## **6.2 Analysis of Taylor's theory**

When we analyse the theory of recognition proposed by Taylor, for him "cultural identity is of deep importance and value" (Taylor 2014: 75). This is because as much as cultural identity falls into the broader picture of a person's identity when misrecognised, it has detrimental effects to an individual or groups that subscribe to the culture. The harms he mentions are that "the members of the unrecognized cultures will feel deracinated and empty, lacking the sources for a feeling of community a basis for self-esteem, and, at the worst that they will be threatened with the risk of cultural annihilation" (Taylor 1994: 76). Employing this to the misrecognition of Africa cuisine, Taylor's framework suggests that the misrecognition of African cuisine could lead to the harms described above, with the worst being the potential erasure of the cuisine. This annihilation implies the risk of African cuisine losing its place in the cultural landscape. As a means to address this misrecognition, Taylor posits that a remedy "involves the publicizing, admiring, and explicit preservation of the cultural traditions" (Taylor 1994: 76). This entails firstly, publicizing the cultural tradition which in this would mean publicizing African cuisine. For Taylor, this publicization would give African cuisine visibility and acknowledgment in society. This then promotes cultural diversity and respect for the unique identities of different groups. It allows individuals and cultural groups to have their cultural practices and traditions acknowledged, and in doing so, it validates their cultural identities. The second aspect of remedying the misrecognition of African cuisine entails its admiration. For Taylore, "admiring" signifies not just recognizing cultural traditions but also appreciating and respecting them. This implies that people from different cultural backgrounds should not only acknowledge African food traditions but also engage with them positively and respectfully.

This promotes mutual respect and understanding among diverse cultural groups and there is no cultural group that is inferior to the other one. The last aspect to remedy of misrecognition of African cuisine is cultural preservation. Here preserving African cuisine involves taking active measures to ensure the continuity and longevity of the cuisine. It means safeguarding from potential erosion or extinction. This can include efforts to document, transmit, and teach these traditions to future generations in things such as recipe books.

For Charles Taylor, these actions are essential for creating a more inclusive and diverse society where individuals and groups can maintain their cultural identities without feeling marginalized or threatened. Publicizing, admiring, and explicitly preserving African cuisine, would promote cultural recognition, respect, and the coexistence of various cultural identities within a pluralistic society.

In this section, I will assess the remedy on whether it meets the conditions stated above that a conception of recognition would have to meet to remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine. The first condition is to address the denial of recognition of African cuisine structurally and systematically. This speaks to the theory being able to address the systems and structures that perpetuate the misrecognition of African cuisine: Taylor's theory does address the denial of recognition, particularly in the context of cultural and identity recognition. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing different cultural and social identities, which can be seen as a response to the denial of recognition of African cuisine, but I contend that his theory does not look into the root problem of the misrecognition which is structures and systems which make it possible for African cuisine to be misrecognised. He does mention that recognition of cultural diversity is a requirement of justice which could speak to policies and laws being drafted in a manner that promotes recognition, but his theory does not explicitly deal with this and thus it does not meet the first condition. His theory does not necessarily prescribe specific policy measures or practical solutions to address systematic and structural misrecognition. Instead, the theory offers a framework for thinking about misrecognition that is structural and systematic and emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting the diversity of identities in society.

The second condition is the reconceptualization of food valuation norms: when analyzing Taylor's theory, does not deal with this, but it may indirectly contribute to the reconceptualization of food valuation norms. This is by him highlighting the importance of

cultural recognition and encouraging a more inclusive perspective on what constitutes valuable cultural practices, which could extend to food and culinary traditions and be adapted to address the misrecognition of African cuisine. He asserts that "we all need to recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive but acknowledge their worth" (Taylor 2014: 64). This is the food context would mean that we recognize the equal value of different cultural cuisines including African cuisine and recognizing these cuisines for their cultural worth. Given this contribution, Taylor's theory partially meets the second condition. The third condition is the reversal of stereotypes. While Taylor's theory does not directly address the reversal of stereotypes, his emphasis on recognizing and respecting diverse cultural identities can contribute to challenging and breaking down stereotypes by promoting a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of different cultures. This would entail the discontinuation of the use of negative stereotypes to describe African cuisine. For this contribution, Taylor's theory partially meets this condition.

The last condition is the promotion of respect and dignity of cultural cuisines: Taylor's theory promotes respect for cultural differences, and this can be extended to the cultural cuisines of different cultural groups. By promoting the respect of different cultural groups, his theory of recognition contributes to the promotion of respect and dignity of African cuisine and meets the last condition. In essence, while Charles Taylor's theory of recognition may not explicitly address these conditions in a systematic or detailed manner, it aligns with the broader principles of cultural recognition and respect, which can indirectly contribute to addressing the denial of recognition, reconceptualizing food valuation norms, reversing stereotypes, and promoting the respect and dignity of cultural cuisines. This makes the theory stand a chance of addressing the misrecognition of African cuisine should it be used in conjunction with another theory that addresses the aspects of the misrecognition of African cuisine that it does not directly address.

### **6.3 Analysis of Honneth's theory**

For Axel Honneth, recognition is a significant aspect of a person's life, and its denial can result in social injustices and individual pathologies (Honneth 1996). He distinguishes between three different forms of recognition as discussed above: love, rights, and respect. He argues that when individuals or social groups are denied recognition in any of these forms, this can result in social pathologies. For instance, the denial of love can lead to an individual feeling neglected while the denial of legal recognition can lead to one feeling oppressed and excluded from the

activities of their community. Similarly, to the analysis conducted above, in this section, I will assess Honneth's theory to examine whether it does meet the conditions to potentially remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine.

The first condition is addressing the denial of recognition of African cuisine structurally and systematically. When we examine Honneth's theory, it is more concerned with recognizing individuals and social groups in terms of their personal qualities, legal rights, and social contributions. While this does not directly address the denial of recognition structurally and systematically, it does offer a framework on how this can be potentially done. This would be done by acknowledging the importance of various forms of recognition, more so legal recognition, which could potentially be applied in situations involving the systematic and structural denial of African food. For instance, when we explore legal recognition as a means to remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine structurally and systematically. The legal system could work towards legal protections and rights for cultural food practices. This might involve securing intellectual property rights for traditional recipes, protecting cultural heritage, and ensuring that regulations and laws acknowledge and respect the importance of African cuisines. This would mean that there would be legal consequences should African cuisine be misrecognised, and this would create a path in which means to deconstruct the systems and structures that make it possible for African cuisine to be misrecognised. This legal aspect of Honneth's theory makes his theory partially meet the first condition. This is partial because this is not a contribution the theory offers at face value, but it can be arrived at through the analysis of the theory.

The second condition is the reconceptualization of food valuation norms. Honneth's theory does not specifically address the reconceptualization of food valuation norms. However, the theory does provide a broader perspective on how societal norms and values can impact individuals and groups. Honneth does this by emphasizing the significance of social recognition in shaping a person's identity, self-worth, and overall well-being. The theory does acknowledge that there are negative effects that groups and individuals can experience as a result of societal norms which could be marginalizing certain cultural groups because they fall outside of the margins of what is stipulated as the norm. This framework could be applied to discussions about cultural cuisines and food valuation norms by highlighting the importance of respecting and valuing cultural diversity, which could lead to a reconsideration of existing food norms such as requiring cuisines to have a certain aesthetic. For African cuisines such as

the South African tripe with an unpleasant odour or some Nigerian meals that make use of fermented locust beans giving the food an unpleasant odour, this would be liberating. This would be liberating because the cuisines do not have to meet a certain standard of what is deemed as a pleasant odour as long as the cultural group that consumes it is pleased with the cuisine. For this contribution of problematizing existing norms or rather acknowledging the negative effects of norms in societies, the theory partially meets the second condition. The third condition is the reversal of stereotypes. The reversal of stereotypes does not necessarily mean that they are being taken back but it is problematizing them and thus abstaining from using them because their problematization highlights how using them affects the parties negatively subjected to them. While the reversal of stereotypes is not a primary focus of Honneth's theory, addressing stereotypes is related to the broader idea of recognizing individuals and groups for their unique qualities and contributions. This means that no standard is put forth to make this to be forced to assimilate into it, but things can just be and exist in their natural unique state. For African cuisine this means, the only standard it should meet is to not be hazardous to the individuals or groups who consume but it can take up any aesthetic or odour. This then allows African cuisine to exist in its complex nature without having to align to simplistic generalizations of what good valuable food it. This aligns with Honneth's emphasis on respect and acknowledgment of personal attributes as African cuisine will be valued and acknowledged for its uniqueness without labelling it with negative stereotypes. For this reason, the theory does meet the third condition. The last condition is the promotion of respect and dignity of cultural cuisines. Again, while Honneth's theory does not explicitly address cultural cuisines, it promotes the idea of recognizing the cultural and social contributions of individuals and groups. Recognizing cultural cuisines as an important part of cultural identity and heritage could be seen as an application of his theory's principles. Promoting respect for cultural cuisines can be seen as an aspect of recognizing the value of cultural contributions. For this reason, his theory also meets the last condition.

In essence, Axel Honneth's theory of recognition does not directly meet the condition to remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine but similarly to Taylor's theory, it provides a broader framework for understanding recognition and its potential application in addressing issues related to food valuation norms, stereotypes, and the respect and dignity of cultural cuisines. It underscores the importance of acknowledging and respecting the diversity of human experiences and contributions, which can be relevant in various social and cultural contexts, including those related to the misrecognition of African cuisine. The theory, similar, to

Taylor's, it be used in conjunction with another theory that addresses the aspects of the misrecognition of African cuisine is does not directly address it. In the following section, I will assess Fraser's theory to examine if it does meet the conditions to remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine.

#### **6.4 Analysis of Fraser's theory**

The theory of recognition proposed by Fraser emphasizes the importance of recognizing people's identities, experiences, and cultural differences as a crucial component of social justice (Fraser 1997). Fraser argues for a need to remedy misrecognition by using a balanced approach that combines recognition with economic justice. Similarly, to the analysis conducted above, in this section, I will assess Fraser's theory to examine whether it does meet the conditions to potentially remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine. The first condition is addressing the denial of recognition structurally and systematically. When we examine Fraser's theory, her theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing individuals and groups who have been historically marginalized or denied recognition. Her focus is more on the broader structural and systemic issues related to misrecognition such as racial discrimination, gender inequality, class-based inequalities, etc. She argues for addressing these issues through political and social change (Fraser 1997). In this sense, her theory indirectly addresses the need to address denial of recognition structurally and systematically. It indirectly does this by problematizing existing systems and structures that marginalize people based on broader issues, but this can also be applied to the misrecognition of African food as her theory would problematize the systems and structures that perpetuate the misrecognition of African cuisine. For this, her theory does meet the first condition.

The second condition is the reconceptualization of food valuation norms. Fraser's theory argues for social change which would open up a platform for the societal norms of food valuation to be reconceptualized into what is just for all cultural groups. This means that her theory in the context of the misrecognition of African cuisine, the theory would promote the reconceptualization of what is deemed acceptable or good food in society as part of promoting social change which would make the norms to be accommodative of African cuisine standards. For this contribution, Fraser's theory does meet the second condition. The third condition is the reversal of stereotypes. Fraser's theory acknowledges the problem of stereotypes and misrecognition in the context of identity politics and cultural differences. While she does not

provide a specific framework for reversing stereotypes, her emphasis on recognizing and validating the experiences and identities of marginalized groups can be seen as a step toward countering stereotypes. This makes her theory meet the third condition. The last condition is promoting respect and dignity of cultural cuisines. Fraser's theory does not directly address the promotion of respect and dignity of cultural cuisines. However, her emphasis on recognition and cultural differences can be related to the broader context of respecting and valuing diverse cultural practices, which could include cuisine and promote respect for African cuisine. For this, her theory does meet the last condition.

Furthermore, what makes Fraser's theory even more appealing outside of it meeting all the conditions is that she does what Honneth and Taylor do not do which I contend is beneficial for a theory of recognition to have. She discusses two types of remedies for injustice that can be applied to remedy misrecognition: The affirmative and transformative remedies. Affirmative remedies for injustice "aim to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disrupting the underlying framework that produces them" (Fraser 1997:23); while transformative remedies are "aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework" (Fraser 1997: 23). The crux of the difference between the two remedies, according to Fraser, "is end-state outcomes versus the processes that produce them. It is not a case of gradual versus apocalyptic change" (Fraser 1997:23). The affirmative remedy in this case would promote the inclusion of African food in mainstream fine dining menus. Transformative remedies would push for the reconceptualization of how "good food" is defined as a whole. In my view Honneth's and Taylor's theory while they offer significant frameworks that could be adopted to remedy the misrecognition of African food. They fall on the affirmative remedies spectrum. What I find problematic about these kinds of remedies is that they deal with injustice in their setting but do not fully engage and disrupt the systems and structures that make it possible for that injustice to take place. This then makes the remedies to be temporal as the injustices can still take place given that the systems which are there perpetuate them. An instance of this would be the example discussed above of serving African dishes such as tripe in fine dining restaurants to remedy its misrecognition. The issue is that having tripe at a fine dining establishment such as Kream would mean that the cuisine would have to be assimilated into fine dining food norms. It would have to first have a certain aesthetic that is fine dining worthy. It would have an odour deemed pleasurable and lastly, it would have to have a fine dining-worthy price. What is problematic about all of this is that the changes that have to be made to this cultural cuisine

reflect broader structural and systemic standards that marginalize tripe. This can be likened to the concept of non-racialism, which is the desire to do away with racial labels, in the context of race. The argument put forth against this is that this is only "a name change, as various critiques indicate; it is purely nominal as it is not at once the existential de-categorization of the racialized subjects" (Dladla 2017:104). The same applies in the context of assimilating tripe to fine dining establishments. In the same way that doing away with racial labels does not remedy racism, the assimilation of tripe into fine dining establishments will not remedy its misrecognition as it will exist in that restaurant as a different cuisine which is not cultural to African people given the changes it would have to undergo for it to be fine dining worthy making it a foreign dish to people who see it as their cultural dish. When it comes to transformative remedies, I contend that Fraser's remedy is more on the transformative side making it a potential theory to remedy the misrecognition of African cuisine. This remedy reconceptualises what is labelled as good food opening up the food landscape to not categorise food as good or acceptable based on Eurocentric food norms but give Africans a platform to have a say in food epistemology and define what good food is for them.

Important to say is that Fraser's theory, like any theoretical framework, is not without its imperfections, however, it remains a valuable foundational perspective. Alongside the insights of other philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth, I believe that these theories can collectively provide a robust framework for addressing the misrecognition of African cuisine. These theories can guide us in understanding and rectifying the systemic issues that contribute to the underappreciation of African cultural food.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I conducted a comparative analysis and critique of Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth's conception of recognition to assess which conception of recognition best encapsulates the recognition that African cuisine deserves based on conditions I delineated through the use of the definition of what misrecognition encompasses from the preceding chapters. Firstly, I laid down the conditions that the conception will have to meet to best encapsulate the recognition that African cuisine deserves based on the characteristics of cultural oppression. This was followed by an analysis of the conceptions of recognition by Taylor, Honneth, and Fraser to assess if their conceptions meet the conditions stipulated. I then concluded that Fraser's theory of recognition best encapsulates the kind of recognition that African cuisine deserves. Her

theory, alongside the insights of Taylor and Honneth, can collectively provide a plausible framework for addressing the misrecognition subjected to African cuisine.

## **7. Final word**

As a conclusion to the dissertation, I believe that I have presented a compelling argument that African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice, resulting in its misrecognition and the perpetuation of Eurocentric food norms. The discussions made in the dissertation were broken down into several chapters to provide a comprehensive exploration of the issue of the misrecognition of African cuisine.

I began by making the argument that there is such a thing as an African food culture. An essential disclaimer I made was that, when reference is made to African cuisine throughout the dissertation, the reference is going to be to African foods that are associated with Black people. Given this disclaimer, the words African food and Black food will be used interchangeably. To begin, I laid the foundation for the conversation by giving an overview of what the subject of food entails. In this section, I highlighted that food is not just a substance that is used for physical sustenance, but it has a cultural and racial nature that links it to the identity of the people who consume the dish. Subsequently, I gave an overview of what the subject of culture encompasses. I mentioned that culture speaks to collectively held assumptions, values, and beliefs by a cultural group of people which serve as the moral compass on how they navigate life and interpret the world. This paved the way for the discussion of the cultural nature of food which helped us to understand how then food becomes/is cultural or what it means to say that food is cultural. To further emphasize the multifaceted nature of food and its depth, I explored race and the notion of food as racial which served to illuminate how unjust food racialization is.

Chapter three lays the foundation for the main contention of this dissertation that African cuisine is often subjected to cultural injustice. I began by addressing the question of what cultural injustice entails. I noted that it comprises the unfair treatment and marginalization of certain cultural groups within societies. This injustice has three key components: cultural domination, nonrecognition, and disrespect. Secondly, I used Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression as a framework that highlights injustice in which some of its elements align with the manifestation of cultural injustice.

In chapter four, I aimed to demonstrate how South African cuisine is subjected to cultural injustice. I did this by using tripe as a site of illustration. This was then followed by the

discussion of Eurocentrism and White supremacy as forces that perpetuate the cultural injustice subjected to South African cuisines associated with Black South Africans. In chapter five, I aimed to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the recognition concepts proposed by Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, and Nancy Fraser. The purpose of this examination was to lay the foundation for the subsequent chapter, where I performed a comparative analysis of these theories. Through this analysis, I aimed to develop a recognition framework that can facilitate the understanding and rectification of cultural injustices experienced by Black people in South Africa, particularly in relation to their cuisine, which often remains invisible.

In chapter six, I conducted a comparative analysis and critique of Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth's conceptions of recognition to determine which of these conceptions best encapsulates the recognition that Black cuisine deserves. To begin, I established the conditions that the chosen conception must satisfy to effectively address the recognition that African cuisine merits. I acknowledged that these theories were not originally formulated to specifically address the cultural injustices experienced by Black cuisine, which may result in certain limitations in this context. However, my intention behind this assessment was not to undermine these theories but to seek a solution to the cultural injustices inherent in the culinary domain.

Following from this, it is therefore my conclusion that African foods should be acknowledged in their natural, authentic state, free from the imposition of standardized Eurocentric food norms as publicized using the Michelin-starred system. For this to be possible, the requirement is that the existing food norms need to be deconstructed to give a platform for the development of new ones that do not perpetuate the marginalization and misrecognition of African food.

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