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Is this output project related?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If yes, provide the project number
Title	Food Studies: An introduction to idea, concept and practice				
Authors	Vasu Reddy				
Type of output	Select the appropriate output type from the list below				
<b>Monograph/book*</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer reviewed				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-peer reviewed				
<b>Chapter in Monograph/book*</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer reviewed				Title of monograph/book in which chapter appears
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-peer reviewed				
*(For monographs/chapters, a letter from publisher must be submitted as proof of peer review.)					
<b>Journal Article</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer reviewed				Title of journal in which article appears
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-peer reviewed				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Newspaper Article</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Review in Journal</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Research Report- Client</b>				Client name and month in which report was submitted
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Research Report- Other</b>				Month in which report was submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Conference or Seminar Papers</b>				Name, date and place of conference/seminar
	University of KwaZulu-Natal College of Humanities Postgraduate Conference; Postgraduate Research in the Humanities: Exploring Trends, Theories and Trans-Disciplinarity; 9-10 October 2013, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Keynote Address; Professor Vasu Reddy.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other, please specify</b>				
Confidential?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Submitted by:	Prof Vasu Reddy				
Submission date:	11 October 2013				

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# Postgraduate Research in the Humanities: Exploring Trends, Theories and Trans- Disciplinarity

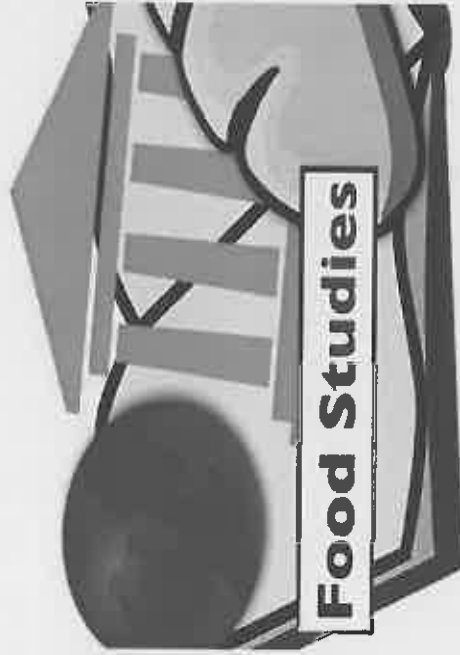
Prof. Vasu Reddy

9 October 2013, UKZN College of Humanities  
Annual Postgraduate Conference 2013

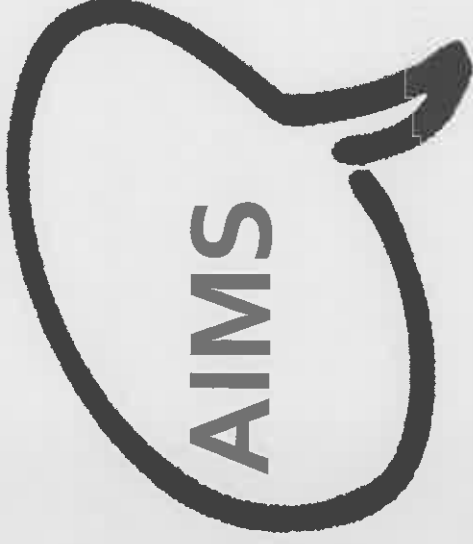




# Food Studies: An introduction to idea, concept and practice

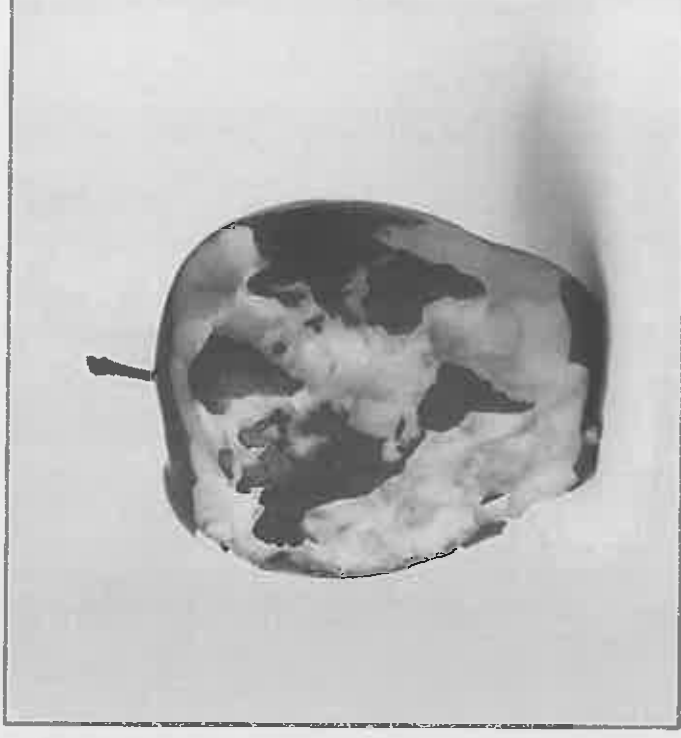


1. **Why the topic?**
2. **What is Food?**
3. **What is Food Studies?**
4. **Why Food Studies?**
5. **Some conceptual parameters & existing knowledge**
6. **Theory, Method and Scope**
7. **Potential topic areas from a Humanities and Social Science**
8. **Frontiers of Food Research & Some Journals**
9. **Closing comments**



# WHAT IS FOOD ?

- A necessary condition for survival in our daily lives.
- Has wide-ranging implications for our health and well-being.
- Is not only about diet, nutrition and calories but is also a sociocultural product (*The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power*; Counihan, C.M. (1999)



# WHAT IS FOOD ?

*" Eating is central to daily life. Our relationship to food is one that is built on necessity and repetition. Because of this cyclical relationship, eating becomes a familiar and intimate part of our lives. Yet the foods we eat, and the circumstances under which we consume, extend beyond our biological need for fuel. They are also based on an individual's cultural, political, and familial heritage. Thus, the symbolic importance of food and consumptive rituals arises from the fact that these choices are representative of our individual and collective identities"*

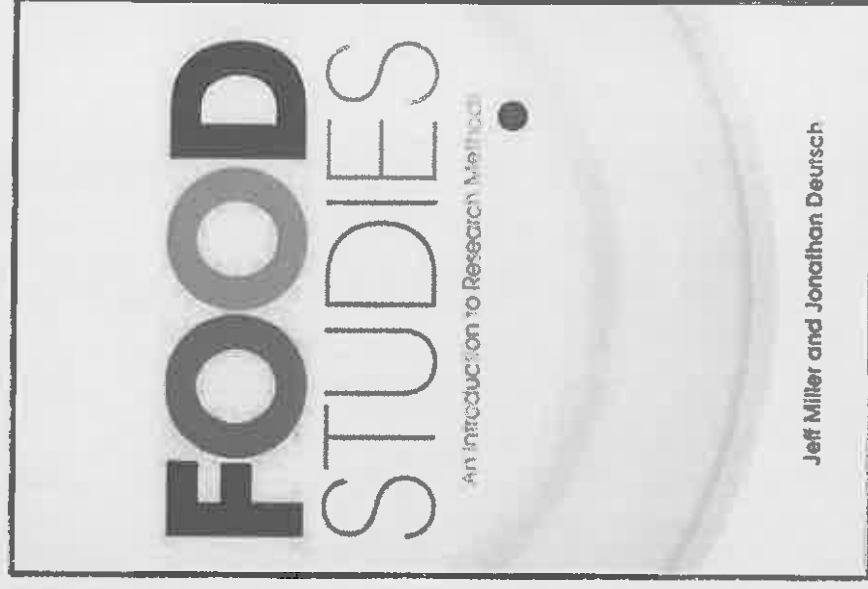
*(Food for Thought: An Analysis of Power and Identity in Prison Food Narratives. Rebecca Godderis. Berkeley Journal of Sociology, Vol. 50; 2006: 61-75) (page: 61)*



# WHAT IS FOOD STUDIES?

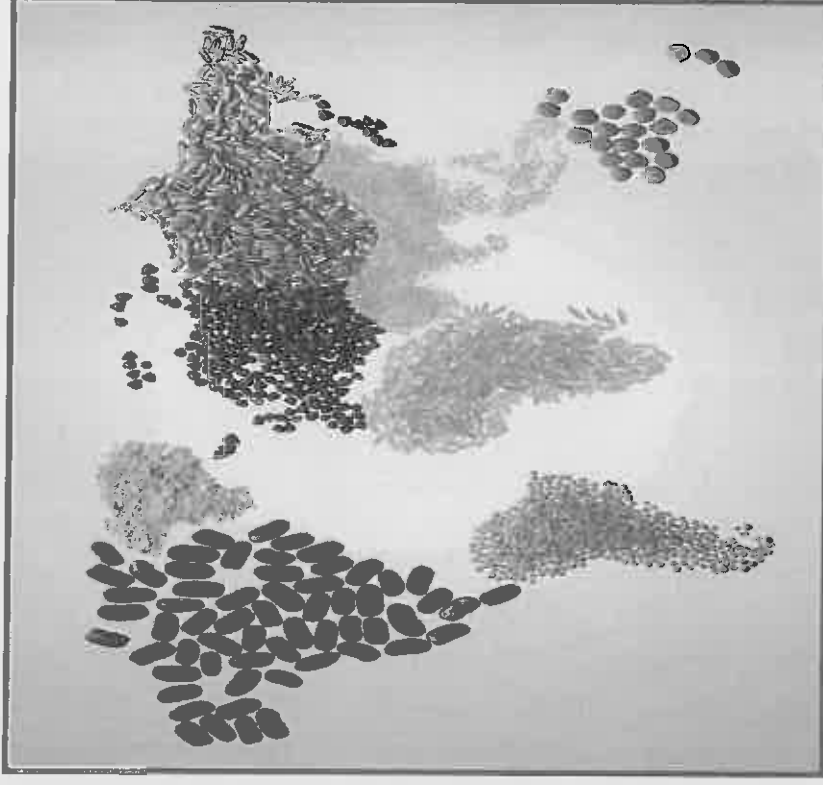
Food Studies emphasizes the ways individuals, communities, and societies relate to and represent food within a spatial, cultural and historical context. Food studies examines the political, economic, and geographic framework of food production, while attending equally to the study of consumption, including gastronomy, and media portrayals of chefs and cuisines, along with attention to problems that follow consumption, the re-making of bodies, accumulation of waste, and burdens of externalizing costs. Food Studies offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of food as a bio-cultural system and employs approaches from the humanities and the social sciences. (<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/nutrition/food/ma/>)

In other words FS is not really about **EATING** and the study of food itself but rather the study of the *relationships* between food and human experience



# WHY FOOD STUDIES ?

- Epistemological enquiry and what Arjun Appadurai (1986; *The Social Lives of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*) calls "the social lives of things"
- Understanding of food habits: how we produce, procure, and consume food – represents powerful systems of symbols.
- Peoples' relationship with food: (tells us about their beliefs, assumptions, background, personalities) (Source: *Food Studies: An Introduction to research Methods* (2009); Jeff Miller & Jonathan Deutsch. New York: Berg; pp. 6-7)





# SOME GENERIC CONCEPTUAL IDEAS

To understand food is to understand the human condition in all its complexity; it offers a key to various types of social organization, uses of technology, expressions of a market economy, and patterns of daily life.

- Food opens up the nature/culture debate.
- Food is always part of an elaborate symbol system that conveys cultural messages (ANTHROPOLOGY = food taboos; sacrifices; religious aspects; value of food; LEVI STRAUSS = food serves in social relations towards a means of analysing structural relations in society) ---  
SYMBOLISM OF MEAT, MILK AND BLOOD in Maasai diet while vegetable food is considered inferior food) = diet as an ideational system - a system of meaning - rather than a behavioural

practice. (Maasai Food Symbolism: The Cultural Connotations of Milk, Meat, and Blood in the Pastoral Maasai Diet. Kaj Århem. *Anthropos*, 84, 1./3. (1989), pp. 1-23.)

# FOOD CULTURES

# HOME GENERIC CONCEPTUAL IDEAS ctd.

Culinary rules are shared ways of preparing and eating food that are socially patterned. The rules guide behaviour. They are socially learned and shaped and often transmitted through familial relations (e.g., mother to daughter) and various other social networks. This results in a shared food system within bounded groups.

- Bell, D., & Valentine, G. (Eds.). (1997). *Consuming geographies*. London: Routledge. Bell and Valentine (1997) have noted that "every mouthful, every meal, can tell us something about our selves, and about our place in the world" (p. 3).
- Food also generates conventionalized social meanings that serve commercial interests: Coca Cola; McDonalds; Pepsi (particular affiliations we have and provide a new sense of identity). Food is also an index of power relations.

FOOD IS NOT  
RATIONAL. FOOD IS  
CULTURE. HABIT.  
DRAWING AND  
IDENTITY.

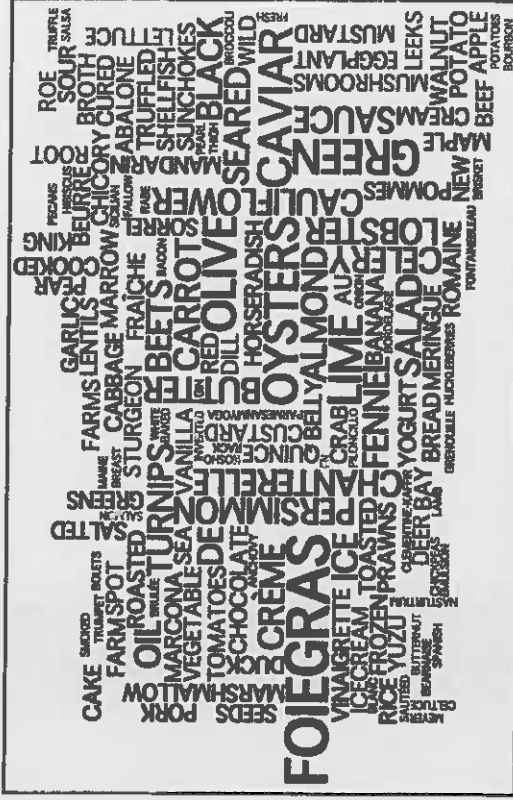


# OME GENERIC CONCEPTUAL IDEAS ctd.

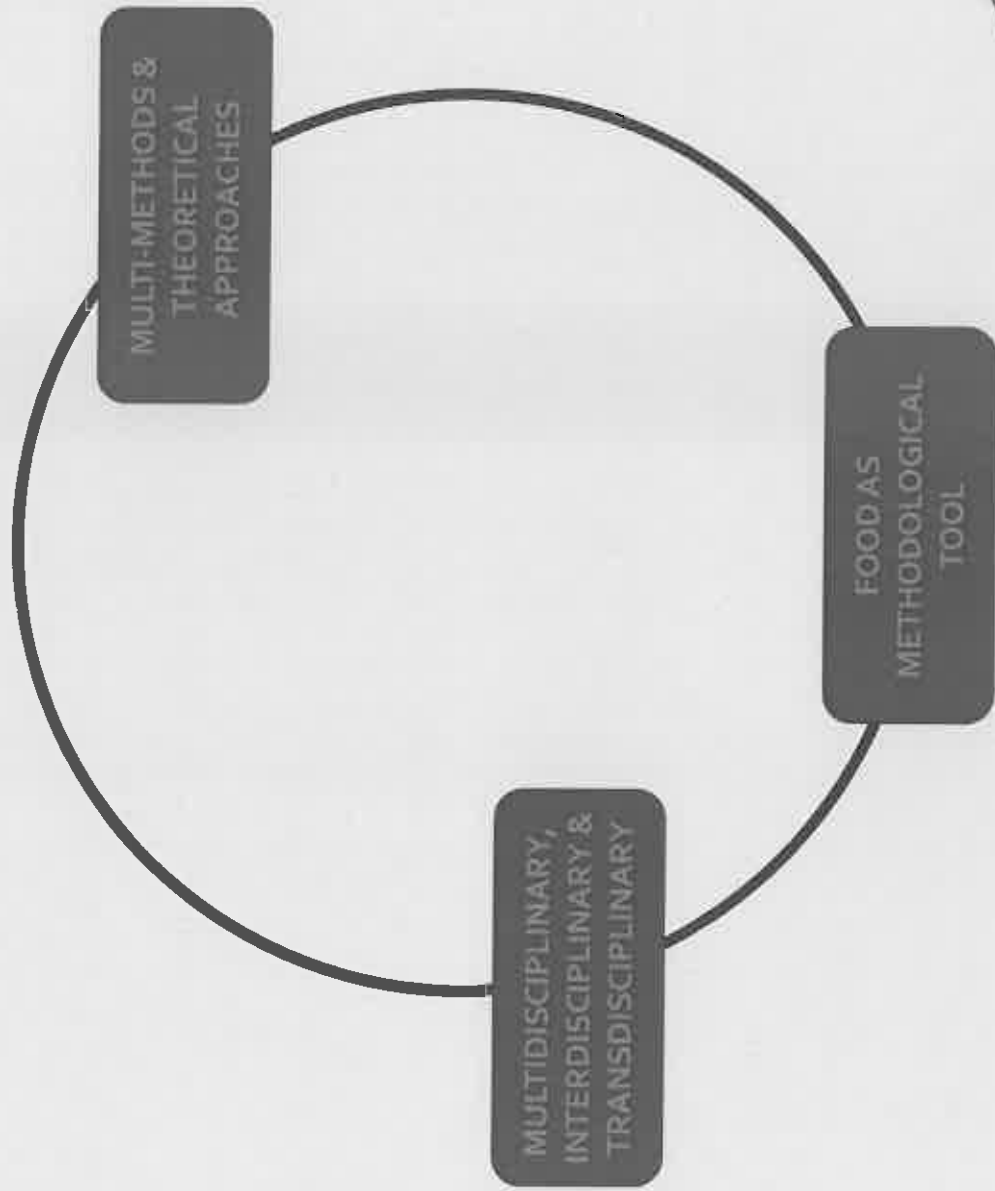
Food also represents ephemeral personal qualities (Tastes for specialized items such as SQUID; OYSTERS; WHALE; SHARK FIN; RAW TUNA; KOPI LUWAK COFFEE – speak of claims to cosmopolitanism; whereas a meal of hamburger and fries does the opposite).

- Food is always ASSOCIATIVE – travel also provokes ideas about appetite and cuisine (when we travel):

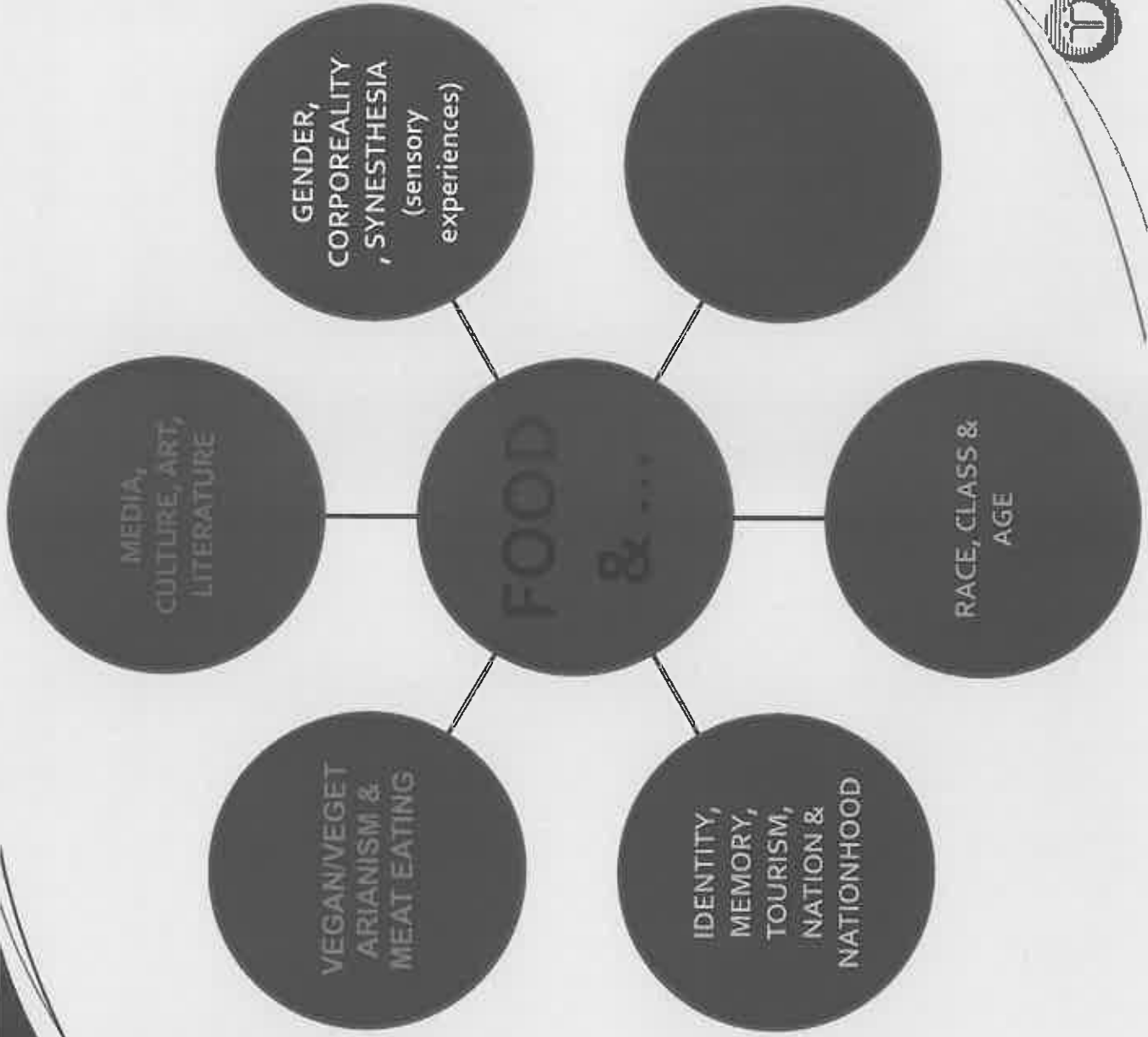
1. The ancient Inca dined alone using elaborate gold and jeweled utensils (Lingis, A. (1994). *Abuses*. Berkeley: University of California Press).
2. Interpretation of a dream about smoked salmon : that it is less about fish and more about the anxiety of being socially acceptable. (Freud, S. (1900). The interpretation of dreams. In J. Strachey (Trans. and Ed.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 4, p. 147).



# SOME ASPECTS OF THEORY, METHOD AND SCOPE



**SOME  
TOPIC  
AREAS:  
Humanities**



## Frontiers of Food Research

- The biotechnology Revolution: genetically modified food (farmaceuticals or nutraceuticals)
- The organic revolution: the idea of embracing 'natural' foods free of pesticides and insecticides
- Food and ideology: placing emphasis on individuals and personal responsibility
- The politics of obesity: long-term health consequences of over-consumption and over-indulgence

## Journals in Food Research

- *Appetite*
- *Food and Foodways*
- *Food, Culture and Society*
- *Journal of Food Research*
- *Nutritional Anthropology*
- *Food Studies*



# CLOSING CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- Food is a central element of our cultural identity
- Opens up much possibility for intellectual enquiry in respect of Humanities & Social perspectives.
- What are some of the issues you could pick up in the development of some discrete projects (short, medium and long term)?



## REFERENCES

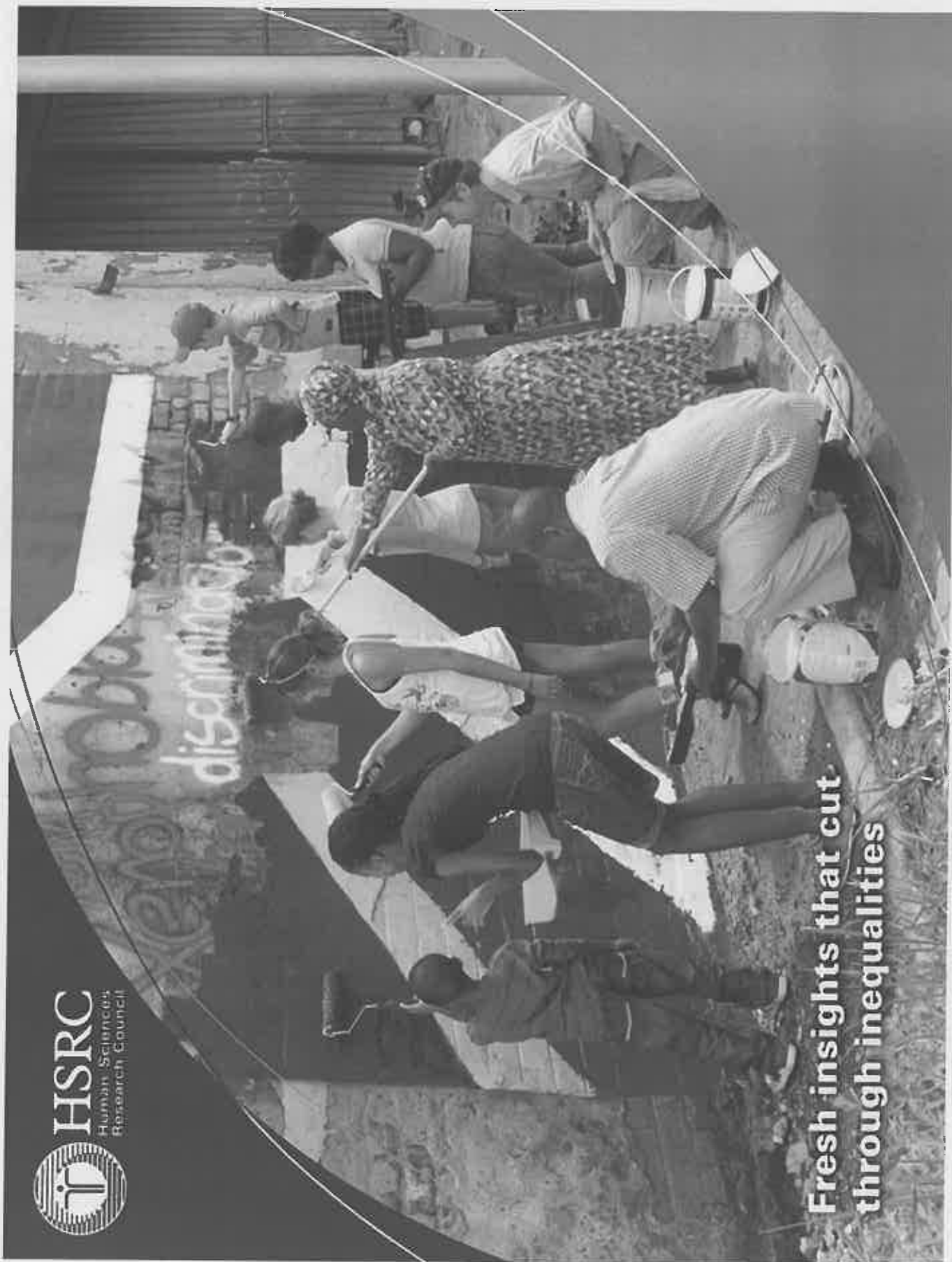
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