The Effect of Consciousness of Social, Political and Historical Context on Adjustment of Undergraduate Students at the University of Cape Town: A Qualitative Study

by
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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy

Faculty of the Humanities
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2010

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature Signed by candidate Date 26-03-2010

Acknowledgements

The writing of this dissertation has been the most rewarding academic challenges I have ever faced. Without the support of the following people, this study would not have been completed. It is to them that I owe my deepest gratitude.

- David Gilmour, my supervisor, whose limitless knowledge and wisdom and tireless generosity and patience inspired and motivated me throughout this entire process. His brilliant sense of humour coupled with his relentless commitment to the highest of standards made this experience endlessly enjoyable and rewarding. Dave, I know I will take this experience with me in all my future academic endeavours. You will never be matched as a partner-in-crime.

- My parents, who have always supported, encouraged and believed in my every effort. I am grateful beyond words to you both for always standing behind me. Every step of the way has been taken with you in mind and heart.

- My dear friend and colleague, Eleanor DeCerff, who turned the process of completing a masters programme a bonafide comedy routine. You and your family's laughter and warmth helped to make South Africa my second home.

- My friends who stood by me through it all, who listened to me gripe and encouraged me to brag, thank you dearly. Taking on this feat 10,000 miles away from home would not have been possible without you.

Abstract

It has been shown that black students are generally not finding the academic success in South African universities that would confirm a truly equitable educational system. In response to this, universities in South Africa have taken several different measures to bridge this gap and provide the support needed for these students to thrive through various programmes that provide supplementary support and extended degree programmes to educationally disadvantaged students.

Because there has been shown to be a relationship between student adjustment and academic performance, this study is designed around UCT's response to the issue of undergraduate student retention, their Academic Development Programme. This study looks specifically at UCT's Undergraduate Law Students and attempts to explore the relationship between these students' awareness and understanding of their own context and experience at UCT, and their adjustment to the university. With UCT Academic Development Programme case studies and several theorists pointing to the importance of students' adjustment to the university for their academic success, it is necessary to look further into the factors contributing to their adjustment or lack thereof. It has been shown that one factor of maladjustment might be students' inability to locate their own difficulties in the institutional context, indicating a need for an exploration of students' own consciousness of their institutional context.

Using a case study approach, this study utilises questionnaires and focus group discussions in an attempt to explore these students' consciousness of their own social, political and historical context and how they understand their place within the university with a specific focus on whether this understanding is enabling or disabling in terms of their adjustment to the university and its institutional culture. Combining Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital, field and habitus with the implications of studies pointing to the potentially powerful adjustment mechanism of conscientisation, provides a tool for analysing the experiences of students with previously disadvantaged backgrounds who find themselves entering the world of higher academia by way of an Academic Development Programme specifically designed to address their deficits. This study contributes to the conversation about how higher education institutions respond

to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population that includes a changing race and class demographic.

The voices of these students provide valuable insight into the complexities of university life, particularly for students coming from backgrounds that have left them ill-prepared for university academics and culture. The study reveals a definite range of awareness of what Bourdieu would call "the game" and these "players'" sense of the "fields" they find themselves having to negotiate. While the 1st year students offer insight into their struggle to articulate the complex and unique difficulties they face because of their location within the university field, the 2nd year students exhibit complex contradictions and personal struggles with their identities and ideals.

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List of Acronyms

AARP	Alternative Admissions Research Project
ADP	Academic Development Programme
CHED	Centre for Higher Education Development
UCT	University of Cape Town
1BF1, 2BM1, 2BM2, etc.	1st year black female #1, 2nd year black male #1, 2nd year black male #2, etc.
SACQ	Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire
SIRP	Student Initiated Retention Project

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the effect of the consciousness of one's social, historical and political context on university adjustment of first year undergraduate students in the University of Cape Town Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme. As research from several UCT Faculties' Academic Development Programmes suggests, academic adjustment is related to students' ability to undergo a socio-cultural shift toward an alignment to the university (see Soudien, 2008; Kapp and Bangeni, 2009). Because there has been shown to be a relationship between student adjustment and academic performance, this study is designed around UCT's response to the issue of undergraduate student retention, their Academic Development Programme. This study looks specifically at UCT's Undergraduate Law Students and attempts to explore the relationship between these students' awareness and understanding of their own context and experience at UCT, and their adjustment to the university. This study contributes to the conversation about how higher education institutions respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population that includes a changing race and class demographic. The chapter briefly states the problem at hand, describes the research methods used and questions explored and gives a chapter outline of the work.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

South Africa's attempt to redress the damaging affects of the former oppressive apartheid government are producing the desired outcomes only to the degree that enrolment of African students in universities has increased since 1994. However, an examination of the throughput rates of undergraduate students in South African universities shows that there are a disproportionate number of African students struggling academically and/or not completing their degrees,

with the average success rate of African students at 70% in 2004 compared with the 84% success rate of White students (Letseka & Maile, 2008). To summarise research done in an attempt to assess whether the same old reality is hiding behind the statistics boasting increased enrolment of black students in universities, Beckmann (2008: 784) shows that across higher education institutions in South Africa, "throughput and completion (efficiency) rates are low, participation and output are skewed in terms of race and class and fields of study (there is too much growth where there is no shortage of graduates) and that equity and development are not served by differing or uneven quality and standards across the system". In 2005, a study conducted by the Department of Education revealed that "of 120,000 students who entered the university system in 2000, half dropped out within four years, while only 22 percent graduated in the same time period. Faced with obstacles that include poverty, shoddy educations in cash-strapped government schools, and cultural alienation on historically white college campuses, black students constitute the majority of dropouts" (Lindow, 2006: 44). Letseka and Maile (2008: 6) state that "on average, 70% of the families of higher education drop-outs surveyed were in the category 'low economic status'" and raises the issue of the intersection of race and class, stating that "Black (African) families were particularly poor".

In looking at the individualised university experience, some black students in South African universities have been shown to experience a transformational introspective experience when attempting to navigate the world of the university where they can be seen as, in effect, transitioning, to varying degrees, to a different social class. Soudien (2008) shows that in confronting the racism still very much thriving on university campuses in South Africa, both projected from staff and colleagues as well as institutionally woven into the very fabric of the university, some black students find themselves alienated at home while battling to assimilate on campus and in the process, come to reject their backgrounds, while others 'reach for the status' of their academic progress which is beyond that of their parents and progress on their own accord, often with the support of their home familial and social networks. Important here is the very fact that diversification of higher education institutions has the potential to provide the

opportunity for black students to deal with their racial identities in profound ways, 'reconstitute' it, and perhaps begin the process from the ground, of integration and participation beyond superficial desegregation. This could be argued to be powerful grounds for social development and the redress for which the government aims and is responsible.

It has been shown that academic programmes that provide significant support from staff, a restructuring of the degree time-frame, student community-building and individualised attention and assistance to students have been successful (to varying degrees) at increasing the retention and throughput of previously-disadvantaged students (Burch et. al., 2007). The University of Cape Town has responded to the need for institutionalised adjustment and transformation by creating support systems for students identified as both having potential to succeed despite their educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, and as being "at-risk" of struggling academically. UCT has implemented Academic Development Programmes across several faculties that are targeted at increasing the success of these students.

Studies done of these Academic Development Programmes (see Jawitz & Scott, 1997; Burch et. Al., 2007; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008; Petersen, Louw & Dumont, 2009) point towards the importance of students' adjustment to the university for their academic success, so it is necessary to look further into the factors contributing to their adjustment or lack thereof. For the purposes of this study, adjustment is defined as a process of interaction between an individual and his/her environment in an attempt to bring about harmony between the demands and needs of the individual and his/her environment, comprised of four aspects including academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment (Petersen et. al, 2009; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008).

It has been shown that there is a relationship between successful student adjustment to students' ability to develop a sense of belonging to the university. In addition, it has been shown that one factor of maladjustment might be students' inability to locate their own difficulties in the institutional context.

This indicates a need for an exploration of students' own consciousness of their institutional context. Given the context of these Academic Development Programmes, which target students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, often producing demographics which show an alignment of educational background to race and class, it is necessary to investigate the following question: **what is the relationship between students' socio-political consciousness and their adjustment to the university?** The main purpose of this study is to explore this question and the issues around it.

1.3 Research Methods

This project utilises a case study approach. Both questionnaires and focus groups were used to collect data, thus addressing not only the complexity of a student's personal experience, but also his/her context and personal conception of their experience. Questionnaires were used to gather information about the students' backgrounds and the experiences they have had at the university starting from the application process through to their current experience. Focus groups were used to expand upon issues raised by the responses to the questionnaires and to discuss the dynamics of the complex and multifaceted student experience.

1.4 Research Questions

The focal research question upon which this study is based is:

What is the relationship between students' socio-political consciousness and their adjustment to the university?

Stemming from this main question are several key questions that support the investigation. These questions are:

- How do students perceive their backgrounds to have prepared them for

university?

  - How do students experience the transition from school to university?
  - Do students feel all other students experience adjustment in the same way?
  - What role do students feel race and class plays in students' ability to navigate the undergraduate university career?
- How do students negotiate their home life with their university life?
  - Do students articulate their university experience with their friends and family from home and if so how?
  - How do students feel they fit into the culture of the university?
- How do students perceive race and class relations and issues at the university?
  - Have students encountered or experienced racism at the university?
  - How do students conceive of racism at the university?

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two gives a background for issues facing universities in South Africa including student access and retention before exploring how they manifest in the context of the University of Cape Town. This chapter describes the University of Cape Town's response to the issue of undergraduate student retention and details the various Academic Development Programmes in place with a specific focus on the law faculty's programme.

Chapter Three reviews the literature around issues of minority student performance and retention and the various strategies universities have used to increase student success. This chapter presents a theoretical framework for exploring undergraduate student adjustment.

Chapter Four describes the research methods used in this study as well as various aspects of the research process including selection of respondents, analysis of data and limitations of the research.

Chapter Five presents the data collected and analyses it against the theoretical framework built by the body of literature reviewed.

Chapter Six provides a summary of the findings of the research and suggests areas of future study before concluding the discussion.

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES FACING SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a background for the issue of university education in South Africa including student access and retention as well as the greater issue of equity in the labour market for South African university graduates. The second section explores these issues with a specific focus on how they manifest at the University of Cape Town and the measures the university has taken to combat these issues.

2.2 The State of the South African University Today

Educational reforms associated with post-apartheid South Africa included the de-segregation of higher education which resulted in pressures on universities "to suspend highly selective meritocratic arrangements and to develop policies based on notions of disadvantage and redress, particularly in relation to African students, who had suffered extreme forms of discrimination under apartheid" (Naidoo, 2004: 460). Universities were expected to transform themselves from elite to mass-based institutions. Gultig (2000: 41) extracts from the 1998 White Paper on Higher Education these five features as its key goals of the transformation of higher education in South Africa:

1. *Increased participation, with particular expansion of students recruited from historically marginalised groups. This referred primarily to a better gender and race demographic, but also to increased recruitment of rural and working class students.*
2. *Being more responsive to societal interests and needs. While debate ensued about "Africanising" universities – and the meaning of this – the White Paper ultimately places its faith in a "global" developmental notion of universities.*
3. *A greater emphasis on career-oriented qualifications and, in particular, a*

growth in science, engineering and technology graduates. An urgent need was to "grow" the small number of African and women graduates in these fields.

4. *The initiation of a more flexible teaching and qualification system. This included new learning and teaching strategies with multiple entry and exit points, a flexible credit system and a range of delivery mechanisms.*
5. *Expanding post-graduate enrolments to address high level skills needed in a new, global, innovation society. Again, the need for increasing the number of African and women graduates was emphasised.*

It is impossible to separate a South African university from the greater global community as the goals of the White Paper show. Marginson (2008) asserts that what distinguishes higher education from other social formations are the credentialing of knowledge-intensive labour, and basic research. He states that the global dimension of higher education is "a bounded domain that includes institutions with cross-border activities" in which "a dual inclusion/exclusion shapes the outer and inner relationships of the domain. He links this to Bourdieu's "fields of power", which I will return to later in the discussion. The basic transformational agenda set out by the Department of Education can be seen as reflected in the mission statement of the University of Cape Town, which among other points, states that it is central to its mission to:

- *Strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination*
- *Be flexible on access, active in redress, and rigorous on success*
- *Promote equal opportunity and the full development of the human potential*

The university's commitment to these specific goals and the reality of its success in achieving them will be referred back to as the discussion unfolds.

2.2.1 The Issue of Access to Higher Education

Bornman raises the issue of diversity in South Africa, stressing that the issue when balancing the financial aspect of higher education with quality of education is "whether this is viable in South Africa as a developing country with its diversity of people" (2004: 374). Beckmann feels that "historical-educational disparities, skewed patterns of access, participation and success and socio-economic inequalities (running on racial lines) affect development negatively and that redress appears vital for development and progress and stability and individual advancement" (2008: 774). Major educational reforms made in South Africa have been driven by external stakeholders and the National Commission on Higher Education's recommendations for a transformation of higher education is focused around "increased participation by a more diverse constituency of learners; greater responsiveness to a wider range of social and economic needs and; increased co-operation and more partnership between higher education and other social actors and institutions" (Ekong & Cloete, 1997: 3). Carnoy and Castells explain that "[w]ho gets what in the educational system determines who gets what in capital, communication, and political influence" so it should follow that increasing diversity at the university level would work to transform the complex race and class issues that define South African society – social transformation embeds itself with educational transformation (1999: 30). The crucial point of contention here is the issue of equality versus equity. If the enrolment of black students increases in a South African university, what is the actual link to social development? Are universities actively changing fundamentally and ideologically, or are they simply fulfilling a quota in order to obtain external funding? Is the university serving the students or are the students serving the university? To continue on the thread of racial diversification, what black students are being admitted – on what criteria and for what reasons, and how are they faring academically and socially?

In the struggle to make compatible the drive for global participation and the need to address critical social issues, many of South Africa's higher education institutions have been successful in fulfilling the goal of increasing the diversity of students. However, Soudien notes that "[g]iven the elite character of higher

education (its selectivity in terms of who it allows in and who out) social class has come to produce new and interesting racial demographics" as universities respond and contribute to the post-Apartheid economic and social transition (2008: 663). The more pressing matter around how South Africa's educational development has progressed, then, is to investigate first exactly what 'diversity' means – in intention and in reality. Universities feel the pressure to diversify racially, but in the higher education institution this is complex in that "race never presents itself as an autonomous phenomenon" (Soudien, 2008: 664). In the South African context, critical here is the intersection of race and class, of race and economic background, of race and previous educational background. In other words, in conceptualising the 'university', we must investigate who the university serves. Second, it is necessary to explore the nature of the experience of this new diverse community of students given the particular circumstances and environment of the South African higher education institution. This means an examination of the personal experience of students as well as the role of the university itself both in this student experience and in what exactly it provides students.

Institutional Planning Background Data from the University of Cape Town (2009) paints an interesting picture of the changing demographic landscape of the South African university. Between the years of 1995 and 2007, the enrolment of African undergraduate students in higher education institutions rose from 50 per cent to 63 per cent. Favish (2005) feels that a major cause of the dramatic increase of African students in higher education during the post-Apartheid transition is not only the policies and practices of universities with regards to admissions, but also the creation and emergence of a black middle class in South Africa, which she considers an internally-driven shift, where blacks saw in higher education an opportunity for social mobility and took it. This complicates superficial statistics that boast increased enrolment of black students with no indication of socio-economic status. If, for example, a university sets a target for the number of black students admitted but subtly excludes economically disadvantaged students through high tuition fees with little financial support, is it really 'diversifying'? In addition, the particular

spread of black South African students across academic disciplines also becomes significant. If black students are entering and graduating from universities with degrees that afford them limited career opportunities, then it is questionable whether social development in the greater, national sense is happening.

2.2.2 The Issue of Societal Responsiveness

Beckman highlights a critical aspect of higher education by suggesting that students' ability to find better employment is "a crucial characteristic of equity" (2008: 84). Favish argues that according to evidence provided by studies of employment rates of black South Africans bearing tertiary education degrees, "the proportion of African students in programmes related to current or target growth areas of the economy… remain[s] way below the target" and there is a misalignment in the growth of human capital and the access to jobs (2005: 276). For example, in a study targeting the crucial post-Apartheid years between 1995 and 1999, she shows that "whilst the number of African graduates in this period grew, the 'demand for tertiary-educated African workers declined by about 77 000 representing an 11.8 per cent fall in employment levels for these graduates'. In contrast, the demand for non-African employment grew by 10 per cent." This explains why Bhorat and Lundall's study exploring race and employment rates shows that, "employment was generated for only 28.74 per cent of all new African entrants into the labour market, relative to 74.69 per cent of all White new entrants" (2002: 3). Favish attributes this to degreed African workers accumulating human capital in fields that are simply not in demand by employers.

In a 2005 study, Moleke shows that in the Engineering and Medical Science fields, graduates find employment immediately 77.2 per cent and 79.3 per cent of the time respectively, whereas in the Humanities and Arts and Law fields, graduates find employment immediately only 46.8 per cent and 49.6 per cent of the time respectively. However, the breakdown of average employment rates across all fields by race shows an even more complicated picture in which 70.4 per cent of White graduates are employed immediately while only 43.0 per cent

of African graduates are employed immediately. Another discrepancy arises when looking at employment rates by institution attended. Graduates from historically white universities find employment immediately 68.8 per cent of the time, while graduates from historically black universities find employment immediately only 40.5 per cent of the time. Of those graduates currently employed in the labour market, 29.0 per cent of Whites are working in the public sector, 59.0 are in the private sector and 12.0 are self-employed, while 82.0 per cent of Africans are working in the public sector, 15.7 in the private sector and 2.4 are self-employed. The general trend is that the majority of those employed in the public sector are Africans and considering the general income difference between public and private employment and the data proving that African graduates on average take longer to find employment, the question arises of whether or not these particular graduates are finding themselves employed in the public sector by choice. If not, then there is a need to address what is happening at the employer level – is this an efficiency issue or a racial discrimination problem notwithstanding employment equity legislation related to real differences in ability?

Further complicating these issues is the possibility that even those black previously disadvantaged students finding themselves in a position of potential upward mobility are struggling to deal with the complex and multifaceted nature of the leap into an often alien university culture. It is here where the discussion turns to students' own experiences of navigating their undergraduate university career.

2.2.3 The Issue of Retention and the Student Experience

With regards to the delicate balance the university faces in attending to both external demands for the country and internal demands of the country, South Africa has proven to be both successful and unsuccessful with respect to the increased access, and more importantly success, of blacks to higher education. In an attempt to assess whether the same old reality is hiding behind the statistics boasting increased enrolment of black students in universities, Beckmann found

that across higher education institutions in South Africa, "throughput and completion (efficiency) rates are low, participation and output are skewed in terms of race and class and fields of study (there is too much growth where there is no shortage of graduates) and that equity and development are not served by differing or uneven quality and standards across the system" (2008: 784). In 2005, a study conducted by the Department of Education revealed that "of 120,000 students who entered the university system in 2000, half dropped out within four years, while only 22 percent graduated in the same time period. Faced with obstacles that include poverty, shoddy educations in cash-strapped government schools, and cultural alienation on historically white college campuses, black students constitute the majority of dropouts" (Lindow, 2006: 44). Letseka and Maile state that "on average, 70% of the families of higher education drop-outs surveyed were in the category 'low economic status'" and raise the issue of the intersection of race and class, stating that "Black (African) families were particularly poor" (2008: 6). Beckmann (2008) suggests that one possible explanation for the unfavourable participation and performance rates of black students is not a decrease in government funding for universities, but rather a failure on the part of universities to diversify and distribute those funds strategically and equitably. In looking at the management of the university itself and whether systems are in place to integrate new types of students into the institution, he regrettably points to "alarming signs of instability" particularly within historically black universities, as evidenced by "student unrest and allegations of mismanagement", which he links to the capacity, or incapacity, for true equity and education development (2008: 781).

Scott states that this "challenge of developing latent talent, particularly in disadvantaged communities, is a central one for the third world as a whole, intensified by globalization" (2003: 49). But some of the concerns raised are that on a whole, universities are not providing teaching methods and materials that are pushing for the success of the diverse range of students that have come to make up the transforming universities in South Africa. Furthermore, specific issues such as the rigid structuring of the educational experience of students including the length of the undergraduate career as well as the pace at which

students are expected to make their way toward their degree compound the problem (Beckmann, 2008; de Beer, 2006). Tinto (2006) insists that it is the responsibility of the higher education institution to create the right set of conditions for all students to succeed by fundamentally restructuring those rigid systems that have remain unchanged for decades.

Turning to the integration-commitment model of attrition conceived by Tinto (1975) and later developed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1983), persistence can be shown to be related to a student's "fit" or academic and social integration within an institution; "goal commitment" or commitment to earning a degree; and "institutional commitment" or commitment to the institution itself. Yorke (1999) shows that the three main causes of withdrawal are a "mismatch" between students and their field of study, financial difficulties, and poor quality of the student experience. He characterises the student experience as including the quality of teaching, the support provided by staff as well as the organisation of the programme. As most higher education institutions have taken an add-on approach, merely supplementing extra academic development programmes and life skills programmes to the traditional structure of the institution, Tinto (1997) warns that this only adds pressure for 'at-risk' students to assimilate into a system which may in itself be problematic. His approach involves shifting the focus towards the relationship the student has with the institution and ultimately pushes for a fundamental change in the higher education institution environment to one that is conducive to involvement, engagement and integrated application of relevant skills and knowledge.

Pityana (2005) feels that in South Africa, the fundamental problem of the transformation of higher education is the culture and ethos of historically white institutions, which alienate black students in ways that negatively affect their academic performance. Jama, Mapesela and Beylefeld speak to the complexity of the social and academic integration of black students from disadvantaged family and school backgrounds who often "come from families who are not educated and thus have no experience of supporting a child enrolled for higher education" (2008: 998). They stress the additional issue of language competence, stating

that these students often "have not fully acquired and grasped the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing" in English and are suddenly faced with lecturers who "ask questions or give assignments and tasks using terms such as 'critically analyse' or 'argue'."

In looking at the individualised university experience, on a deeply personal level, some black students in South African universities have been shown to experience a transformational introspective experience when attempting to navigate the world of the university where, and this is where the intersection of race and class is critical, they can be seen as, in effect, transitioning, to varying degrees, to a different social class. Soudien (2008) shows that in confronting the racism still very much thriving on university campuses in South Africa, both projected from staff and colleagues as well as institutionally woven into the very fabric of the university, some black students find themselves alienated at home while battling to assimilate on campus and in the process, come to reject their backgrounds, while others 'reach for the status' of their academic progress which is beyond that of their parents and successfully progress on their own accord, often with the support of their home familial and social networks. Important here is the very fact that diversification of higher education institutions has the potential to provide the opportunity for black students to deal with their racial identities in profound ways, 'reconstitute' it, and perhaps begin the process from the ground of integration and participation beyond superficial desegregation. This could be argued to be powerful grounds for social development and the redress for which the government aims and is responsible.

2.3 The University of Cape Town

Issues present in many South African universities can be seen to be reflected in the statistics and case studies emerging from the University of Cape Town.

2.3.1 Statistics on Undergraduate Programmes

This section provides data that helps explain the University of Cape Town's need for institutional strategies for increasing undergraduate student success and throughput particularly for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.

2.3.1.1 Undergraduate Student Access

Even in the few years between 2004 and 2008, The University of Cape Town has successfully increased the enrolment of black students into undergraduate programmes. In this time, the total enrolment of African, Coloured and Indian undergraduate South African students increased from 2960 to 3496, 2072 to 2466, and 1000 to 1124 respectively (University of Cape Town Institutional Planning Department, 2008).

One of the strategies used by UCT to specifically target the enrolment of educationally disadvantaged students is their Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP). According to UCT's Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), "[o]ver the past few years, many hundreds of these students have gained access who would not otherwise have been admitted to the institution on the basis of their school-leaving results; nevertheless, their graduation rate is substantially higher than that of comparable students who were accepted on the strength of their school results" (University of Cape Town Centre for Higher Education Development, 2009). It is stated that the main function of AARP is to target those students who have academic potential hidden behind their slightly lower school results. One method the university uses to identify these students is the UCT-developed National Benchmark Test, which attempts to assess "entry-level academic and quantitative literacy and mathematics proficiency" as well as "the relationship between entry level proficiencies and school-level exit outcomes".

2.3.1.2 Undergraduate Student Retention

There remains a racial disparity in undergraduate throughput rates across all faculties. When looking at the five year cohort survival analysis between 1999 intakes and 2003 intakes, the total number of students to complete their undergraduate bachelors' degree increased from 65 per cent to 70 per cent and while there was an increase across all racial groups, the average throughput of African and Coloured students has remained below average, from 52 per cent to 59 per cent between the 1999 and 2003 intakes for African students and between 53 per cent to 64 per cent for coloured students (University of Cape Town Institutional Planning Department, 2008).

UCT's primary response to the issue of retention is the network of staff and support systems in the form of Academic Development Programmes (ADPs). Currently, all faculties at UCT run ADPs, though their design and structures vary. The Centre for Higher Education Development states that "the most widely-used and successful ADP strategy for fostering access and success is the 'extended curriculum' model, in which substantial foundational provision is articulated within the mainstream curriculum, resulting in a lengthened degree programme that allows educationally disadvantaged students to develop firm academic foundations" (University of Cape Town Centre for Higher Education Development, 2009). CHED specifically claims that these programmes have "played a key role in enabling the growth of black student enrolment and graduation at UCT, and have achieved some highly encouraging success".

2.3.2 Academic Development Programmes

Although all Academic Development Programmes at UCT are different in their backgrounds and their programmatic structuring, a detailed look into one specific faculty at UCT and how their ADP works paints a clearer picture of what an ADP student's typical experience might be during their undergraduate career. This section looks specifically at the Law Faculty at the University of Cape Town and the undergraduate Academic Development Programme aimed at increasing the success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. A brief background establishes the changing demographics and success rates of students by race and

a thorough description of the Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme introduces the context that forms the basis of this study.

2.3.2.1 Background Information

The head coordinator of the Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme explained that the 2000 changeover of the law degree from a graduate to an undergraduate programme at the University of Cape Town was met with resistance from both the university and the law profession, but South Africa's Department of Justice successfully pushed the policy for universities in the country to offer undergraduate law programmes. Between the years of 2004 and 2008, UCT's Law Faculty has increased the total enrolment of black students into undergraduate programmes, with the total enrolment of African, Coloured and Indian undergraduate South African students increasing from 11 per cent to 18 per cent, 13 per cent to 15 per cent, and 7 per cent to 5 per cent respectively (University of Cape Town Institutional Planning Department, 2008). This increase has partially been accomplished as a result of the university's implementation of strategies specifically targeting the increased enrolment of black South African students. Admission into the Law Faculty is now based on a point system that takes into account students' matriculation results with a lower minimum point requirement for black students than for white students. Where white students need to achieve 42 points for consideration of admission, African students need to achieve 37 points.

The start of this change in the structure of the law degree resulted in significant failure rates for first year students in undergraduate law programmes at the University of Cape Town, with black South Africans being the most vulnerable group of students. There still remains a racial disparity in undergraduate throughput rates within the Law Faculty today. When looking at the five year cohort survival analysis between 1999 intakes and 2003 intakes, the total number of students to complete their undergraduate bachelors' degree increased from 38 per cent to 60 per cent and while there was an increase in enrolment across all racial groups, the average throughput of black students

shows skewed patterns, from 33 per cent to 46 per cent between the 1999 and 2003 intakes for African students, between 25 per cent to 83 per cent for coloured students, between 0 per cent to 100 per cent for Indian students, and between 57 per cent to 58 per cent for white students (University of Cape Town Institutional Planning Department, 2008). It is clear that African students in particular are struggling academically and graduating with degrees at well below average rates. It was in 2006 that UCT's Law Faculty, recognising the disparity between the number of black South African law graduates being generated compared to white, proposed the Academic Development Programme to increase the overall throughput of black students.

2.3.2.2 Structure of the Programme

The Law Faculty uses several strategies for isolating those students already admitted into the undergraduate law programme who might struggle academically. These students will ultimately be placed into the Academic Development Programme. Several factors are taken into account when assessing students for entry into the ADP including students' AARP test results, matriculation marks (specifically English marks), home language and previous educational background. Ideally, the assessments are aimed at finding students who come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds but who have potential for academic success due to their demonstrated work ethic and ability.

The undergraduate degree programme is structured in such a way that if a student fails more than three half-courses, he/she is not allowed to continue his/her studies unless he/she reapplies to the university or applies for readmission into the programme and passes strict readmission policies. For this reason, the ADP is designed to ensure that those students who are less prepared due to their educational backgrounds are given the support they need to succeed in their undergraduate career. The Law Faculty's ADP follows the extended curriculum model in which the total course of the undergraduate degree programme runs for five years rather than four. The first year of the mainstream programme is extended over the course of the ADP students' first two years.

Where mainstream students take seven courses in their first year, ADP students take three courses in their first year and four courses in their second year. These lectures are taught by one of the two ADP coordinators and students sit in lectures together as an ADP cohort rather than attending mainstream lectures alongside their other non-ADP colleagues. One first year course that is compulsory for ADP students is called "Word Power" and is specifically designed to build the foundations for academic reading and writing. In addition to the ADP students' average of seven hours of lectures per week, they are given five hours of workshops and tutorials per week to aid in their understanding of the material as well as provide extra skills and language building.

The Law Faculty's ADP is run by two coordinators who are responsible for the design and implementation of the programme. Coordinator A lectures ADP courses in Foundations of South African Law while Coordinator B lectures ADP courses in Law of Persons and Marriage. Coordinator A uses his extra five hours per week with the ADP students providing a revision of the students' lectures. He allows students to bring their own questions for him and attempts to build the students' skills through the course material. Each week he sets assignments for his students that pertain to the lecture material and runs classes that work like tutorials. Coordinator B uses her extra five hours per week presenting students with "problem questions" which are exam-orientated but also skills-based. She designs creative activities such as role playing to help students understand law cases and build debating skills. The coordinators aim to build the ADP students' academic skills through the course material rather than simply supplementing lectures. In addition to the extra attention given to ADP students by the coordinators of the programme, a senior PhD student who has a law degree and is employed by CHED's Writing Centre delivers classes to the students twice weekly which are designed to build students' academic reading and writing skills.

The 2008 ADP cohort is made up of 16 students and the 2009 cohort is made up of 12 students, both of which are predominantly made up of African students, but

which also have some coloured students. These two cohorts of students formed the basis of this study.

2.3.3 Case Studies on Academic Development Programmes

Since the foundation of UCT's Academic Development Programmes across all faculties in response to their clear undergraduate retention issue and the specific academic performance disparity across racial lines, several studies have emerged that have evaluated the effectiveness of these programmes and have attempted to theorise on potential factors contributing to undergraduate academic performance, specifically with regard to marginalised students coming from poor academic backgrounds. Several of these studies will be discussed here and their theories will be elaborated upon further in Chapter Three.

2.3.3.1 Theories on Increasing Retention

A study done in 1997 by Jawitz & Scott's shows that the ASPECT programme, designed for undergraduate engineering students at UCT, was motivated by the growing concern for imbalances in human resources development in South Africa in the areas of science and engineering and was originally implemented to increase the number of black engineering graduates from UCT by extending the first two years of the programme into three years and adding intensive support and additional learning activities. The authors' findings showed that the curriculum, standards of assessment and the teaching and learning environment are all factors contributing significantly to retention rates. The focus of these authors was not on the shortcomings of the students, but rather the design of the undergraduate programme as the link to improving academic success and throughput rates. As this programme incorporates an extended degree programme with supplemental support and activities, it attempts to both develop students' ability and increase their support network, however it fails to transcend the integrationist model that simply aims to assimilate students into the existing university system.

Turning to the health science faculty, Burch et. al.'s 2007 study focuses on the effect of the recently implemented problem-based learning (PBL) programmes on the students of the medical student intervention programme at UCT. Burch et al. explain that elsewhere in the world, PBL has raised concerns about the ability of educationally disadvantaged students to cope with the lack of structure PBL provides. This has resulted in many such students being excluded from these programmes. As the study shows however, there is potential in problem-based learning as retention rates have been shown to increase after its implementation, which the authors attribute to the programmes' focus on intensive group work. The Health Science programme's strategy focuses on developing students' skills by providing them an alternative mode of instruction.

2.3.3.2 The Impact of Student Adjustment

A general study of undergraduate students across all faculties and fields of study done by Petersen, Louw & Dumont (2009) focuses on adjustment to the university environment. Because the authors see adjustment of educationally disadvantaged students as a key determinant of academic performance, they centre their study around certain factors related to adjustment according to their founding in meta-analysis including help-seeking (student-faculty contact and utilisation of student support services), academic motivation and self-esteem. Their study surveys undergraduate students across a range of academic disciplines chosen strictly for their status of being supported by need-based financial aid. The findings suggest that self-determined motivational orientations such as intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, self esteem, perceived stress and academic overload are all significant predictors of adjustment and students who engage in their academics because they value it and consider it intrinsically important and personally relevant, rather than for extrinsic rewards are found to be better adjusted.

In reviewing the Science Faculty's programme, Davidowitz & Schreiber (2008) explain that the general response to the retention issue has been for universities to either target psycho-social and affective factors through mentoring

programmes, skills development programmes and orientations or to focus on cognitive and academic factors through access, bridging and foundation and extended programmes. These authors problematise the add-on skills development focus so common in these programmes stating that they do nothing to fundamentally challenge the university institution as a whole. Their study analysing the general science intervention programme at UCT targets the relationship between affective factors and academic performance and is founded in theories highlighting the alienation certain groups of students experience when finding themselves belonging neither to their context of origin nor to the context of their higher education institute. They draw on ideas of the potential negative affects of universities, which use assimilationist models when dealing with students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

The authors describe UCT's science intervention programme as a 'life skills development programme' which they feel "rests on the premise that the capacity for life skills, adjustment, coping, managing stress and personal development constitute affective, and thus 'underlying factors', which can significantly impact on efficiency rates at HE institutions" (2008: 194). They propose that "adjustment to university is mediated by assisting students in developing necessary life skills, increasing their self-esteem and motivation, reducing their stress levels, and developing the students' sense of belonging at UCT" (2008: 195). Their study shows that the programme's use of classes and workshops focused on group work, cooperative learning, coping and stress management, campus resources, assertiveness and communications, time management, study skills and examination competence lead to high levels of intrinsic motivation and attachment to the goals of UCT. However, the study also shows that students in the programme scored particularly low on the personal-emotional subscale of adjustment, which the authors say "gives an indication of the extent to which students internalise their difficulties" and suggests that these students may "locate any difficulties they might have within their own capacities and internalise the distress, rather than locating the difficulties outside of themselves, in their relationship with the institution or in the institutional context" (2008: 202).

2.4 Conclusion

Theories emerging from case studies on UCT's Academic Development Programmes point to the importance of adjustment and the connection to students' ability to contextualise their difficulties. This very strongly echoes the theories proposed by Hendricks et al. (1996) as well as the philosophy behind the one university's retention programme, called the Student Initiated Retention Programme, in which students are encouraged to develop a consciousness of their own identities within the context of the university. A deeper look into these and other studies as well as general theories on student adjustment will help develop a more comprehensive method for analysing the various factors that contribute to undergraduate students' adjustment to the university and their relationship to student success as well as provide a framework for understanding the complexities of the undergraduate student's navigation through the university experience.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK – Understanding the Undergraduate Student Experience

3.1 Introduction

It has been shown that black students are generally not finding the academic success in South African universities that would confirm a truly equitable educational system. In response to this, universities in South Africa have taken several different measures to bridge this gap and provide the support needed for these students to thrive through various programmes that provide supplementary support and extended degree programmes to educationally disadvantaged students. However, as these programmes choose students based on previous schooling, matriculation scores and benchmark tests designed to identify entry-level academic proficiencies, their rationale could be considered to be predicated on a deficit model, which tends to place the responsibility of adjustment and success on the student rather than the institution. Black students are not only admitted into undergraduate programmes by different standards of measure, but their academic "shortcomings" are dealt with by way of assimilationist models that attempt to arm them with the tools that will help them succeed within the institutions' existing structures. This chapter highlights several factors contributing to undergraduate student adjustment to university life as well as existing theories behind increasing student success and develops a conceptual and analytical framework for understanding the complexities of the undergraduate student's navigation through the university system.

3.2 Student Adjustment to the University

This section explores existing theories on the student experience with a particular focus on the unique and complex experience of marginalised students entering and navigating the university. A definition of adjustment is established and the issues universities face trying to facilitate student adjustment are explored.

3.2.1 Theories on Integration and Success of Minority Students

Bourdieu's extensive body of work suggests the importance of cultural capital, and his notions of cultural reproduction have been used to explain differential experiences in schools based on class, gender and race/ethnicity (Dika & Singh, 2002). Robbins explains Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital as something that "does not possess absolute value which is quantifiable" but rather "possesses value in exchange and the exchange is a social struggle" (2005: 23). Furthermore, social exclusion of the most disadvantaged classes is seen as a continuous and complex process and "[t]here is no one Culture… to be acquired by the socially deprived which will remedy their supposed deficiencies" (p. 23). While Bourdieu does stress the importance of economic capital in the contemporary capitalist world, it is essential to make the connection between his theories of cultural capital and those of his notion of "field" in order to avoid mistaking his way of thinking as reductionist and determinist and to understand the depth of his view.

Savage, Warde and Devine explain that "Bourdieu argues for the differentiation of social relations into a series of discrete 'fields', each with their own 'stakes' around which contestants struggle and jostle for position" (2005: 39). While these "agents are conditioned in their strategic behaviour by their location in the competitive, game-playing character of the field" and "[t]heir stock of capital is a crucial resource in allowing them to gain advantages within the fields", Bourdieu recognises that "capital is field specific and does not necessarily allow advantage to be translated into other fields" (p. 39). He stresses the characteristic of class to arise not just out of a person's societal location, but also his or her individual agency. This complex notion of "field" is crucial when considering the experience of previously disadvantaged students entering the game of higher education without the rules embedded in their cultural lineage. Naidoo explains Bourdieu's conceptualisation of higher education as a "sorting machine that selects students according to an implicit social classification and reproduces the same students according to an explicit academic classification... without explicitly recognising,

and in most cases, denying, the link between social properties dependent on social origin (such as class) and academic selection and evaluation" thus "reproduc[ing] the principles of social class and other forms of domination under the cloak of academic neutrality" (2004: 459-460). Bourdieu's 'fields' and cultural capital highlight the complexities of those hidden underlying factors that play a role in a student's ability to manage the university system and how much, if any, autonomy the student has to determine his/her own fate within the system.

Walpole (2003) isolates Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' as an important key to understanding how students navigate their educational experience. She defines habitus as "a web of perceptions about opportunities and the possible and appropriate responses in any situation" (p. 49). Reay explains that "[a]ccording to Bourdieu it is through the workings of habitus that practice (agency) is linked with capital and field (structure)" (2004: 432). She says that "Bourdieu views the dispositions, which make up habitus, as the products of opportunities and constraints framing the individual's earlier life experiences" (p. 433). Bourdieu "conceptualizes practices in higher education in terms of strategic 'position-takings' that depend for their form on the meeting of an agent's 'habitus'" and that "mirror the field of positions" such that "agents attempt to both increase their volume of capital and make the form of capital underpinning their position the dominant measure of achievement within the field" (Maton, 2005: 690). Hunter explains that "Bourdieu's emphasis on social structures is balanced by his conceptualization of agency" but "acting as an agent may be mediated by influences that are beyond conscious realization", which might explain why "agents may actually reproduce the very structures that limit them" (2004: 176). Hunter sees this as the very manifestation of culture, which she explains is "embodied and reproduced through… the interaction of field and habitus, through social structures and agents" and is maintained through actions that "occur through processes that may be beyond conscious control or awareness of the individual" (2004: 177). It is the notion that habitus generally manifests outside of the realm of consciousness that the idea of a student's very culture playing a role in his/her success in the university 'field' becomes problematic

when one considers that the university itself is built upon societal foundations that dominate and marginalise.

White maintains that for marginalised students who do not encounter inclusivity at their institution, "the primary form of struggle comes in self-alienation from the societal systems that perpetuate inequalities" (2007: 153). This is critical considering the findings of Ochse, who says that "[a] number of major cognitive theories (such as locus of control; attribution theory; expectancy-value theory; self-concept theories; efficacy theory and self-worth theory) suggest that unsuccessful students may be handicapped by being pessimistic, that is by believing they have little ability and by not expecting to be successful" (2005: 334). A growing school of theorists have tied social and academic integration to persistence. A student's higher level of integration has been shown to increase the student's commitment to the university institution, which is linked to the ultimate commitment to completing the undergraduate degree (Tinto, 1975). Building on the work of Tinto, Donovan (1984) shows that for minority students in particular, academic integration has a stronger impact on persistence than previous educational background. However, Eimers and Pike (1997) suggest that when compared to white students, minority students are more likely to experience feelings of isolation and alienation in the university setting, both of which have been linked to withdrawal and dropout.

Minority students reportedly "had lower levels of academic and social integration, perceived quality, and institutional commitment" as well as "higher levels of perceived discrimination than did nonminority students" (Eimers & Pike, 1997: 87). With regards to marginalisation based on class, Mann describes the experience of low income, working class students in the university setting as feeling like "stranger[s] in a foreign land" and explains that if this reality is not validated in the discourse of the institution, these students "[have] to live on [the] margins and interstices" (2001: 11). She feels that under these circumstances, the student "either has to withdraw their participation, or conform to what is required and, in the process, lose their capacity to connect with their own desire, voice and language", a process which leads the student to

be “estranged, both from this new land, but also from their own language, culture and desire” (p. 12). Arce emphasises the possibility that “the attainment of upward socioeconomic mobility (‘success’) and structural assimilation (‘acceptance’) must be paid for with cultural/behavioral assimilation (loss of ethnic knowledge and behavior) and identificational assimilation (loss of ethnic identity)” (1981: 181). This is echoed in the work of Kuh and Love (2000), which shows that persistence is inversely related to the distance between a student’s culture of origin and culture of immersion. Minority students who are not members of the dominant culture upon which the university system is built are put into a position in which they have to negotiate two different and potentially contending cultures or identities, which can result in a student having to assimilate to the university culture by letting go, in some ways, of their ethnic culture or identity. It has been proposed that this process and experience contributes to the relative underachievement of minority students and could partially explain the lower levels of academic success of black students in South African universities.

The University of Cape Town’s Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Publc Higher Education Institutions states that “[r]acism engenders deep feelings of loneliness and alienation” resulting from the experience of first coming to the university which one black UCT student likened to ‘coming to a new country’ (Department of Education, 2008: 75). Many students, however, are able to undergo a transformation that enables them to successfully negotiate their multiple identities and navigate university life while still maintaining their affiliation to their home culture. Guiffrida suggests that to move Tinto’s theory “away from an integrationist perspective that emphasizes student adaptation to the majority culture” and towards one that “values diversity and encourages colleges and universities to affirm and honor diverse student cultures,” the notion of ‘integration’ must be replaced with that of ‘connection’ in order to “recognize that students can become comfortable in the college environment without abandoning supportive relationships at home or rejecting the values and

norms of their home communities" even in the face of discrimination encountered on campus (2006: 457-8).

Hendricks et al. (1996) claim that minority students who have persisted despite experiencing perceived racial prejudice have developed the mechanism of depersonalising incidents of prejudice in order to cope and succeed academically. These students conceivably contextualise the experience of prejudice and attribute it to external forces rather than assuming and internalising personal fault and self-blame. This possibility is significant considering that academic development programmes designed for black students are focused on providing academic support only. If a student's academic success is linked to integration and minority students have an added layer of difficulty to their adjustment to the university, then a black student in an academic development program at UCT would conceivably have to develop this "mechanism of depersonalising incidents of prejudice" on his/her own, outside of the structures of support provided to them by the university.

3.2.2 Defining Adjustment and the Role of the University

Petersen et. al define adjustment as "a multi-dimensional process of interaction between an individual and his/her environment, in an attempt to bring about harmony between the demands and needs of the individual and his/her environment" (2009: 100). In looking at the multi-dimensional nature of adjustment, it can be seen as comprised of four aspects including "academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment" (Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008: 195). Petersen et al. stress that "economically and educationally disadvantaged students are particularly vulnerable to adjustment difficulties in making the transition from secondary school to university" (2009: 100). In the particular scenario of these students, Kuh and Love (2000) state that "students from cultures incongruent with the dominant culture of their campus can either acclimate to that dominant culture or seek membership in one or more subcultures in order to increase their likelihood of

success" (cited in Museus, 2008: 572). As discussed previously, this negotiation itself can contribute to adjustment problems.

In the light of this, Tierney (1997) feels that universities have the power to shape their dominant campus cultures in such a way that includes and engages the wide range of cultural diversity in the student body. Museus explains that "[c]ulture is both something that an institution *has*, such as core values and rich history, and something that an institution *does* that affects both institutional and individual outcomes" (2008: 569). To build on Tierney's argument, perhaps it is the responsibility of the university to create a university culture that fosters the success of all students rather than just those who embody the dominant university culture. Petersen et. al explain that academic performance is "the single most revealing indicator that a student is coping with the academic demands of the university and is thus likely to graduate" and that "[t]here is much evidence to indicate that adjustment in turn is a key determinant of academic performance" (2009: 100). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that for universities to increase academic success, particularly for marginalised students, student adjustment must be one of the key targets.

If adjustment involves finding a 'harmony' between the needs of the student and the demands of the university, then a key problematic is whether the demands and needs of both are known, defined and made explicit. In the case of the university, students are caught in the middle of the university's need to attend to multiple roles. The university is straddled between tending to 1) the global or universal pursuit of research and knowledge production; 2) the national transformational agenda, which includes the equitable production of a viable labour force for a globalised economy; and 3) the local, internal needs of its students with a specific focus on inclusion and redress. Because of the multifaceted nature of the role of the university, it is often contradictory and conflicted in its articulation of its actual position and who or what it aims to serve. Naidoo feels that "[i]n an era where both academic and economic forces exert powerful structuring effects on universities, the field of higher education is likely to become the locus of power struggles over the legitimate capital required

to attain dominance" (2004: 469). Given its pivotal position as both producers of knowledge and producers of workers, the university stands to play a significant role in realising South Africa's vision of redress and ultimately equality and equity, as long as it remains open to transforming itself constantly to meet the changing needs of the nation and more importantly, declare itself as such. In articulating its own objectives, there must be a strong alignment between the goals of the university and those of the nation. Further complicating the matter, structures such as academic development programmes in place at the university that are designed to target previously disadvantaged students are similarly caught between the demands of the university and the professionalism it expects and the needs of their students and the empathetic alignment they might wish to take. On the other hand, it is questionable whether students themselves are clear about their requirements of the university, and so, are they in a position to demand and fight for them?

The question then arises, in a higher education institution like the University of Cape Town, what obligation does the university have to its students given its power, as it both maintains the right to pass and fail students, and on a deeper level, also controls the strings of redress, including increasing the access and throughput of black South African students? The University of Cape Town, like any other higher education institution in South Africa, is under pressure to respond to the government's call for higher education transformation that involves increased participation and success of students from historically marginalised groups. This is not a new problem for universities worldwide and there are a number of theories about how universities can increase student success, particularly amongst marginalised students who constitute the largest group of students who struggle academically and who do not complete their studies to graduation. These are discussed below.

3.3 Strategies for Increasing Student Success

Given the empirical insights discussed above, universities in general have developed three main responses specifically aimed at increasing the academic

success and ultimately the throughput of those students that the university has identified as having educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and who therefore are at risk of struggling academically. These three key theories of institutional strategies for increasing student success are:

- Social Integration
- Multiculturalism
- Conscientisation

This section gives an overview of these theories and their implications for the South African university context.

3.3.1 Social Integration

The social integration position focuses on the sense of connection that students have with the institution and argues that it is this connection, or lack thereof, that is the key to students' varying levels of success. Tierney (1992) notes that generally, minority students are forced to assimilate to the institutional structures of the university in order to integrate by learning and adopting the dominant university culture and way of thinking. However, Tinto (1993) stressed the importance of not placing the burden of establishing this connection on the student. Rather, the process of integration is seen as a responsibility of the institution. Tierney criticises the social integration approach for viewing the student as the main problem and suggesting that the student lacks a connection to the university rather than the university lacking the ability to adapt to the diverse needs and talents of individual students.

3.3.2 Multiculturalism

The multiculturalist approach to increasing student success can be seen as a variant of the more general model of social networking that is salient in the context of a highly culturally diverse university campus. Multiculturalists tend to place the emphasis of student retention and success on the need for institutional

transformation. The university is seen as a place that can alienate and hinder the success of minority students who may not fit into the mainstream university culture and who feel disaffected by the institutional policies and practices. Multiculturalists thus call for a transformation of the university that allows for inclusivity and representation of all cultures present in the student body. However, Žižek warns of the danger that lies beneath the ideology of multiculturalism in its propensity to hide the reality of racism within its boasted universalism. He states that "multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism" that "'respects' the Other's identity, conceiving the Other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position" (1997: 44). This manifests in "today's critical theory, in the guise of 'cultural studies'" which "is doing the ultimate service to the unrestrained development of capitalism by actively participating in the ideological effort to render its massive presence invisible" (p. 46). Kapp and Bangeni's study of undergraduate students at the University of Cape Town revealed that "their consciousness mirrors a 'new' South African political ideology that is drawn from models of multiculturalism within global capitalism" but that "in lived reality… [t]he notion of an 'African Renaissance'" is only "symbolic in nature" (2009: 8). Critics of multiculturalism such as Žižek and Kapp & Bangeni remain sceptical of whether there is potential for transformative power in the multicultural approach or if it simply serves to mask the reality of institutionalised racism.

Carter (2008: 491-2) applies critical race theory, critical race achievement ideology and the myth of mediocrity to show that in order for black students to maintain school success and a positive affiliation with one's racial group, students must align with all six of the following components:

> *1) believe in themselves and feel that individual effort and self-accountability lead to school success;*
> *2) view achievement as a human character trait that can define membership in their racial group;*

3) possess a critical consciousness about racism and the challenges it presents to their present and future opportunities as well as those of other members of their racial group;

4) possess a pragmatic attitude about the utility of schooling for their future as members of a subdominant racial group;

5) value multicultural competence as a skill for success;

6) develop adaptive strategies for overcoming racism in the school context that allow them to maintain high academic achievement and a strong racial/ethnic self-concept.

This would suggest that for universities to provide a space in which a diverse range of students can thrive, they need to foster the diversity in the range of cultures and identities present amongst their students. Walker (2003: 176) feels that higher education pedagogy needs "to recognise and value the variety of difference and the cultural resources students bring to learning", warning that "[r]epeated encounters with non-recognition, misrecognition, indifference and disrespect by the culturally dominant other produces 'the hidden injuries' of class/gender/race". He feels that to provide students the recognition they need to develop a successful and powerful learning identity, a pedagogy must be developed which involves "processes of the educational development of individuals in participatory and inclusive learning communities in which gaining knowledge and successful learner identities went hand in hand" (2003: 176). This is supported by Bourdieu's notion that "[s]tudents who reject the necessary culture of the school as unfamiliar need to be provided with a universal pedagogy in order to gain access to the necessary curriculum" and places the institution as carrying this obligation, stating that it is the university that "is both accountable for inequality of educational opportunity by administrative definition and its effective cause by theoretical fiat" (Nash, 2005: 603).

Osterlind (2008: 80) stresses that "Bourdieu sees the political in the personal, recognising how inner structures support and maintain social structures and vice versa". Mills (2008) suggests that the way to improve the educational outcomes of marginalised is to link pedagogy to social change and connect

critical learning to the experiences students bring to the institution, creating a space for contestation, resistance and possibility and allowing for, at the very least, an exposure of what Žižek says has been made invisible and at the deepest level, the development of a "critical consciousness" as Carter suggests. A possible expression of this can be seen in the third strategy discussed below.

3.3.3 Conscientisation and Student Self-Empowerment

One radical alternative theory and strategy for increasing the academic success of traditionally underperforming students emerges from the United States in the form of the Student-Initiated Retention Projects (SIRPs) at the University of California, Berkeley. In reviewing their programme, Maldonado, Rhoads & Buenavista (2005: 609) argued that both dominant models for improving student performance, namely social integration and multicultural frameworks, "fail to acknowledge the importance of the role students and student groups play in mediating their own environments". The three themes defining the philosophy behind the SIRPs are developing knowledge, skills and networks; building community ties and commitments; and challenging social and institutional norms. It can be shown that the first two themes are, to varying degrees, a part of the programmes commonly implemented in UCT's Academic Development Programmes. However, the third theme, involving the challenging of social and institutional norms, stands alone. The proponents of the SIRPs feel that the first two themes alone are merely social integrationist strategies which "would only serve to reproduce the dominant culture and the assimilation of students of colour into the mainstream institutional culture" (p. 630). They feel that "success partially involves adapting to the ways and norms of a culturally different social world, however adaptation does not necessarily have to involve a loss of one's own cultural heritage and identity" and "the process of adapting, as framed by SIRPs, amounts to developing a separate consciousness about oneself within the university context".

The philosophy behind the SIRPs is consistent with Freire's notion of a "pedagogy of the oppressed" and calls to mind his idea of *conscientizafao*, or

conscientisation, which at its core sees advantage in students working to benefit themselves and holding to the notion that "taking action for oneself and one's community is self-empowering and likely to reinforce one's commitment to education" (p. 632). The SIRP ideology takes a cultural validation perspective, which is grounded in the notion that the academic success of minority students should involve experiences that are culturally validating as opposed to mere assimilation to the dominant culture. Maldonado, et al.'s study revealed that students of colour were better able to confront alienation when provided with "activities designed to reinforce cultural roots, create educational opportunities for students to discuss and reflect on group struggle, and promote the kind of critical thinking students need to make sense of the locations of their families and communities within the broader socioeconomic context" (p. 631). In the SIRP, organisers "challenge students to understand the cultural knowledge and social connections needed to negotiate the dominant culture" and "to confront university structures, policies, and practices that have situated their own knowledge as irrelevant and their own identities as marginal". In addition, students are challenged "to confront their own individual and collective behaviors, attitudes, and social practices that may contribute to marginality and alienation" (p. 631).

The result of these efforts has been not only a confrontation of the alienation students feel resulting from identities formed in the context of a dominant culture, but also an acquisition or re-framing of the cultural capital needed to succeed in an institution predominantly defined by "cultural others" through a collective and personal raising of socio-political consciousness. The philosophy behind the SIRP thus places the student at the centre of the retention strategy, acknowledging and fostering the student's own awareness of his/her precise needs for institutional transformation. The very fact that students themselves design, develop, implement and evaluate the programmes and activities that serve their own communities and interests calls to mind Freire's "education as liberation" and hooks' "education as a practice of freedom" in that it strives for transformation and reconstruction from the bottom up.

3.4 Manifestations of Students' Socio-Political Consciousness and Students' Shifting Identities at UCT

The idea of conscientisation and self-empowerment connects with Hendricks et al.'s aforementioned theory that those minority students who have been successful in the face of racial prejudice did so by depersonalising the incidents of prejudice they experienced. In the light of Maldonado, Rhoads and Buenavista's study, it could be hypothesised that these students possessed or developed a level of consciousness that enabled them to see their discrimination in the context of their historical, cultural, political and social time and space, and cope with this reality rather than internalising it in a negative way which would result in academic failure. For the black undergraduate students in Soudien's case study at UCT (2008), the discrimination and subsequent alienation experienced navigating the university experience can manifest as pain and maladjustment or as empowerment and success.

Soudien's study revealed that "[t]he full burden of the racial experience—decoding the social spaces in which they found themselves—was being placed on black students. White students, black students felt, were not required to do any reflecting on their situation. Their cultural orientations meshed perfectly with those of the institution. Feelings of inferiority and a lack of worth were pervasive amongst students in academic development programmes" (Soudien, 2008: 669). Soudien highlights the contradictory nature of statements made in institutional climate surveys conducted at UCT by explaining that "[w]hile surveys such as these paint a vivid picture of the racial frustration of students, there is an intense desire on the part of the students, reflecting what Cooper and Subotzky (2001) call middle-class aspiration, to feel at home" (2008: 669). Some are even able to "adapt positively to how they fit into the institution and hold on to their identities in a way which affirms their pasts and their futures" by "go[ing] through deep transformations of their self-identities" (p. 673). This adds a deeper level to the theory that academic integration, and in turn success, of minority students is affected by the experience of negotiating the clash of their own culture with that of the university a struggle which Kapp and Bangeni

describe as "be[ing] as much about finding a site where they felt a sense of belonging as it was to succeeding academically" (2009: 4).

According to Soudien's study, at UCT, some black students not only perceive discrimination and experience alienation because of it, but are both aware of the relative ease with which their white counterparts navigate the university system, and also simultaneously desire to fit into the institutional culture; while other black students have survived and thrive by developing a strategy for negotiating their own identity within the university culture. Furthermore, because improving language and academic skills "becomes inextricably tied to becoming proficient in the dominant discourse, students often have to deal with challenging tensions around identity. For example, English, the medium of instruction in the institution, is perceived by participants as the language of progress and upward mobility, but, within communities, is (simultaneously) also negatively associated with assimilating into 'white'/Western ways and losing touch with home norms and values" (Kapp & Bangeni, 2009: 5). This is described as students having to occupy an ambivalent space and negotiating what are often conflicting discourses.

Kapp and Bangeni's three-year case study at UCT tracked twenty students from disadvantaged backgrounds over the course of their undergraduate degrees and explores the "connections between their language and literacy attitudes and practices and their struggles with multiple, often conflicting discourse" (2009: 4). They found that "Viewed over time, their struggles seemed to be as much about finding a site where they felt a sense of belonging as it was to succeed academically" and while the students in the study "start off trying to maintain a notion of single identity," by the end of their undergraduate careers, they tended to "become adept, self-conscious and less conflicted about shifting identity in order to fit into particular contexts" (p. 5).

Kapp and Bangeni described students' early undergraduate experiences as emotionally charged and marked by alienation and the phenomenon of feeling different and because of this, silenced. Still, students maintained a strong

attachment to the university, as it was perceived as being a key to upward mobility for them. They experienced an increasing alienation from home caused by "their growing critique of home discourses, their increasing use of English and shifts in their tastes" (p. 10). Many reported that they felt alienated around their friends from home because they were perceived as elitist or labelled as "white" and "their efforts to re-connect within their communities were rejected" (p. 10). Over time, the students' perspectives changed and their ability to cope with the multiple and often conflicting demands on their identities increased as they "become less conflicted about this situation over time, rationalizing the shifts they have to engage in as a function of living in a transitional time and in a diverse context" (p. 14).

By the end of their undergraduate careers, many of these students had developed a keenly critical consciousness and for them, "the notion that social and cultural boundaries are constructed and can be transgressed was liberating" (2009: 9). One student explained, "I am proud to say… I can freely cross the boundaries of another culture and find commonness within that culture with which I can communicate… Culture does indeed change, because it is not organic but social, which means it can be unlearned and redefined" (p. 9). Similarly, another student explained, "[w]hat I have been taught about God, females and males, the world is not necessarily true or wrong – not everything is black and white… I have learnt that human beings are not passive; they question things, its roots and how things become universally accepted (the norm)" (p. 12). Furthermore, these students "saw the university institutional environment as a microcosm of the transition of the broader society and retained the belief… that they and the institution were engaged in a process of transformation" (p. 8). It is important to note that the students participating in Kapp and Bangeni's study were Social Science students taking courses in Social Work and Political Studies and so their discipline involved debate and reflective writing around personal, community, cultural, social and political issues. It is equally important to note that 100 per cent of the twenty students in this cohort graduated with undergraduate degrees, compared to 62 per cent of their mainstream counterparts. Perhaps in this context, these students' developed level of

consciousness of the factors at play in their context when entering and navigating the university influenced how they experienced their encounters with what was essentially a new cultural environment. The discipline and course itself may have provided the opportunity to reflect on and confront their alienation, which Maldonado, Rhoads and Buenavista (2005) claims is essential for the adjustment of students of colour.

3.5 Potential Implications: Developing a Hypothesis

To return to Bourdieu's notions of habitus and cultural capital, is important to bear in mind that though the concept of habitus clearly relates to how much cultural capital one has, a person from a lower class may or may not be aware of their relative lack of cultural capital and unlikeliness to succeed in the higher education system (Dumais, 2002). In the context of a university, undergraduate students enter as players in the game of higher education, but as Hunter explains, "[o]ne does not necessarily play the game consciously" (2004: 178). Important here is Bourdieu's concept of "illusio" which can be seen as the investment a "player" has in maintaining "the game". Bourdieu claims that "one is born into the game, with the game; and the relation of investment, illusio, is made more total and unconditional by the fact that it is unaware of what it is" (1990: 67). Dumais feels that this can mean that "lower-class students tend to self-select themselves out... on the basis of their views of what is possible and what is not" but also says that in some cases, "exceptional students from the lower class may see the accumulation of cultural capital as a way to overcome the obstacles that are typical for those in their class position (2002: 47). This idea is supported by Walpole, who feels that while a student with a lower socio-economic status (SES) might have lower aspirations and deploy educational strategies which make them less successful at achieving their desired social profits, "habitus has a dynamic component and an individual can adopt new elements as a result of novel experiences, historical changes in the material environment, exposure to another individual's habitus, or associating with people who originate from a different habitus, all of which are possible in the college environment" (2003: 50). This could manifest in students from

disadvantaged backgrounds who find themselves at elite universities actually leveraging their awareness of their social standing to ease their adjustment to the university and fuel their academic success. This would confirm the SIRP theory of student retention, which centres around fostering student consciousness to ultimately increase student success.

To return to the issue of student adjustment to the university and the attempt to find "harmony between the demands and needs of the individual and his/her environment" (Petersen et. al, 2009: 100), it is evident that "a game is going on within the game which is not reducible to the objective rules of the game, and players have to use their cultural literacy to negotiate a context which is never officially articulated" (Schirato & Webb, 2002: 263). Furthermore, "the fact that a field is always subject to the vicissitudes of both internal and external pressures means that the literacy Bourdieu identifies in practical knowledge must be informed, at least potentially, by an awareness of the game that goes into making the game" (Schirato & Webb, 2002: 265).

Paralleling the idea of conscientisation, "[t]hrough understanding the construction of knowledge that frames the field, more students might become more aware of the discourses operating as well as the need to critically act towards these discourses" which calls for "an awareness of the complicit or agentic participation of teachers and students in reproducing discourses and circles of influence… to be raised" (Hunter, 2004: 189). It would follow that by becoming aware of the nature of these complex social processes, students "may be able to critique their own social construction and positioning within the social processes imposed in institutions such as schooling" (p. 189). It could be hypothesised that this would in turn lead to students, like those in Soudien's (2008) study as well as those in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study, being able to adapt to their positioning in the university 'field' while still maintaining their own cultural identity, thus maximising adjustment and increasing academic success. That 100 per cent of the students in the undergraduate cohort that formed the focus of Kapp and Bangeni's study succeeded academically is significant, and offers a core layer to the proposed hypothesis. It is clear that

these students developed a self-awareness and self-consciousness over the course of their undergraduate careers, perhaps in part due to their specific discipline of study and the nature of the work that was asked of them. Is there a link between their academic success and this transformation they underwent, which enabled them to successfully negotiate their fluid and multilayered identities? Can parallels be drawn between the experience of these students as well as those in Soudien's study of racial identities and the first and second year undergraduates in the Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme who formed the basis of this particular study?

3.6 Summary and Conclusion

With the UCT Academic Development Programme case studies and several theorists pointing towards the importance of students' adjustment to the university for their academic success, it is necessary to look further into the factors contributing to their adjustment or lack thereof. It has been shown that one factor of maladjustment might be students' inability to locate their own difficulties in the institutional context, indicating a need for an exploration of students' own consciousness of their institutional context. There is a multitude of theories that attempt to provide strategies to best combat the academic issues that arise when students from poor educational backgrounds find themselves in an alienating university institution. Most models tend to focus on characteristics and skills that marginalised students lack, while others stress the importance of the conscientisation of students to allow them to contextualise the various institutional barriers they will inevitably encounter throughout their undergraduate careers. Combining Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital, field and habitus with the implications of studies pointing to the potentially powerful adjustment mechanism of conscientisation, provides a tool for analysing the experiences of students with previously disadvantaged backgrounds who find themselves entering the world of higher academia by way of an Academic Development Programme specifically designed to address their deficits. Given the context of these Academic Development Programmes, which target students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, they often produce

demographics that show an alignment of educational background to race and class. This study attempts to explore these students' consciousness of their own social, political and historical context and how they understand their place within the university with a specific focus on whether this understanding is enabling or disabling in terms of their adjustment to the university and its institutional culture.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As discussed, research suggests that academic adjustment is related to a student's integration into the university culture. In practice, this materialises in an inverse relationship between a student's adjustment and the distance between his/her culture of origin and culture of immersion, a problematic captured in the main research question of '**What is the relationship between students' socio-political consciousness and their adjustment to the university?'**

The sample chosen is representative of those marginalised students for whom the distance between their culture of origin and their culture of immersion has been designated by the university as being large enough such that they require a specialised academic programme designed to bridge the gap between the background they bring and that which is expected by the university.

This chapter provides the rationale for choosing a case study approach. It then describes the research instruments and design used and discusses the sampling, data capturing and research limitations.

4.2 The Case Study Approach

As indicated, the purpose of this case study is to explore the role of students' consciousness of their socio-historical context with regards to student adjustment to the university experience. The nature of this area of research called for a case study approach for several reasons. Because this study attempts to explore the complex and multifaceted student experience as well as the highly subjective consciousness of the students, a design was needed that addressed not only the complexity of a student's personal experiences, but also their contexts. Cohen, Manion and Morrison speak to the nature of contexts in sociological and educational research, explaining that "case studies investigate

and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance" (2000: 181). As "[c]ase studies recognize the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths", this method will serve to investigate the 'conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants' (184). More specifically in the case of this study, these 'viewpoints' include not only a student's socio-political consciousness, but also his/her dynamic with regard to the multifaceted aspects of undergraduate university life.

The voices of the undergraduate students in University of Cape Town's Law Department Academic Development Programme are presented to illustrate how students' consciousness of one's own experience and social, political and historical context impacts on adjustment in terms of the four dimensions of adjustment defined earlier – including academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment. In addition, alternate dimensions of adjustment are explored. These particular students' stories are interpreted both through the lens of research that examines the factors impacting general student adjustment and academic success and that of students in Academic Development Programmes at the University of Cape Town, as well as through the theoretical framework established, building upon the evaluations of the various strategies for increasing student success as well as Bourdieu's notions of cultural capital, field and habitus. Bourdieu's lens helps to illuminate those facets of both the individual and his/her context that are otherwise hidden by conventional notions of the student experience. Mills and Gale explain that "[u]tilizing Bourdieu's theoretical perspective" when conducting research "requires researchers to look at the dynamic interaction between individuals and the surroundings in which they find themselves and situate their accounts within a larger historical, political, economic and symbolic context" (2007: 440). While Bourdieu suggests that we "view individuals as actively engaged in creating their social worlds, his method emphasizes the way in which 'the structures of those worlds is already predefined by broader racial, gender and class relations'" (Reay, 2004: 439). Hence, this study attempts to examine what could be seen as the link between the active engagement of students and the predefined

structures that bind them: their own consciousness of the reality of their context and the possibility of the limitations of their autonomy and power.

4.3 Research Instruments

This section details the various methods of field research used in this study. Due to the complex nature of the field of inquiry, it is best approached from more than one angle, as "[g]ood case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence" (AERA, 2006: 115). This is in order to "'triangulate' or establish converging lines of evidence to make [the] findings as robust as possible" (p. 115). To do this, the fieldwork included questionnaires and focus groups for the students, and interviews with the programme convenors.

4.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are used to gather basic information about the students' backgrounds and the experiences they have had so far at the university starting from the application process through to their current experience in both the academic as well as social realms of university life.

4.3.1.1 Rationale for Using Questionnaires

Due to the sensitive nature of some areas of this study, such as the effect of race and class on these students' personal experience at the university, it was necessary to provide them the opportunity to share their thoughts with some degree of anonymity and privacy. Responding to a questionnaire gave a written outlet for these students' words and thoughts and did so without the urgency or the stress of in-person dialogue or discussion. Questionnaires are thus used here as one medium for the students to voice themselves for the main reason that "anonymity can be assured and questions can be written for specific purposes" (Opie, 2004: 95). The questionnaire used was mostly made up of closed questions, but as open questions help to obtain "replies which reflect the

spontaneity of the respondent in their own language" (Opie, 2004: 107), a section at the end allowed students to add their own input in an unstructured manner. Unfortunately, only 7 out of 20 students left comments here.

4.3.1.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire designed for this study was an adaptation and modification of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989), developed for widespread use in American colleges to flag potential areas of difficulty in adjustment for the purposes of targeted retention efforts. It is used as a standard benchmark assessment to determine undergraduate students' adjustment to university. Bearing in mind potential issues with compatibility outside of the context of the time and place in which it was originally developed, the adapted Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire provides useful comparison to a base of work previously done. Some of the sixty-seven questions in the original questionnaire have been omitted and some have been added to better serve the inquiries of this particular study. In addition, rather than the original 9-point response format, students were asked to respond on a 7-point spectrum from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" such that the higher the numbered response to positive statements, the higher the student's level of adjustment with regards to that particular statement. This modification was made in an attempt to streamline the process of completing the questionnaire for the students as well as to provide a simpler but concrete picture of adjustment to springboard a deeper inquiry through the subsequent focus group discussions. See Appendix A for the original SACQ as well as the adapted questionnaire used for this study.

The SACQ is made up of four subsections including academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment. The questions that were added to the questionnaire dealt with the students' perceptions of their experience at UCT as well as their experience of negotiating their home life with their university life. The questionnaire also contained a comment section at the end allowing the students to share additional

information that came up for them throughout the completion of the questionnaire. Opie warns about the "tendency to resist writing answers to such questions" often "because of the time needed to do them, in that one needs to think more about composing answers or, in some cultural settings, a feeling of personal inadequacy in being able to answer in the language required." (2004: 107). While the responses here were indeed few, this section was also intended to prompt potential focus group topics and indeed provided helpful ideas as well as valuable insights.

4.3.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups are used to delve deeper into the dynamics of university life and the students' relationship with the university. As indicated, the guiding questions for the focus groups were developed after reviewing the responses to the questionnaires and were based upon areas that warranted elaboration and further inquiry.

4.3.2.1 Rationale for Holding Focus Groups

Allowing students to voice their opinions together and the potential for group interaction sheds light on the nature of the student experience as well as the students' collective perception of their navigation of the university. Bogdan and Biklen explain that "[w]hen reflecting together on some topic, subjects often can stimulate each other to talk" revealing a "cue to the language [they] might share" (1992: 100). The purpose of focus groups then is to provide an unstructured forum with "broadly defined objectives" but with the leeway for students to have "a great deal of freedom in his or her responses" (Verma & Mallick, 1999: 123). The unstructured and open-ended nature of the questioning is conducive to gaining an understanding particularly when "dealing with issues about which the interviewee feels very sensitive" and has the potential to "reveal attitudes or further lines of inquiry which the interviewer had not previously considered" (p. 123). Verma and Mallick stress that this method of data collection could "result in revelations obtainable in no other way" (p. 123). In addition, focus group

discussions allow for follow-up questions and deeper questioning according to how students respond to certain prompts.

4.3.2.2 Focus Group Questions

The primary areas of inquiry around which the focus group discussion revolved were how students perceived their backgrounds to have prepared them for university; how students negotiated their home life with their university life; and how students perceived race and class relations and issues at the university.

Although there were guiding questions based on the topics above (see Appendix B), the focus groups were relatively unstructured to allow certain lines of questioning to follow their own natural threads. For a few of the initial questions, the students were asked to respond individually, but for the remainder of the discussion, they were encouraged to simply engage in more natural conversation and to exchange dialogue amongst themselves rather than only in response to questions.

4.4 Sampling

The students chosen for this research project were members of the first year and second year undergraduate law students in the Academic Development Programme. These students had been accepted into the Academic Development Programme because they had shown academic potential in the face of a poor educational background. The reason for using both cohorts was to gain insight into how students who are relatively new to the world of higher academia (cohort 1) experience navigating the institution and students who have more experience (cohort 2) may have different perspectives as they become more accustomed to negotiating the university atmosphere.

Participation was entirely voluntary. Out of 12 first year students, 8 participated in the questionnaire and 9 participated in the focus group discussions and out of

22 second year students, 12 participated in the questionnaire and 4 participated in the focus groups. Of the first year students who participated, there were 2 males and 7 females, all of whom would be identified as 'African' except one who would be identified as 'coloured'. Of the second year students who participated, there were 3 males and 1 female all of whom would be identified as 'African'.

4.5 Data Collection and Capturing Methods

The questionnaires were administered on two separate days to two different cohorts. The two focus groups were held just a few days after the questionnaires were administered, and again the cohorts met separately. The questionnaires were collected upon completion and the data was transferred to a spreadsheet while the focus group discussions were audio recorded and relevant sections were transcribed for analysis.

4.6 Limitations of Research

The limitations of this study include both those intrinsic to the instruments used as well as those that arose in the fieldwork itself.

4.6.1 Limitations Intrinsic to Research Instruments

One limitation of the questionnaires in general lies in the respondents' potential misinterpretation of the questions asked. With closed questions, there is no way to know if respondents understand and appropriately answer the questions. Another limitation may be in respondents rushing through the questions and answering them superficially rather than taking the time to digest each question and answer thoughtfully. Similarly, respondents may not feel comfortable answering in certain ways to certain questions and may therefore misrepresent themselves by choosing answers that do not correspond to their real opinion. It was for these reasons that focus groups were used in an attempt to overcome these potential problems.

However, there are also limitations to focus groups. These lie mainly in the open-ended nature and conversational style of the method. Because group discussions are impossible to completely control, the discussion often has to be steered back to relevant topics and conversation. The success of the method depends not only on the moderator's own ability to phrase questions and lead discussion but also on the group dynamic and even the setting, which can affect responses and skew results in ways that cannot be predicted or controlled. Peer pressure is also a potential problem in focus groups as participants may feel inhibited in answering honestly when in the presence of their colleagues as well as in the presence of the moderator. In addition, the small sample size means that the group can hardly be seen as a representation of the larger population but rather can only provide the personal insights of the specific individuals themselves. Analysis of the data collected through this method will be done with great caution and care and with a constant awareness of its limitations.

Another significant methodological problem arises because of the subjective nature of the very essence of this study. Issues of race, class and personal identity are controversial topics that are not only difficult to talk about, but attempting to capture them is extremely complicated. In addition, in exploring students' consciousness, it is impossible to define one true "reality" that the students can be conscious of, so there is no way to quantifiably measure the level of students' consciousness. The philosophy behind the Student Initiated Retention Project (Maldonado, Rhoads & Buenavista, 2005), for example, was influenced by one specific idea of what "consciousness" is and the particular political leanings that might define it. To combat this problem, the data collected here will be presented not as definitive, but rather as a another body of student voices which, when cross-referenced with those captured in other studies (e.g. Soudien, 2008, and Kapp and Bangeni, 2009), help to build a stronger generic picture about the undergraduate student experience.

4.6.2 Limitations of the Fieldwork

A significant potential limitation of this study rested in the willingness of the respondents to generously share their insight when it came to the personal, sensitive and controversial issues at hand. Ideally, one would devote time to gaining the confidence and trust of the students, but since that was not possible given my own time constraints, the intended solution was to approach the students by way of two different means in order to provide them with differing outlets for their voices.

Students' participation in the study was entirely voluntary and the coordinator of the ADP felt that the timing of the study coinciding with the last two weeks of the undergraduate term may have had an effect on student participation. Eight out of twelve first year students completed the questionnaires and nine participated in the focus group discussions. Twelve out of twenty two second year students completed the questionnaires but only four participated in the focus group discussions. The coordinator of the ADP alerted me to the fact that when he initially introduced the second year cohort to the idea of someone coming to engage them in a discussion, many were resistant. He also mentioned that he had been having issues with class attendance in the past couple of weeks, which he attributed to exam stress, and that he was worried that not many students would arrive to participate in the study. This could account for the low participation rates of the second year students.

The focus group with the nine first year students went very smoothly and the group was not hesitant to open up about any of the topics raised. All students were able to voice themselves and converse amongst themselves about the issues. After our meetings took place, one student even emailed me to tell me that after our discussion, she wanted to offer her help with my study as she "realised that there are many people in the same situation like we are and therefore realised how important is what you are doing". This same student emailed me almost four months later requesting to be kept updated about the study and once again offering to help in any way she could. The group of four second year students had a completely different dynamic from the first year group. The discussion was almost entirely dominated by two of the four

students and while efforts were made to specifically engage the other two students, the threads of conversation almost always went back to discussion, and sometimes arguments, between the two dominating students. However, this led to some interesting and unexpected information arising. Despite these possible limitations of the small number of participants, both discussion groups had a very relaxed and casual tone, which was conducive to the students being able to share their stories about topics of a more controversial nature.

4.7 Procedures to Ensure Ethical Considerations

Because this research project required the collection of personal information from the participants, every measure was taken to ensure that all ethical concerns were considered and addressed. All aspects of the research project were kept transparent with the head coordinator of the Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme from the initial concept stage all the way through development and finally the administering of the questionnaires and focus group discussions with the students. Permission to conduct research was obtained through research ethics clearance in both the Education Faculty as well as the Law Faculty before any contact was made with the potential participants.

After meeting the participants and explaining my research aims, I held voluntary sessions at which I distributed a written consent form that addressed procedures, risks and discomforts, benefits, confidentiality, withdrawal, costs/payments and injuries. While the participants were provided with a description of my background as well as the basic topic of my research, I was not able to explain in detail the specifics of my research intention due to the nature of the topic. Explicitly divulging the rationale would be problematic as the central question focuses on the participants' consciousness itself. This would have been jeopardised if the participants were made conscious of every aspect of the research project.

Anonymity was ensured by keeping data secure and private and removing identifiers from the data upon written analysis. Confidentiality was ensured by keeping all paper data secure and digital data stored only on my secure personal computer. Upon completion of the research and analysis, paper questionnaires were destroyed and digital data was stored on a secure disc off the original computer's hard drive. There was no potential harm to the participants foreseen in this project as a result of their participation. The participants were made aware that if requested, they would have full access to my completed thesis

4.8 Conclusion

This case study employed two key methods for gathering data including questionnaires and focus groups. By using two methods, the students participating had a chance to share their voice in two different ways, providing more insight into their experience at UCT. Although there are limitations because of the research tools used as well as the nature of the research topic itself, much useful data was collected in the course of the fieldwork. The following chapter provides a presentation of the data and a thorough analysis based on the conceptual and analytical framework upon which this study is built.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS – The Complexities of Adjustment and the Development and Negotiation of Consciousness

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Three, adjustment can be conceptualised as "a multi-dimensional process of interaction between an individual and his/her environment, in an attempt to bring about harmony between the demands and needs of the individual and his/her environment" (Petersen, Louw & Dumont, 2009: 100). This chapter presents the data collected through the questionnaires and the focus group discussions, which aimed to understand these different levels of student adjustment. By examining this data through the lens of the theoretical framework established in Chapter 3 and comparing it to the results of the studies done by Soudien (2008) and Kapp and Bangeni (2009), a clearer picture can be painted about the complexities of the undergraduate student experience. The first section presents the results from the questionnaire survey and this is followed by an analysis of the focus group discussions.

5.2 A Look at Adjustment Through an Analysis of the Questionnaires

The original Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), used here in a modified form, comprises four dimensions of adjustment. These are "academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment and institutional attachment" (Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008: 195). As indicated, a fifth section on 'Student Perceptions' was added to the questionnaire for the purposes of this study (see Appendix C, Table 1.1). As described in Chapter Four, a 7-point scale was used in the responses to the questionnaire. These were:

1 – Strongly disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Somewhat Disagree
4– Neutral/Not applicable

5– Somewhat Agree

6– Agree

7– Strongly Agree

Only the key findings are discussed in detail here. The full questionnaire data tables can be found in Appendix C in Tables 1.1 and 1.2. The averages are rounded off here to one decimal place.

Results from the questionnaires in each module of adjustment show a general trend of students falling in the average to slightly above average range of adjustment on most questions with the overall average for all responses being 4.5 (accounting for the questions for which a high numbered response implies a lesser degree of adjustment rather than a higher degree of adjustment). This indicates that the students participating have generally been able to adjust to the university undergraduate experience according to this particular research tool. This section begins then by discussing the results of the data collected with special focus on areas of exception to the general rule of overall positive adjustment as well as both contradictory and supporting statements written and voiced by the students themselves. Finally, this section begins to explore the possibility of other dimensions of adjustment at play in the experience of these students.

5.2.1 Academic Adjustment

Overall, academic adjustment with regards to students' work ethic and commitment is relatively average, however, there is a general decrease from the 1st year to the 2nd year group. For example, the 1st year group answered with an average of 6.3 to the statement, "I always attend lectures." The 2nd year group answered with an average of 4.2. Similarly, with the negative statement, "I do not work as hard as I should," the 1st year group averaged 4.8 while the 2nd year group averaged 5.6. The overall average of 4.14 indicates that the students participating in the ADP have generally been able to adjust to the academic demands of their course. This is supported by the fact that the 2nd year cohort

had passed three terms and the 1st year cohort had passed a full term and were preparing for their second term exams at the time of the study. Statements made by some students indicate that the systems in place at UCT including the Academic Development Programme might be contributing to these students' relative adjustment to the university, such as the statement written by this second year female student:

> "It is good to be in UCT and ADP programme because for me I feel that if I had not been I would not be where I am right now in terms of academic performance and how to manage my time and work load."

However, many other statements written by students or voiced in the focus group discussions revealed that getting to a level of academic adjustment that allowed them to pass their courses was difficult and complex. Students answered with an average of 3.5 to the statement, "I am satisfied with my academic course load." This is supported by the echo amongst many students that they found academic work extremely difficult and that they were not prepared for the level of difficulty they had to face. For example, one 1st year female student wrote:

> "It's really not easy for me, and I have not enjoyed any moment this year, I try with all my might but I always feel like it's never enough."

A similar statement made by a 2nd year male student shares in her sentiment:

> "UCT is a brilliant academic institute however the level of work is really hard and tedious. Even though you work hard it can still be overwhelming."

The next portion of this section and the subsequent dimensions of adjustment discussed next help to illuminate this seemingly contradictory data. When looking at positive statements about students' personal experience and perceptions with regards to their academic work, the whole group on average felt strongly that they would finish their degree, but disagreed that they were satisfied with their academic performance. The overall responses for negative

statements were slightly above average as well, indicating that while students are managing to find relative success academically, they do not feel they are doing as well as they should be considering their effort. For example, the average response to the statement, "I am satisfied with my academic performance," was 2.8. One factor contributing to this perception could be that students expect university academic work to be similar to high school where they succeeded with relative ease, and are not prepared for the shock of the increased difficulty level and higher standards. One 2nd year male student remarked:

> "You get good marks in school then it's normal to fail for your first time here."

Some students felt the issue was that of content difficulty while others felt it was the quantity of work that was the source of difficulty. One 1st year female student said:

> "I feel that a lot more student help is needed as the work load gets too much."

A 2nd year female student foresees increasing difficulty due to the design of the Academic Development Programme itself:

> "Thus far my UCT experience has been pleasant; however, I feel that the structure of the ADP can be change. In fact, it should be changed. Because in your first 3 years you have 'lighter' load and then by your 4th and 5th year in the L.L.B. it is exactly the same as the 'normal' stream of the L.L.B."

This shows an awareness on the part of this student of the contribution of the ADP to their academic adjustment as both easing the transition from school to university but also potentially setting the students up for a more difficult transition into mainstream academic life.

5.2.2 Social Adjustment

Overall, these students' social adjustment seems to be average to slightly above average, with an improvement between the 1st year and 2nd year group. The biggest improvement in social adjustment between the 1st and 2nd year group can be seen in the average response to the statement, "I feel a strong connection to my group of peers in the ADP," increasing from 4.0 for the 1st years to 5.7 for the 2nd year students. It is possible that the sense of community students gain from their membership in the ADP cohort from year to year has an effect on social adjustment in general, and may be a cause of an increase in overall student adjustment over time. Contradicting this sentiment, but possibly supporting the idea of improvement in this connection over time, is one 1st year male student's statement:

> "…everybody tends to do things for themselves and not assist others."

Significant also is the fact that the average response to the statement, "I fit in well to the UCT environment" was 4.6, which is slightly above neutral towards agreement. This would not align with the theoretical framework established, which would predict a sense of alienation in these students. Indeed, this alienation is confirmed in many ways by the students in the focus group discussions and will be discussed below in Section 5.3.

5.2.3 Personal-Emotional Adjustment

The students' personal-emotional adjustment generally tended to decrease between the 1st and the 2nd year group. The average response to the statement, "I have trouble coping with university stress," for 1st years was 4.1 but for 2nd years was 4.8. This could be a result of an increase in difficulty level of the courses students take in their second year compared to their first year but may also relate to an increased alienation experienced by 2nd years as they become more conscious of the many factors at play in their university experience and struggle to transition and cope. The exception to this trend is in response to whether or not students miss home when they are at UCT. The 1st year group responded with an average of 5.4 while the 2nd year group averaged 4.9. This

would imply that over time, students are able to develop a stronger sense of independence as they deal with being away from home to work towards their degree.

5.2.4 Institutional Attachment

Overall, institutional attachment appears to be high amongst most students in both groups and seems to improve between the 1st and 2nd year groups with the exception of a couple of areas. It is notable that every 1st year and all but two 2nd year students' response to the statement, "I consider a university degree to be important," was "Strongly agree." Interestingly, the average response to the statement, "I could articulate my specific reasons for being in university," decreased between the 1st and 2nd year groups from 6.3 to 5.3. This could be nothing more than a reflection of the individual students making up each cohort, or it could imply that the significance of attending university changes as a student makes their way through their degree programme.

Although the average response to whether students have thought about dropping out of UCT was 4.8, the average response to whether they feel they would fit in better at another university or college was only 3.0 and the average response to whether they would prefer to be at another university was 2.2. This could be explained by students struggling academically and considering dropping out but still feeling attached to UCT itself, perhaps because of its renowned status as a top internationally recognised university. A 1st year male student mentioned that "Being in UCT gives you pride wherever you go" and a 2nd year male student explained that growing up and seeing UCT on television influenced his decision to attend the university as "everything looks so glamorous". One 2nd year male student said that he chose UCT because, "You just want to be part of the elite" while another 2nd year male student said, "I chose UCT because it's the best in Africa, so I wanted to be among the best."

On the other hand, one 2nd year male student professed his conscious detachment from UCT:

> "I just want the piece of paper at the end. I couldn't care less if I love the place or I don't love it. Most of these people don't even know me, the people who mark my paper. They don't know me. Why should I take my heart and soul and say, 'Oh, my alma mater!' I don't have any emotion to this place. If I could, I wouldn't be here. I'd be at UWC, but I can't afford it."

This reveals a significant shift that this particular student has made. That now in his second year, he is aware of the power that a UCT degree affords him but consciously and actively detaches himself emotionally from the university suggests that one mechanism of adjustment this student has developed is actually disconnecting from the institution. The widely used Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire rests on the assumption that institutional attachment is an indicator of overall student adjustment. However, for those students whose backgrounds and circumstances arm them with a particular cultural capital and habitus that does not align them to the university from the moment of entry, it is possible that for some, the contrary is true. In the case of this particular student, actively detaching from the institution may actually serve to increase adjustment on some level.

5.2.5 Student Perceptions of the University Experience

While the average response to the statement, "My school background prepared me well for my course work" was only 3.0, the response to whether students themselves felt they were adjusting well to UCT was 5.0. The average response of 4.6 to whether they felt UCT had provided adequate support suggests the ADP might be part of the reason students have persisted in spite of what they reveal is a poor educational background. It is important to note that the average response to the statement about UCT providing support actually decreased between the 1st and 2nd year groups from 5.3 to 4.5. This could imply that between students' first and second years in the ADP, there is a decrease in the perceived value of the support offered or that as the level of difficulty increases, the need for more support is not met by the university.

Statements about family and friends' pride in the students for attending UCT reveals high averages of 6.5 and 6.2 respectively. Students responded to the statement, "When I speak to my friends and family back home, I speak about my university experience with pride," with an average of 5.1. This conflicts with what the 2nd year students revealed in the focus groups about feeling elitist when talking about UCT and therefore finding it difficult to share their experiences. This is also contradicted by the low average for the statement, "I have difficulty explaining my experiences at UCT to my friends and family back home." These contradictory sentiments made up a significant portion of the focus group discussions and will be discussed in greater detail in Section 5.3.

5.2.6 Summary

The results of the questionnaire data generally indicate reasonable levels of adjustment and integration of the students. This could mean a number of things. Firstly, it could indicate that the systems UCT has in place, namely the Law Faculty's Academic Development Programme, are successfully easing students' adjustment to the university and aiding in their academic success. Secondly, it could also mean that students themselves brought with them or developed over time an ability to adjust to the university and the obstacles they faced. Thirdly, it could also mean that the students are in fact struggling with certain complex dimensions of adjustment that are simply not being captured by the questionnaire. Alternatively, and this is most likely, all of the above factors could be in play simultaneously.

This appears to be so when the questionnaire results are taken in conjunction with the comments written and voiced by the students. There emerges in these a certain level of contradiction in what they report about themselves as they indeed convey disquiet around certain social issues despite the reasonable average level of adjustment that the questionnaires would indicate. This is in accordance with previous work done by Soudien (2008) and Kapp and Bangeni (2009) who found that similar students developed multifaceted and fluid

identities in order to cope with the demands of navigating a university environment that they found to be markedly different from their home environments. The next section pursues these issues through a discussion of the focus group results.

5.3 The Complexity of Adjustment

Each focus group discussion raised complex and intriguing questions and offered valuable insight into the different ways these students experience their transition into life at the University of Cape Town. The following section discusses three main themes that emerged from these discussions and explores the complex experience of the students who participated in this study with a particular focus on what they themselves highlighted as key issues they find themselves grappling with as they navigate their undergraduate university experience. These issues included cultural, racial, language-based and class-based clashes with the university and/or other students encountered at the university, alienation resulting from the negotiation of home and university identities, and perceived race relations on campus.

5.3.1 Conception of Cultural Capital and the Notion of Race-Class Alignment

The notion of cultural capital and its impact on adjustment was explored directly through my own lines of questioning but also arose repeatedly in different forms amongst both groups even out of context of specific and directed questions or prompting. What emerged were three key themes including the students' perception of the connection between cultural capital and background education, the connection between cultural capital and race and class, and finally the complex and often contradictory conception of the effect of differences in educational background.

5.3.1.1 Students' Conception of Own Cultural Capital and its Connection to Background Education

The unanimous consensus amongst all students was that their school backgrounds did not prepare them for what they would encounter at the University of Cape Town. This can be summed up by this statement by one 1st year female student:

> 1BF1: "When you get here you realise that it's completely different, so it's either sink or swim."

Further questioning into what they found to be particularly challenging revealed that many students pinpoint language without hesitation as being a significant area of difficulty and source of both personal and academic stress as well as initial maladjustment to the academic environment. This 2nd year female student highlights the English language issue:

> 2BF1: "For someone who didn't do English first language, this would be a struggle because not only are you struggling to understand the words, but you're struggling to understand the concepts and they're so twisted that you really have to apply yourself to understand them. I mean, my Ethics is a first year course. So someone who's coming from a disadvantaged school and they did, well where I come from they do Zulu first language and you did English second language, and then you come to UCT and they say for part of your degree you have to take Ethics. And you get there and that's your first university course. Then you're kind of going to struggle."

For these students, the language issue does not only include the English language itself, but also the academic language they encounter regularly in their classes. This can be seen in the responses of these 1st year students:

> 1BF1: "You get into lectures, and you get these professors, you know, doctors and everything, and they speak in this language. You don't know if maybe they're trying to show off or not, but it's like you don't understand what they're saying. Why not say something simple, like as it is?"

> 1BF2: "They use this big ass language and you're like, kind of sitting there. Like you write all these words down and you go home and you look them up in the

dictionary and you're like, 'Oh! So basically he wanted to say A, B and C and he had to take the long route around!' So I mean, it's really been a difficult adjustment."

1BF3: "You don't feel like you can go and talk to the lecturers because it almost feels as if, when you go there, you're going to be asking dumb questions and they're going to be like, 'You're wasting my time.' And really, still they're going to answer the question the same way that they were explaining it and it's just going to make no difference."

1BF4: "It's not a matter of you not knowing the information; it's just you not understanding the actual question. So I think in terms of answering certain questions, I think I was under-prepared for certain things. You misunderstand certain things, like if the question says 'critically evaluate' or, I mean, people tend to not understand the actual question rather than not knowing the information."

As conveyed in their articulation of the issue, the students do not conceptualise this language barrier as a cultural difference but rather a personal choice on the part of the professors who, some feel, are actually purposely making things more difficult than they feel they need to. One 1st year female student did mention, however, what she felt might be a valid reason for the use of what other students perceive as overly and unnecessarily complicated academic language:

1CF1: "I spoke to a lecturer and I was told that the language is necessary for that particular course. Like, the one we're doing now called Foundations of South African Law. It's jurisprudence and that's the language we're going to encounter when we do the actual course. So rather to spare us the false sense of security by thinking, 'Okay, fine, I can do this,' you know, and then get there to find, you know, to fail. I mean, I think as a first year, though, it's a bit harsh."

The implication that was agreed upon by this student's peers regarding whether or not the academic language used was necessary, was that it was thought to be extremely difficult for 1st year students to understand and that little was being done to alleviate the transition. Furthermore, one 1st year female student

suggested that the language issue also bleeds over into social realms of the university experience:

> 1BF3: "You come here and you feel you are stupid. You don't know anything! Anything! Culturally, even when people are talking, I'm like, 'Are they talking to me or what?!'"

This student implies that she has encountered a cultural divide between herself and other students. There was no elaboration or explanation given by this student or others as to what they think are the factors behind this divide. That fact combined with the linking of the perceived cultural divide to a perceived inadequacy (feeling "stupid") implies that this possible lack of consciousness of the factors at play creating and perpetuating this divide affects this student's adjustment to the university. In order to cope with these difficulties they encountered, many students explained that they had to teach themselves what they lacked:

> 1BF1: "You tend to, well you have to, teach yourself to be like up to standard. It's something that you're not taught in high school. It's like learning from experience. After failing one course and then you're like okay, now I have to pull up my socks, now I have to study more than I don't know how many hours, now I have to stop doing this and this and that and focus on this. So it's kind of like you teach yourself and that's what we're not taught in high school."

> 1CF1: "They prepared us with high school level work for the matric exams, but after that, we're on our own. Getting here, you had to learn by yourself what you need to do in order to survive at this place."

These students are clearly aware that there is a connection between educational background and adjustment to university and that their particular backgrounds were generally inadequate at preparing them for the challenges of university. One 2nd year male student explained that it was joining the Academic Development Programme in his second year that helped bridge the gap for him:

> 2BM1: "I was doing mainstream last year and then I came through and I spoke to [Coordinator A] and the moment I came here, I saw so many things I was doing wrong. Even coming from reading cases to writing to arguing my points to just basic, basic things that some people somehow have learned by their own accord, I learned here."

It is important to note this student's mention of other students' ability and/or prior knowledge, which he claims to have lacked. His final statement suggests that he does not have an understanding of how other students arrived at the university with stronger foundational skills and knowledge. The phrase "by their own accord" implies a perceived personal difference rather than an acknowledgement of the significance of the difference in background preparation based on school attended and access to resources. The group of 1st year students discussed in detail what they felt is a great disparity between the preparation provided by private schools and well-resourced public schools in comparison to under-resourced public and township schools. One 1st year male student explained:

> 1BM1: "For me I think it depends not just about high school, not any high school. It depends on the high school you go to. You cannot compare me having studied in Langa and the girls that studied at Westerford High. So it depends because for me, I worked for my marks at the end of the year, but a girl at Westerford High worked for her marks from the beginning until the end. So when you get here, it's a different story. The way they prepare us in our high school, like in the township, it's a different story."

The group of 1st year students agreed passionately with this statement and proceeded to add to his argument, attempting, with some difficulty, to pinpoint what exactly it was that some schools provided that they felt their schools did not. The hesitation and difficulty in articulation reflects their lack of consciousness of the greater social, political and historical context that might explain this phenomenon in more detail. The lack of vocabulary to articulate this experience can be seen in this 1st year female student's statement:

1BF4: "When you come from public school and a private school, the level of education is totally different. Because you find that when you're in a private school, it's like they teach you to… sort of like, when you get into varsity, you sort of have that… that… that leverage… than a person who comes from a public school has in terms of the level of, like… knowledge, for one... and the standard, and… what else? The facilities as well. And then you get people from private school who like, when they get into varsity it's like they have… they know what they are going to do because they… they have these resources, you know?"

Many students felt the circumstances at some of their schools contributed to their being ill-prepared for university compared to their private school counterparts and attributed many of these failings on the teachers they had:

1BM1: "Even the teachers, it's like, you get teachers that don't come to class. Some of them don't come to class, or they come drunk!"

1BF3: "In my school, my teachers really didn't care. A week could end without you having an English class, a maths class. And in my school, we didn't even have a library. You had to walk for hours to go to a library. How do you learn? You just learn from the notes you get once in a week or once in a month. They come drunk!"

The consensus amongst these students was that academically, their school background did not prepare them for the demands of university course work and identified factual knowledge, skills acquired, discipline and expectations as the prominent areas that were lacking. On the other hand, some students explained that certain aspects of their background and their life experiences did prepare them for other difficulties they would face at university. For example, one 1st year female student said:

1BF4: "Personally, I think I was well-prepared emotionally and, like mentally, for varsity because at our school, although we did a whole lot of sports, you kind of learned how to manage your own time. So therefore, when I also got here, I still have a social life, but I can still manage my time for school."

It is possible that those students who do succeed at under-resourced schools such as those these students attended are forced to teach themselves how to budget their time and negotiate that balance between their academic and social lives that is so crucial to success. In addition to this skill, a 2nd year male student explained:

> 1BM2: "In terms of life, you know, obviously where I come from, when you fall down, it's just easy for you to get back up and brush yourself off and continue. You know, if you fail a course, you don't see it as this big thing, you know. You just continue."

Perhaps this student's resilience and perseverance arms him with a certain overlooked cultural capital that enables him to adapt to the university environment when he finds himself struggling academically. In stark contrast to the consensus amongst the 1st year students that a student's background plays a large role in determining how easily they will adjust to university, the 2nd year group was initially adamant that a student's background has no bearing on his/her ability to perform academically. One 2nd year male student repeatedly referred to UCT as "the great equaliser". It is important to note that the two voices most prominent in this argument were both students who were initially accepted into the mainstream degree programme but upon failing more than one course, were referred to and accepted into the Academic Development Programme. One 2nd year black female student explains:

> 2BF1: "I think once you're here, it's just you. It's about you and your books. It's really just you. It doesn't matter where you came from. Your dad could be the president, really. It's just you and your mark. I think a common misconception is saying that if you come from a disadvantaged school or you went to a good school that you're going to come here and there's still going to be that big difference. Because I feel that your high school doesn't matter because when you get here, it's a completely different ballgame. It doesn't matter where you come from. You could have come from, I mean, my school's rated quite highly, but I'm struggling. I had to go on the Programme because it was the only way I was going to survive this LLB. There's no way I could have stayed in mainstream and still carried on."

One 2nd year male student even felt that having a history of higher education in a student's family actually adds stress:

> 2BM1: "Whether your grandfather was here, whether he donates, okay I'm not sure about that! But it's only to do with how much you work. This whole thing of, 'Ah, you know, my grandfather used to come here!' it just puts more pressure on you because now you have to work harder. But no big deal for me."

When asked for further explanation, he said:

> 2BM1: "Okay, if you had an education where somebody who was going to university and coming back and talking to you about what's happening and how it's happening, showing you maybe some papers. If a person was actively involving you, like, 'Okay this is what we do,' and bring you along for lectures, that *might* give you an edge, but still."

This same student, however, later contradicted himself by blaming poor schooling for some students' academic struggles:

> 2BM1: "The education system, you know the secondary education system, that's where the problem is. It's not about the people themselves, it's because of the teacher. The teachers are going to tell you, "X is equal to Y" when in fact X is equal to Z. You're going to learn that, you're going to know that and you're going to go to an exam that that is set by somebody out there and you're going to say X is equal to Y when it's equal to Z because your teacher only had grade 12 maths in standard grade but is teaching you higher grade because there's no other teacher to teach you."

This student does not make the connection between his own academic struggles and his admittedly poor educational background, nor does he see a connection between a person's family history of higher education and their adjustment to higher education. This would imply he does not conceive of a culture of higher education, and so, attributes his own academic success and failure to work ethic

and/or intelligence alone. Difficulties perceived as arising because of poor educational backgrounds are used to justify other students' academic struggles but not his own. Paralleling Bourdieu's notion that it takes an awareness of "the game" for "players" to be able to transcend the potential of failure in the instance of a relative lack of cultural capital, this particular student seems to exhibit signs that his inability to connect academic background with academic success/failure adds a layer of complexity, if not difficulty, to his adjustment to the university.

In addition to the students' varying perceptions of the connection between educational background and adjustment to the university, there were strong opinions about the role that race and class plays in student adjustment to the university.

5.3.1.2 The Connection to Race and Class

The 1st year students saw a connection between race and class and they attributed relative ease of adjustment and academic success with access to resources, which they equated with being white. One 1st year female student said:

> 1CF1: "I don't think that white people in general are more intelligent than me. I just think they have more resources. You find that most of them have extra books just because they can afford them. And, you know, you ask yourself, 'If I had that book and everything was there for me, I mean, would it be so hard for me to get an A or a B?' You know, it's not because they're more intelligent, they just know what to use and how to use it."

Her somewhat defensive tone implies that she has encountered the assumption that academic success is a result of intelligence and that people attribute the relative success of white people to an innate intelligence rather than their access to resources. The mention of "what to use and how to use it" shows this student's conception of cultural capital and her connection between race and ease of adjustment shows a consciousness of the social, historical and political

context in which she exists. Like this student, several other 1st year students agreed that university on a whole is generally easier for white people and attributed this to a related connection they made between race and class, and in turn, class and educational background:

> 1CF1: "I think it might be easier for white people because of probably most of their backgrounds, like where they come from. Probably they're not first person in their family to be at university."

> 1BF5: "One thing I realised is that your background education plays a very important role. Like for [white students], it's very easy considering the type of school they went to, and the type of, um, sort of, what can I say, the standard of living they come from. It's sort of like, for them, it's chill. You know, next day, they can do another course, you know, do humanities and stuff, it's fine. It's less pressure, which is really important. For us it's like 'I have to crack law, if I don't crack law… I have no choice!'"

Of note here is the fact that these students bear an added pressure that they do not feel white students experience. The implication was that for them, academic background provides not only preparation for the academic aspect of the university experience but also alleviates the high stakes these students place upon academic performance for their future success and livelihood. To explain more deeply the context surrounding the disparity in academic adjustment and success based on race was clear when one student commented on the recent political history of the country. She attributed the difficulties black students face to the lingering effects of apartheid:

> 1CF1: "Because of our past apartheid, there were disadvantages. So the type of schooling we had, you know, township schools, I don't know personally, but I went to a public school, and the disadvantages are obvious. [White people] come from schools [which] have everything. Therefore, they're more qualified and when they get here, they are more prepared and survive here. Whereas, I think also, maybe we have black students, but then they drop out because they can't handle it."

One student commented on what she believed to be a lack of consciousness on the part of white people to the phenomenon of a difference in ease of adjustment to university between black and white students:

> 1BF4: "For us looking at them, it's easier, but as a white person, I don't think they really realise. If you had to talk to somebody who's white, I think that the answer would be like, "Oh whatever." They don't see the difference. They don't see a difference. For them it's just a day-to-day thing. It's just normal."

This echoes the findings of Soudien's (2008) study, which showed that it is the black students who carry the burden of the racialised experience of university life. That this student believes white students do not have to think about race issues shows that she believes they fit into the university culture with greater ease than non-white students, for whom day-to-day experiences are not "normal". Still, some students were adamant about the fact that while they imagined university to be easier for white students, they do not feel that should be used as an excuse for black students to underperform:

> 1BF2: "I think everything depends on the individual. You cannot just say, 'Because I'm black and I came from this background, I can't get this mark and everything.' I think it depends on you, if you really work hard. I think it depends on you to take a step up, a step further compared. I think you need to work hard because you cannot say, 'Because I'm black...' You just really need to work hard and you need to realise actually maybe I need to work harder than them, but the thing is you need to work hard."

As would be predicted by Maldonado et al (2005) and Dumais (2002), the students seemed to use this consciousness of the reality of their circumstances in an empowering way, accepting that while they may have to work harder than their white counterparts, they acknowledge that all university students must work hard and channel their focus into doing what they need to do to succeed at UCT in order to progress further in life in general. It is perhaps this consciousness that serves as the key to students moving past the lack of

awareness of Bourdieu's 'illusio' and actually consciously playing the "game" in full awareness of their position in it and the limitations of their power. By attributing what they perceive as differences in ease of adjustment of students based on race and class to educational background and other factors resulting only from one's socio-historical circumstance, they can cope with the fact that there are added layers of difficulty in adjustment for them. This consciousness and conception of the issue may be a powerful mechanism of adjustment when they are faced with the high-stakes pressure of completing their degree. Further questioning into these students' explanations of their navigation of the university revealed the staggering complexity of their experience and the impact their conception of identity issues has on their adjustment.

5.3.2 Negotiation of Different Fields: Multiple, Changing and Layered Identities

A significant issue that students in both Soudien's (2008) and Kapp & Bangeni's (2009) studies faced was the difficulty in negotiating the dual worlds of home and university. Similarly, the students in this Academic Development Programme reported the same alienation with regards to articulating their experience and their struggles to their parents who themselves had never attended a higher education institution:

> 1BF1: "It seems as if [my mom] doesn't understand because she's never been there herself, like studying and stuff, but then she knows that I have to work hard basically. That's what she always says to me, like nothing in life comes on a silver platter, you always have to work hard for it."

> 1CF1: "I basically feel like I'm screaming at them but it's like they're just not hearing me and what I'm trying to say. They know that I have to work hard, it's just… I don't know, it's like… they won't be able to relate."

> 1BF4: "The only person I communicate to is my mother, but whenever I go to her, I don't really feel like she understands. She might be encouraging, but I don't think she understands at all."

Further inquiry revealed that there was more than just difficulty articulating their experience to their parents and their parents' inability to understand or relate, but also a conscious hesitation on the part of some students to share their university related struggles with their parents. One 2nd year male student explained:

> 2BM1: "Never, ever, ever do I speak about anything that's school related. I just don't. I just don't do it. You know, you feel like you are bragging or you are getting there and you are like this high and mighty and 'This test was stressful today,' where at home they're dealing with *real* stress. You know, like, you tend to compare the stress that you feel for a test and the stress that they feel for providing for kids, making sure the kids get to school and clean the house and all those things."

> 2BM1: "When I tell people I have stress, you know I'm not even 30 yet, it's like I'm going to get a heart attack or whatever, but they're like, 'Ah, you must be kidding! You go to this fancy school and all the sudden you have stress?' So it's like, you being here, there are certain perceptions of what you are."

When the other 2nd year students confirmed this sentiment, there was a very clear sense that they not only specifically refrain from sharing their university stress with their parents because they believe it will not be taken seriously given the hardships that so define their home lives, but they also feel like it is unfair to burden their families with their stress. They feel that the articulation of their experience of stress will not be validated due to the conflicting cultural foundations of their home lives compared to their university lives. This particular student seemed to carry a great deal of the stress of this tension on his own, and seemed to adjust by simply enduring the guilt he felt when he opted to live on campus and stay away from home for longer periods of time than his family expects. At this stage, these students seem to be experiencing the same issue faced by the 1st year students in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study, that is alienation resulting from the struggle to establish the self-awareness and adeptness to negotiate a layered identity capable of smoothly shifting from context to context. The same student also explained another delicate subject that

adds an additional element of pressure to his negotiation of his home life with his university life:

> 2BM1: "For parents, especially in the townships, one of the biggest fears is when their kids make it, or when their kids study, whatever, you know they have a certain expectation. You know, 'Okay, he's going to at least take care of us in the interim, before he maybe marries.' And the biggest fear is you're going to go there, work, move to Jo'burg and forget about family. It's actually a fear. It's a thing that they're actually scared of. And what happens is, in reality as well, people come to whatever institution, get their degrees and immediately, like two months afterward, get married, you know? So immediately, they like move away from where they were coming from and it's about money, you know? Because when you graduate, then that is a lot of money and that amount of money can make life easier for your family and yourself. And if you are married, a whole lot of that money is going to be focused on you and your *new* family instead of the people that were there for you when you were still studying. So there's this thing of, 'Eugh you know, he's not even a lawyer yet and he's already keeping away from us as if we're the plague. He's staying there for months on end and coming to see us only when he has to.' And it's a sensitive thing, you know?"

It is clear that this student perceives a sense of obligation to family and a pressure to share the monetary benefits of a university degree with his immediate family. Coupled with the experience of the 1st year students who felt the added pressure of the sense of having nothing to fall back on as their undergraduate degree was perceived as holding the key to their future success, these students' circumstances amount to a significant added level of difficulty in adjusting to university life. The 1st year students seem to be conscious of this phenomenon, which seems to have allowed them to accept and adjust to it. This particular 2nd year student, on the other hand, remains adamant that students' backgrounds have no correlation to their academic performance, and so, he has nothing to which to attribute his failure to succeed in the mainstream programme but his own personal shortcomings. This fact alone may be a significant factor in his struggle and would confirm Bourdieu's notion that it is the unconscious nature of one's actions and that allows for the perpetuation of

the marginalisation of students through the mechanisms of the university as a "sorting machine" that simply reproduces the social structures upon which it was built.

In addition to the difficulties these students had with articulating their experience to their parents, the 2nd year students also explained that they find themselves forced to negotiate a delicate and often difficult balancing act with their friends from home who did not go on to tertiary education or who attended a tertiary education institution generally considered less prestigious than UCT:

> 2BF1: "You constantly have to watch what you say because I can't go to a group of my friends who only got to matric and couldn't carry on because they couldn't afford it, not because they weren't smart enough, but they couldn't afford to go to university. So it's sometimes a bit insensitive of me to come and offload my university stress on them... So socially, it impacts on you. Or like, I've got friends I've made here and some of them are from back home. But when I'm back home, I can't be with them all the time because then it's like, to my friends from back home, that I'm starting to think that I'm better than them and I'm starting to hang out with a better class of people. So you've also got to watch that because you don't want to alienate the people you've known all your life because they are a part of your life. So it's just you've got to find that balance where you're not alienating people but at the same time, you're not holding back on who you want to become. Because the people you're with here will add to who you want to become and the people that you met in your past are a part of who you are, so you don't want to lose that."

> 2BM2: "I find that I can't really talk to [my friends from home] about my experiences in UCT because they're obviously not in UCT. They might be in other tertiaries, but then whenever I start talking about my experiences, it seems like I'm trying to portray myself as, you know, I'm the better one, this and this and that, I'm in UCT. So I end up having to listen to what they have to say about their schools and I don't say anything."

These students explained how common it was for them to have to detach themselves from UCT when their friends from back home to speak negatively

about UCT. One 2nd year male student in particular, spoke of what he feels is an experience unique to black students:

> 2BM1: "Also talking crap about UCT. You can't defend it. You are expected to talk more crap. Like we have to add on to the crap they're speaking, like, 'Yeah it's so *bad*!' You can't say anything good about this place, honestly. If you are black and you come here, first things first, you are almost a sell-out. You know, because we're going to this place of wealthy people and what not, and then supposedly you're also conforming to their way of thought. And when people criticise the place, you just to sit there you know, sip on your beer and be like, 'Mmm, yeah.'"

He elaborated on the notion of a lack of relevance in the content taught in courses at UCT, especially as he feels is perceived by his friends from home:

> 2BM1: "The content matter, you look at, for example the philosophy, how Eurocentric it is. And you look at the context in which this body's supposed to be operating in, again you have this huge divide, like I know exactly what Emmanuel Kant or whoever from the U.S. is thinking. Is there no South African philosopher? Is there no African philosopher? Nothing. You know? So this whole issue is just facade. You know, 'We're going to take you in, but you gotta find your way.'"

With many theorists highlighting the importance of attachment and belonging to the university for students' successful adjustment (see Tinto, 1975; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Davidowitz & Schreiber, 2008), the burden placed upon these students becomes glaringly clear. In order for this particular student to deal with the alienation he experiences when he encounters what he perceives as Eurocentric content that is irrelevant to his context and that is actively rejected by his peer from home, he has developed the mechanism of detaching and distancing himself from UCT and to think about his degree in a purely functional manner:

> 2BM1: "If UCT feels that it has to take a stance of being more of a company than a university, then it's completely their choice. And people should have the responsibility of seeing that the university is doing A, B, C and D and therefore I, as

> an individual, am not going to go there. Because if nobody's coming to UCT, they can't be elite. So if UCT wants to be a big corporation that's making humongous amounts of money and being famous and doing these fancy whatever and being completely relevant to other people, it's up to people to see that, 'No man, those people are irrelevant to me. They're not giving me anything I want, therefore I'm not going to go there.' Here I'm just a student. I'm just a person to pay fees and to pass or fail. That's it. That's why I have no emotion for this place, nothing. I don't like it at all. And I wish I was somewhere else. I'm really just here to get my degree that says UCT on it because UCT's the best in Africa."

His sentiment and the way he deals with his alienation at UCT and his conception of his particular context and circumstances could be seen as simultaneously beneficial and functional, as well as counterproductive and even harmful as it is clear that he struggles to settle into an identity, if even a multifaceted one, that reconciles the disparate worlds in which he must coexist. When compared to the students in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study, this particular student's experience seems to mirror those of the students in their early undergraduate careers who were struggling to establish an identity that successfully straddled all of the different contexts that made up their lives. Like those students, he can be seen as clinging to the notion that the university degree is nothing but a key to upward mobility, in order to cope with the alienation he experiences in his struggle to obtain it. Like those students, he has not yet developed the liberating consciousness that might allow him to move freely across the borders that exist in his life, shifting his identity to adjust within the context of the nation's, the university's, and ultimately his own personal transformation. This struggle is epitomised in his and other students' negotiation of race and class dynamics on campus.

5.3.3 Perceptions of Race and Class Relations and Issues at UCT

When asked about race relations at UCT, most students were quick to say that they had not experienced personal, direct racism on campus. However, it became apparent that their initial interpretation of the term 'racism' had more to do with social segregation than power dynamics or prejudice. Both the 1st and

2nd year group quickly equated the word 'racism' with the racial cliques that they see as predominating social life at UCT:

> 2BM1: "On a daily basis, I don't really experience racism, although I find that we're all so accustomed to being in our own groups. Like, it's not a matter of being racist, it's just because I relate better to a black person rather, I think."

> 1BF4: "In terms of academics and being in the law faculty, I haven't really experienced anything, although there is this thing that, you know, you hang out with your black friends, I hang out with my white friends, you know?"

Through further discussion, the students began to point out more subtle instances of racism at UCT and were asked to elaborate on what they had encountered. One 1st year female student made note of the racially-differentiated power dynamic in the residence halls:

> 1BF5: "I wouldn't say I've experienced racism, but I live in res and there's this white side, they say, there's white people live this side and the black people live this side. When there are parties and stuff, only white people go to white parties, we go to black parties. Even the house committee, it's only the white people that are there. Like, white people are in charge of everything."

In addition, the students described the subtle feelings of discrimination they had encountered on campus:

> 1BM1: "Racism does exist, that's a fact. But we don't really show it up. When they're looking at you, when they talk to you, they're not going to say, 'I hate you because you're black.' They're not going to say that. But they do. They do. Racism exists. It's not going to end, like tomorrow."

> 1BF3: "In terms of personally, you get into UCT and you have this sort of 'I'm black, you're white' but as an individual, you get used to it. You get used to that, 'She thinks she's white and she thinks she's superior than I am.' You sort of just get used to everything. You don't even see it anymore."

One 2nd year male student also pointed out a more institutionalised form of racism that he feels is perpetuated by the university itself as he explained the fundamentally problematic nature of the racialised point system of admissions at UCT:

> 2BM1: "A black person always has to justify why they're there, always. You know this point system where they say a black person will need 35 instead of 37 or whatever. So by being here, immediately, you're looked at as the token black guy. Nobody respects the amount of work that you put in and the obstacles that you faced to get to that level that's acceptable for this university."

This particular student's unusual circumstance, in which he was admitted into the mainstream programme but failed too many courses and was subsequently put in the ADP, may partially account for his feelings about the point system. What is striking is that this is the same student who felt that one's background does not influence academic adjustment and performance. That he mentioned the respect he feels he deserves for "the obstacles that [he] faced to get to that level that's acceptable for this university" seems to contradict his aforementioned notion. It is possible that this disconnect could have contributed to his difficult academic adjustment during his first year at UCT.

The 1st year students agreed that the best method of coping with the racism they have encountered at UCT has been to simply ignore it. One 1st year female student explained her empowered mechanism for deal with racism that enables her to maintain pride in her race and class:

> 1BF2: "Personally for me, I suppose I'm one of those people who doesn't really care about racism. I mean, you can call me black, you can call me a kaffir if you want. But I mean, it's one of those things to me, that you waste your time doing what you need to do and worry about my colour, but I mean, for the fact that I'm here and for the fact that my parents are where they are now and all kinds of things means that my colour has got nothing to do with anything."

By depersonalising the feelings of racism projected upon her from others and recontextualising them as a personal problem on the part of the racist party, this student is able to adapt to her environment and find a relative level of adjustment at the university despite the presence of racism. The same 2nd year male student who felt he was perceived as the "token black guy" appears to conceptualise and deal with race relations in a very different way. An interesting conversation amongst the 2nd year students revealed his personal issues with race and what he sees as his own harboured "reverse racism" which was challenged by his peer in the discussion:

> 2BM1: "We have this view of people who have rugby friends. It breaks my heart when I hear guys speaking, you know speaking through their nose. And you know, they didn't choose that. They grew up in a white area or they went to a white school, maybe they have white adoptive parents, I don't know. But you know, it feels like I've lost a brother or something, or a potential friend."
>
> 2BM3: "What exactly is your problem with that, if a black person talks like a white person? What is torturing you there?"
>
> 2BM1: "It's racism, I'm racist. It's not something like I choose to be, it's something that happens instinctively. Like I hear a guy say, [mimics white accent] and I'm just like, 'Eugh, what an ass.' I just dislike that person immediately. It's not something that there's a reason, like, I'm doing this because this guy is A, B, C or D. It's just something that happens within me."
>
> 2BM3: "Do you think that's okay though?"
>
> 2BM1: "I'm working on it."
>
> 2BF1: "I don't think it's hatred, I think it's a protection mechanism. I mean, I don't know if you go through it, but I know I talked to some girl and she explained to me how she felt that before I could look down upon her, she wanted to make me feel bad first. So for her it was a thing of, 'You live the good life. You've got the accent.' But she was like, before I come and I judge her (which was purely an insecurity on her part because I didn't even notice that, like I didn't even care), but she had

> already felt like because I come from that type of background, I'm going to come and look down on her and think that she's inferior to me. And then because of that, she immediately took a disliking to me without getting to know me. So it was like her way of protecting herself, her way of making sure that I don't make her feel inferior. So I thought that was unfair. Like just because of the privileges I've had in my life doesn't make me any more different to you. At the end of the day, what a lot of us need to recognise and realise is in African society, like in our culture, there is no 'my family is my mom, my dad and my brothers'. That's crap! Your family is your mom, your dad, your aunts, your uncles, your cousins. It's a huge family! And not everyone in that is privileged. So I think a lot of people seem to forget that and they think that just because you've lived a privileged lifestyle, that's who you are."

It is important to note that the female student's response to the discussion between the two male students had a defensive tone to it, especially towards the end of her comment. Out of this discussion emerged a palpable tension between the more outspoken black male student and his female counterpart. Earlier in the focus group session, they revealed their financial aid status at UCT – that he had all fees waived by the university and knew every detail of the university's policies on fees and interest rates on bursaries while she was not on financial aid and was entirely unaware that some students were even able to get their registration fees waived. For her, this represents a clash of two worlds, or fields, within the field of UCT academe and social life, which is one already rife with complexities and contradictions for her. As someone who grew up in the townships but later moved out when her parents were able to afford a lifestyle change that included sending her to relatively advantaged schools, this student finds herself not only having to negotiate the alienation that comes from maintaining her relationships from home, but also dealing with the tension that arises when faced with peers in the ADP who are coming from a comparable background to that which she may have had if it weren't for her family's changing socioeconomic status.

Despite the defensive stance she was compelled to take in response to his comment, there was a nuance to her conceptualisation of this phenomenon of

"reverse racism" that seemed to aid in her ability to cope with the complexities of the ever-changing race relations at UCT. On the spectrum of adaptation that can be seen as increasing in time for the students in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study, this particular 2nd year female student seems to be pushing through the initial alienation that most students are experiencing as she develops a multifaceted identity and a greater consciousness of the different fields she inhabits and a stronger ability to shift her identity to negotiate these fields and maintain balance within and between them. Although her experience is not to be generalised, this student represents one case of a member of South Africa's emerging black middle class and the unique experience of a generation in the midst of transformation.

5.4 Conclusion

While the questionnaires might imply a reasonable level of adjustment on the part of these students, upon analysing the focus group data, a different picture of these students' experiences emerges. This does not necessarily imply maladjustment on the part of the students, but instead offers a complex, multifaceted perspective to their experience. By listening to the voices of these students, one gains valuable insight into the complexities of university life, particularly for students coming from backgrounds that have left them ill-prepared for university academics and culture.

Although it is impossible to measure a student's level of consciousness of his/her context, it was clear that there was a definite range of awareness of what Bourdieu would call "the game" and these "players'" sense of the "fields" they find themselves having to negotiate. While the 1st year students offered an essentially collective voice that struggled in its articulation of the complex and unique difficulties they face because of their location within the university field, the 2nd year students seemed to embody a deeper consciousness, but more complex contradictions and personal struggles with their identities and ideals. Like the students in Soudien's (2008) study as well as those in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study, some of these students showed signs of alienation as a

result of negotiating the balance between home life and university life as well as the unique pressures of attending a university such as UCT given their backgrounds and the cultural capital it has afforded them. The voices of these students provided not only insight into the unique experiences of these individuals, but also an invaluable snapshot in time of a changing demographic in a nation taking steps towards transformation.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion and Implications

The students that formed the basis of this study, because of their lived reality, their unique positions in their particular time and place, have had to confront from birth living in a world that is structurally (and perhaps philosophically on some level) built to disempower them. In the realm of higher education, they are facing the reality of coming to university armed with backgrounds that have not properly prepared them for any aspect of university life, academic or social, which has resulted in their forced negotiation of both immense academic difficulties but also the constant experience of a clash of world views and cultures or identities.

When their voices are held up against those of Soudien's (2008) and Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) studies, it could be argued that these students are in a similar early stage of development of the layered identities they will need to develop in order to thrive. If a heightened social, cultural and historical consciousness is the key to the strongest development of these identities, then it would make sense that the 2nd year students seem to have a more nuanced understanding of their contexts and their role at UCT, but have not yet mastered the ability to negotiate the clash of fields as had the 5th year students in Kapp and Bangeni's (2009) study. Because of their particular discipline of study the students in Kapp and Bangeni's study had been given the opportunity to delve into the very issues they themselves faced in their own lives and in their own communities. If this explicit opportunity contributed to their ultimate success, then the implication for Academic Development Programmes is that a very powerful mechanism for fostering the adjustment of their students could be missing entirely.

The programmes currently in place clearly address academic deficiencies, but this study prompts a series of questions that place academic development programmes in a wider transformational agenda. Statistics show remarkable differences in success rates of students based on academic background and

although it is problematic to view differences in backgrounds as creating 'deficits', but there has not been an attempt to put structures in place on an institutional level that enable students to confront what they themselves see as a cultural deficit. While the nation awaits fundamental change in education from the primary level up, tertiary education institutions will continue to fight for transformation as the wounds of the past slowly turn to scars. But failure to address the complex issues Žižek claims have been made invisible means that the university passes along their burden to those students who, because of the fundamental structure of the university and its conflicted and unarticulated role, are already set up to struggle most. It should not be the students' plight to discover, develop and embody those multifaceted identities that allow them to navigate a university that was not designed for them if the institution properly articulated and is actively and successfully executing its agenda of transformation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ (optional)

Year in the Programme: 1 / 2 (circle) **Gender: male / female (circle)**

Instructions: For each statement, please circle *one* of the numbers 1-7 to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree (or feel neutral about) the statement in question. If there are any questions you find hard to answer, don't hesitate to elaborate in the Comments section at the end of this questionnaire. Thanks again for participating!

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral / Not Applicable	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My friends from home are proud of me for attending UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I enjoy academic work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I consider a university degree to be important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I am good at budgeting my time to allow for studying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Most of my interests are not related to academic work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I expect to finish my degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I have trouble coping with university stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I have difficulty feeling at ease with people at UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Being independent has not been easy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I find academic work difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	No matter how hard I study, I find exams difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I feel tired a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I do not feel clever enough for the course work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I feel nervous and tense.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I have several close social ties (good friends etc).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral / Not Applicable	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	I am satisfied with my social life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	For the effort I put in, I do not do well academically.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	I have trouble getting started on course work assignments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	My school background prepared me well for my course work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	I am satisfied with the quality of the courses in my programme.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	I am satisfied with my academic course load.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I could articulate my specific reasons for being in university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	I am involved with social activities at UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	I fit in well to the UCT environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	UCT has provided adequate support for the transition from high school to university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	I am adjusting well to UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I enjoy writing assignments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	I have trouble concentrating when I am studying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I am meeting people and making friends at UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	I wish I were not in the ADP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I have good friends to talk about problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I am motivated to study.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I am generally calm and content.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	When I am at home, I miss university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	I would prefer to be at another university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	When I speak to my friends and family back home, I speak about my university experience with pride.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37	I have thought about transferring to another university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38	I worry a lot about financing my education.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral / Not Applicable	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
39	I do not work as hard as I should.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40	When I am at UCT, I miss home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41	I am satisfied with my lecturers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42	I wish I could talk to somebody about my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43	I am satisfied with my academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44	I feel in good health.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45	I have thought about dropping out of UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46	I am pleased with my decision to attend UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47	I keep up to date with my course work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48	I am not able to control my emotions easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49	I always attend lectures and classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50	I feel I am different from others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51	My family is proud of me for attending UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52	I have personally experienced discrimination at UCT.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53	I have difficulty explaining my experiences at UCT to my friends and family back home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54	I feel a strong connection to my group of peers in the ADP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55	I am happy to be part of the ADP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56	I have well-defined academic goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57	I think I would fit in better at another university or college.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire Results

Academic Adjustment

1. Is definite about reasons for being in college
2. Has well-defined academic goals
3. Consider college degree important
4. Doubts the value of a college degree
5. Enjoys academic work
6. Most interests are not related to course work
7. Keeps up-to-date with academic work
8. Does not work as hard as he or she should.
9. Is not motivated to study
10. Attends classes regularly
11. Finds academic work difficult
12. Does not function well during exams
13. Is satisfied with academic performance
14. Does not feel smart enough for course work
15. Does not use study time efficiently
16. Enjoys writing papers for courses
17. Has trouble concentrating when studying
18. Does not do well academically, considering effort
19. Has trouble getting started on homework
20. Is satisfied with variety of courses
21. Is satisfied with quality of courses
22. Is satisfied with program of courses
23. Is satisfied with professors
24. Is satisfied with academic situation

Social Adjustment

25. Fits in well with college environment
26. Is very involved with college social activities
27. Is adjusting well to college
28. Has several close social ties
29. Has adequate social skills
30. Is satisfied with social participation
31. Is satisfied with social life
32. Is meeting people and making friends
33. Has informal contact with professors
34. Gets along well with roommates
35. Has difficulty feeling at ease with others at college
36. Does not mix well with the opposite sex
37. Feels different from others in undesirable ways
38. Has good friends to talk about problems with
39. Is lonesome for home
40. Feels lonely a lot
41. Would rather be home
42. Is pleased about decision to attend this college
43. Enjoys living in a dormitory

44. Is satisfied with extracurricular activities

Personal-Emotional Adjustment

45. Feels tense or nervous
46. Feels blue and moody
47. Being independent has not been easy
48. Is not able to control emotions well lately
49. Has thought about seeking psychological help recently
50. Gets angry too easily lately
51. Sometimes thinking gets muddled too easily
52. Worries a lot about college expenses
53. Has trouble coping with college stress
54. Feels tired a lot lately
55. Appetite is good
56. Has a lot of headaches
57. Gained or lost a lot of weight lately
58. Is not sleeping well
59. Feels in good health

Attachment

60. Is pleased with decision to go to college
61. Thinks a lot about dropping out of college permanently
62. Is thinking about taking time off from college
63. Is pleased about attending this college
64. Would prefer to be at another college
65. Expects to finish bachelor's degree
66. Is thinking about transferring to another college

Appendix B: Focus Group Guide

- Previous Background
    - What made you decide to go to university?
    - Why did you choose UCT? And why Law specifically?
        - Is it not just about money?
    - Having gotten here, in what ways do you feel your previous educational background and also life experiences prepared you for undergrad at UCT? (Academically, socially…)
    - Do you feel it would have been different at another university?
    - When you began thinking about coming to university, who did you turn to for guidance or who did you talk to about it?
    - I was the first person in my family to go to university and I felt that had a significant impact on my experience – actually nearly failed out in my first year; wasn't just about previous schooling for me, it was something else
        - Many of you responded in the questionnaire that you find the course difficult (I'm sure all do at least sometimes): Why do you think you find it difficult and do you think other people find it difficult? Does family educational history have anything to do with it in your opinion?
- Cultural Experience of University
    - When I went off to university, I remember coming home and not talking about it at all because I didn't know how to talk about it with my mom – it's its own culture and its own world
        - How do you explain your experience to your family and friends back home? How do you talk about it? Do you feel at all that there's a disconnect there and if so why do you think that is?
- Discrimination
    - UCT's Mission Statement: "…it is central to our mission" to "strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of… oppressive discrimination", "be flexible on

access, active in redress, and rigorous on success" and "promote equal opportunity and the full development of the human potential".

- Having said that, I've just been reading the transformational report and there's a general consensus amongst black staff that they see racism here both on an institutional level (in terms of the unequal numbers of black vs. white staff in of higher pay and prestige, and vice versa for lower-paying positions) and on a personal level (in terms of the way they're treated): How do you feel about that? Why do you think this is? (Both pieces of the puzzle)
- Similarly, a recent report from UCT that looked into the way students experience UCT and many black students felt they experience racism here
    - Have you ever?
    - In what form?
    - What do you think is the cause of this?
    - How do you deal with it?
    - Do you think it's easier in some way for white students? What is it that they bring to the university that makes it easier, or is it the way they're seen/treated by others? What makes it easier for them? How do you think they're treated?
- Going back to the mission statement, how do you think UCT is doing with regards to overcoming discrimination? When Julius Malema was making his rounds here, he argued for radical transformation
    - Why do you think so?
    - Is it important?
    - What does "flexible on access" mean to you?
    - How do you feel about the affirmative action issue?
    - Do you feel the university lives up to its mission in terms of being "active in redress"?

- Try to imagine what South Africa must have been like, say, 20 years ago: What do you think your experience would have been then?
    - Based on how UCT's doing with regards to its mission statement, what do you imagine it will be like for students in 10 years?

Appendix C: Tables

Table 1.1: Responses (%) Grouped by Dimension of Adjustment

Academic Adjustment		Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral / N/A	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
I enjoy academic work.	All	0.0	0.0	15.0	85.0	0.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	0.0
I am good at budgeting my time to allow for studying.	All	5.0	20.0	15.0	55.0	5.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	12.5	75.0	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	25.0	16.7	41.7	8.3
Most of my interests are not related to academic work.	All	5.3	36.8	5.3	47.4	5.3
	1st Yr	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
	2nd Yr	9.1	27.3	9.1	45.5	9.1
I expect to finish my degree.	All	0.0	0.0	5.0	25.0	70.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	8.3	33.3	58.3
I find academic work difficult.	All	0.0	15.0	30.0	45.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	37.5	37.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	25.0	50.0	8.3
No matter how hard I study, I find exams difficult.	All	0.0	25.0	15.0	45.0	15.0
	1st Yr	0.0	37.5	0.0	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	25.0	33.3	25.0
I do not feel clever enough for the course work.	All	0.0	30.0	20.0	40.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	37.5	12.5	37.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	25.0	25.0	41.7	8.3
For the effort I put in, I do not do well academically.	All	5.0	15.0	40.0	30.0	10.0
	1st Yr	12.5	0.0	25.0	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	25.0	50.0	8.3	16.7
I have trouble getting started on course work assignments	All	10.0	20.0	10.0	55.0	5.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	50.0	12.5	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	33.3	8.3.0	33.3	25.0
I enjoy writing assignments.	All	10.0	35.0	20.0	30.0	5.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	37.5	25.0	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	41.7	8.3	33.3	8.3
I have trouble concentrating when I am studying.	All	5.3	26.3	15.8	42.1	10.5
	1st Yr	14.3	14.3	0.0	57.1	14.3
	2nd Yr	0.0	33.3	25.0	33.3	8.3
I am motivated to study.	All	5.0	20.0	20.0	45.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	37.5	12.5	50.0	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	8.3	25.0	41.7	16.7
I do not work as hard as I should.	All	0.0	20.0	5.0	50.0	25.0
	1st Yr	0.0	25.0	12.5	50.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	0.0	50.0	33.3
I am satisfied with my academic performance.	All	15.0	55.0	10.0	20.0	0.0
	1st Yr	25.0	37.5	25.0	12.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	66.7	0.0	25.0	0.0
I keep up to date with my course work.	All	10.0	35.0	5.0	50.0	0.0
	1st Yr	0.0	25.0	12.5	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	16.7	41.7	0.0	41.7	0.0
I always attend lectures and classes.	All	5.0	25.0	5.0	30.0	35.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	41.7	8.3	16.7	25.0
I have well-defined	All	0.0	0.0	20.0	45.0	35.0

academic goals.	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	33.3	41.7	25.0

Social Adjustment		**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree Somewhat**	**Neutral / N/A**	**Agree Somewhat**	**Strongly Agree**
I have difficulty feeling at ease with people at UCT.	All	10.0	40.0	15.0	30.0	5.0
	1st Yr	0.0	37.5	25.0	25.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	16.7	41.7	8.3	33.3	0.0
I have several close social ties (good friends etc).	All	5.0	0.0	0.0	65.0	30.0
	1st Yr	12.5	0.0	0.0	62.5	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
I am satisfied with my social life.	All	0.0	5.0	5.0	60.0	30.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	12.5	50.0	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
I am involved with social activities at UCT.	All	15.0	15.0	15.0	30.0	25.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	25.0	25.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	16.7	8.3	8.3	33.3	33.3
I fit in well to the UCT environment.	All	5.0	15.0	30.0	35.0	15.0
	1st Yr	12.5	0.0	37.5	37.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	25.0	25.0	33.3	16.7
I am meeting people and making friends at UCT.	All	5.0	10.0	5.0	55.0	25.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	0.0	37.5	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	8.3	66.7	25.0
I have good friends to talk about problems.	All	10.0	10.0	5.0	50.0	25.0
	1st Yr	25.0	0.0	12.5	50.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	0.0	50.0	33.3
I feel I am different from others.	All	5.0	20.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
	1st Yr	0.0	25.0	12.5	12.5	50.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	16.7	33.3	33.3	8.3
I feel a strong connection to my group of peers in the ADP.	All	0.0	20.0	15.0	55.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	50.0	12.5	37.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	16.7	66.7	16.7

Personal-Emotional		**Strongly**	**Disagree**	**Neutral /**	**Agree**	**Strongly**

Adjustment		Disagree	Somewhat	N/A	Somewhat	Agree
I have trouble coping with university stress.	All	10.0	20.0	10.0	55.0	5.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	0.0	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	16.7	16.7	50.0	8.3
Being independent has not been easy.	All	15.8	21.1	21.1	36.8	5.3
	1st Yr	25.0	12.5	25.0	37.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	9.1	27.3	18.2	36.4	9.1
I feel tired a lot.	All	0.0	25.0	5.0	55.0	15.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	0.0	87.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	33.3	8.3	33.3	25
I feel nervous and tense.	All	10.0	25.0	20.0	45.0	0.0
	1st Yr	12.5	12.5	12.5	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	33.3	25.0	33.3	0.0
I am generally calm and content.	All	0.0	26.3	21.1	47.4	5.3
	1st Yr	0.0	28.6	14.3	42.9	14.3
	2nd Yr	0.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0
I worry a lot about financing my education.	All	15.0	10.0	10.0	25.0	40.0
	1st Yr	12.5	12.5	25.0	12.5	37.5
	2nd Yr	16.7	8.3	0.0	33.3	41.7
When I am at UCT, I miss home.	All	5.0	5.0	25.0	55.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	12.5	62.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	8.3	0.0	33.3	50.0	8.3
I wish I could talk to somebody about my life.	All	10.0	10.0	20.0	35.0	25.0
	1st Yr	12.5	12.5	12.5	25.0	37.5
	2nd Yr	8.3	8.3	25.0	41.7	16.7
I feel in good health.	All	10.0	10.0	25.0	50.0	5.0
	1st Yr	0.0	25.0	12.5	62.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	16.7	0.0	33.3	41.7	8.3
I am not able to control my emotions easily.	All	15.0	40.0	30.0	15.0	0.0
	1st Yr	12.5	62.5	12.5	12.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	16.7	25.0	41.7	16.7	0.0

Institutional		Strongly	Disagree	Neutral /	Agree	Strongly

Attachment		Disagree	Somewhat	N/A	Somewhat	Agree
I consider a university degree to be important.	All	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	90.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	8.3	8.3	83.3
I am satisfied with the quality of the courses in my programme.	All	0.0	22.2	16.7	50.0	11.1
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	16.7
	2nd Yr	0.0	33.3	25.0	33.3	8.3
I am satisfied with my academic course load.	All	30.0	15.0	20.0	35.0	0.0
	1st Yr	25.0	12.5	25.0	37.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	33.3	16.7	16.7	33.3	0.0
I could articulate my specific reasons for being in university.	All	0.0	10.0	10.0	50.0	30.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	16.7	33.3	33.3
I wish I were not in the ADP.	All	35.0	30.0	10.0	15.0	10.0
	1st Yr	25.0	25.0	12.5	25.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	41.7	33.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
When I am at home, I miss university.	All	20.0	10.0	5.0	50.0	15.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	0.0	50.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	25.0	0.0	8.3	50.0	16.7
I would prefer to be at another university.	All	50.0	30.0	5.0	10.0	5.0
	1st Yr	50.0	25.0	12.5	0.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	50.0	33.3	0.0	16.7	0.0
I have thought about transferring to another university.	All	26.3	26.3	5.3	42.1	0.0
	1st Yr	37.5	25.0	0.0	37.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	18.2	27.3	9.1	45.5	0.0
I am satisfied with my lecturers.	All	10.0	20.0	15.0	45.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	37.5	25.0	25.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	16.7	8.3	8.3	58.3	8.3
I have thought about dropping out of UCT.	All	45.0	25.0	5.0	10.0	15.0
	1st Yr	50.0	37.5	0.0	12.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	41.7	16.7	8.3	8.3	25.0
I am pleased with my decision to attend UCT.	All	0.0	0.0	15.0	40.0	45.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	12.5	62.5	25.0
	2nd Yr	0.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	58.3
I am happy to be part of the ADP.	All	5.3	5.3	10.5	57.9	21.1
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	12.5	62.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	9.1	0.0	9.1	54.5	27.3
I think I would fit in better at another university or college.	All	30.0	30.0	10.0	25.0	5.0
	1st Yr	25.0	25.0	12.5	37.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	33.3	33.3	8.3	16.7	8.3

Student Perceptions		Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neutral / N/A	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
My friends from home are proud of me for attending UCT.	All	0.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	65.0
	1st Yr	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	87.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	8.3	16.7	25.0	50.0
My school background prepared me well for my course work.	All	25.0	40.0	10.0	25.0	0.0
	1st Yr	12.5	75.0	0.0	12.5	0.0
	2nd Yr	33.3	16.7	16.7	33.3	0.0
UCT has provided adequate support for the transition from high school to university.	All	5.0	25.0	10.0	50.0	10.0
	1st Yr	0.0	25.0	12.5	37.5	25.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	25.0	8.3	58.3	0.0
I am adjusting well to UCT.	All	5.0	10.0	20.0	50.0	15.0
	1st Yr	12.5	0.0	12.5	62.5	12.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	16.7	25.0	41.7	16.7
When I speak to my friends and family back home, I speak about my university experience with pride.	All	10.0	15.0	10.0	35.0	30.0
	1st Yr	12.5	12.5	0.0	50.0	25.0
	2nd Yr	8.3	16.7	16.7	25.0	33.3
My family is proud of me for attending UCT.	All	0.0	5.0	5.0	15.0	75.0
	1st Yr	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5
	2nd Yr	0.0	8.3	8.3	16.7	66.7
I have personally experienced discrimination at UCT.	All	35.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	5.0
	1st Yr	12.5	25.0	25.0	25.0	12.5
	2nd Yr	50.0	16.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
I have difficulty explaining my experiences at UCT to my friends and family back home.	All	30.0	40.0	20.0	5.0	5.0
	1st Yr	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
	2nd Yr	33.3	33.3	16.7	8.3	8.3

Table 1.2: Raw Counts and % by Year, Gender and Question

Raw Counts	Option	Year	Gender	My friends from home are proud of me for attending UCT.	I enjoy academic work.	I consider a university degree to be important.	I am good at budgeting my time to allow for studying.	Most of my interests are not related to academic work.	I expect to finish my degree.	I have trouble coping with university stress.	I have difficulty feeling at ease with people at UCT.	Being independent has not been easy.	I find academic work difficult.	No matter how hard I study, I find exams difficult.	I feel tired a lot.
Strongly Disagree	1	8	9	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	0	0	0
Disagree	2	12	11	0	0	0	2	5	0	2	7	3	0	2	2
Disagree Somewhat	3	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	1	1	3	3	3
Neutral / Not applic	4	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	3	4	6	3	1
Agree Somewhat	5	0	0	0	6	1	7	6	1	5	4	2	6	8	6
Agree	6	0	0	3	11	0	4	3	4	6	2	5	3	1	5
Strongly Agree	7	0	0	13	0	18	1	1	14	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
%	Option	Year	Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Strongly Disagree	1	40.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.3	0.0	10.0	10.0	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Disagree	2	60.0	55.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	26.3	0.0	10.0	35.0	15.8	0.0	10.0	10.0
Disagree Somewhat	3	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.5	0.0	10.0	5.0	5.3	15.0	15.0	15.0
Neutral / Not applic	4	0.0	0.0	10.0	15.0	5.0	15.0	5.3	5.0	10.0	15.0	21.1	30.0	15.0	5.0
Agree Somewhat	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	5.0	35.0	31.6	5.0	25.0	20.0	10.5	30.0	40.0	30.0
Agree	6	0.0	0.0	15.0	55.0	0.0	20.0	15.8	20.0	10.0	10.0	26.3	15.0	5.0	25.0
Strongly Agree	7	0.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	90.0	5.0	5.3	70.0	5.0	5.0	5.3	10.0	15.0	15.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Ave Raw No			6.35	5.4	6.75	4.45	4	6.55	4.4	3.5	3.947	5.1	4.6	4.9

Table 1.2, continued

I do not feel clever enough for the course work.	I feel nervous and tense.	I have several close social ties (good friends etc).	I am satisfied with my social life.	For the effort I put in, I do not do well academically.	I have trouble getting started on course work assignments	My school background prepared me well for my course work.	I am satisfied with the quality of the courses in my programme.	I am satisfied with my academic course load.	I could articulate my specific reasons for being in university.	I am involved with social activities at UCT.	I fit in well to the UCT environment.	UCT has provided adequate support for the transition from high school to university.	I am adjusting well to UCT.	I enjoy writing assignments.	I have trouble concentrating when I am studying.
0	2	1	0	1	0	5	0	6	0	3	1	1	1	2	1
1	4	0	1	2	2	4	2	3	0	3	2	3	0	1	1
5	1	0	0	1	3	4	2	0	2	0	1	2	2	6	4
4	4	0	1	8	5	2	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	4	3
4	4	4	2	4	4	3	1	0	5	3	4	3	5	5	5
4	5	9	10	2	1	2	8	7	5	3	3	7	5	1	3
2	0	6	6	2	5	0	2	0	6	5	3	2	3	1	2
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	18	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	19
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
0.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	15.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.3
5.0	20.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	11.1	15.0	0.0	15.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	5.0	5.3
25.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	15.0	20.0	11.1	0.0	10.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	21.1
20.0	20.0	0.0	5.0	40.0	25.0	10.0	16.7	20.0	10.0	15.0	30.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	15.8
20.0	20.0	20.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	15.0	5.6	0.0	25.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	25.0	25.0	26.3
20.0	25.0	45.0	50.0	10.0	5.0	10.0	44.4	35.0	25.0	15.0	15.0	35.0	25.0	5.0	15.8
10.0	0.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	25.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	30.0	25.0	15.0	10.0	15.0	5.0	10.5
100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
4.55	3.95	6.9	6.2	4.3	4.7	3	4.45	3.5	5.55	4.45	4.55	4.6	4.95	3.8	4.421

Table 1.2, continued

I am meeting people and making friends at UCT.	I wish I were not in the ADP.	I have good friends to talk about problems.	I am motivated to study.	I am generally calm and content.	When I am at home, I miss university.	I would prefer to be at another university.	When I speak to my friends and family back home, I speak about my university experience with pride.	I have thought about transferring to another university.	I worry a lot about financing my education.	I do not work as hard as I should.	When I am at UCT, I miss home.	I am satisfied with my lecturers.	I wish I could talk to somebody about my life.	I am satisfied with my academic performance.	I feel in good health.
1	7	2	1	0	4	10	2	5	3	0	1	2	2	3	2
1	4	0	1	3	0	6	0	4	1	2	0	1	2	8	0
1	2	2	3	2	2	0	3	1	1	2	1	3	0	3	2
1	2	1	4	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	5	3	4	2	5
2	2	1	5	7	3	1	1	2	1	4	2	6	3	4	3
9	1	9	4	2	7	1	6	6	4	6	9	3	4	0	7
5	2	5	2	1	3	1	6	0	8	5	2	2	5	0	1
20	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
5.0	35.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	20.0	50.0	10.0	26.3	15.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	10.0
5.0	20.0	0.0	5.0	15.8	0.0	30.0	0.0	21.1	5.0	10.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	40.0	0.0
5.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	10.5	10.0	0.0	15.0	5.3	5.0	10.0	5.0	15.0	0.0	15.0	10.0
5.0	10.0	5.0	20.0	21.1	5.0	5.0	10.0	5.3	10.0	5.0	25.0	15.0	20.0	10.0	25.0
10.0	10.0	5.0	25.0	36.8	15.0	5.0	5.0	10.5	5.0	20.0	10.0	30.0	15.0	20.0	15.0
45.0	5.0	45.0	20.0	10.5	35.0	5.0	30.0	31.6	20.0	30.0	45.0	15.0	20.0	0.0	35.0
25.0	10.0	25.0	10.0	5.3	15.0	5.0	30.0	0.0	40.0	25.0	10.0	10.0	25.0	0.0	5.0
100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5.45	2.95	5.3	4.55	4.316	4.6	1.75	6	3.474	5.05	5.25	5.1	4.35	4.8	2.8	4.6

Table 1.2, continued

I have thought about dropping out of UCT.	I am pleased with my decision to attend UCT.	I keep up to date with my course work.	I am not able to control my emotions easily.	I always attend lectures and classes.	I feel I am different from others.	My family is proud of me for attending UCT.	I have personally experienced discrimination at UCT.	I have difficulty explaining my experiences at UCT to my friends and family back home.	I feel a strong connection to my group of peers in the ADP.	I am happy to be part of the ADP.	I have well-defined academic goals.	I think I would fit in better at another university or college.	Other family at university	Where do you live
9	0	2	3	1	1	0	7	6	0	1	0	6	13	12
4	0	4	5	3	3	0	4	7	2	0	0	5	5	0
1	0	3	3	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	5
1	3	1	6	1	5	1	4	4	3	2	4	2	0	1
0	3	5	2	2	3	0	2	0	2	3	3	4	0	0
2	5	5	1	4	2	3	2	1	9	8	6	1	0	0
3	9	0	0	7	5	15	1	1	1	4	7	1	0	0
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	20	18	18
45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
45.0	0.0	10.0	15.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	35.0	30.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	30.0	72.2	66.7
20.0	0.0	20.0	25.0	15.0	15.0	0.0	20.0	35.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	27.8	0.0
5.0	0.0	15.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	5.3	0.0	5.0	0.0	27.8
5.0	15.0	5.0	30.0	5.0	25.0	5.0	20.0	20.0	15.0	10.5	20.0	10.0	0.0	5.6
0.0	15.0	25.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	15.8	15.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
10.0	25.0	25.0	5.0	20.0	10.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	45.0	42.1	30.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
15.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	35.0	25.0	75.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	21.1	35.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2.85	6	2.9	3.1	5.65	4.6	6.5	3	2.6	5	5.421	5.8	3	1.278	1.722