

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**Transitions into Higher Education: Educational Decision-Making of Coloured First-
Generation University Students**

Jean-Paul Solomon (SLMJEA002)

Supervisors: Dr Ariane De Lannoy & A/Prof. David Cooper

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Social Science in Sociology**



Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2013

COMPULSORY 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: _____ Date: _____

University of Cape Town

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Firstly, thank you to the following scholarship and bursary programs that funded my studies: UCT Equity Scholarship; Masters Research Scholarship; NRF Masters Free-Standing Scholarship. I feel privileged to have been given this support that enabled me to focus on my studies.

To Dr Ariane De Lannoy: without your involvement this particular project might never have gotten off the ground and I might not have had the opportunity to focus on this fascinating topic. I appreciate your encouragement, guidance, enthusiasm and, most significantly, patience that never wavered.

To A/Prof David Cooper: thank you for the guidance and support that ensured this project remained on track. I am also indebted to the faculty, staff, as well as my fellow students in the sociology department at UCT. Thank you for creating a supportive learning environment. Thanks, also, to my colleagues at the Cornerstone Institute and the Human Sciences Research Council.

I am immensely grateful for the inspiring and insightful respondents who took part in this study. Thank you for not only giving of your time to speak to me, but also for honesty and openness. I hope that what I have written here is an acceptable representation of everything you shared with me and that, in some way, it conveys my high regard for your contribution to this project.

Thank you to my family and friends (there are too many to name) for your support and encouragement over the past two years. To those around the country and the world: thank you for taking an interest in my progress and sending messages of interest and encouragement via the various types of media.

I'm also grateful for Denver Grigg, Emma Arogundade & Tanya Charles – three friends who were invaluable when I was trying to hammer out some of the details of the research design and my argument, as well as with the editing.

Each of you has played a valuable role in what I have learned and achieved during this project. Thank you.

In Him I live and move and have my being. (Acts 17:28)

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

COMPULSORY DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS:	iv
GLOSSARY:	vi
ABSTRACT:	vii
1. INTRODUCTION:	1
2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT:	3
3. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS:	9
3.1 Research Design:	9
3.2 Sampling:	10
3.3 Interviews:	13
3.4 Data Analysis – Miles and Huberman:	15
4. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL CONCEPTS:	18
5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS:	30
5.1 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS:	30
5.1.1 Role of Parents:	30
5.1.2 Motivations:	37
5.1.3 Academic Ability:	44
5.1.4 Making it a reality – Contacts, relationships and information:	47
5.1.5 Passions, interests and talents:	57
5.1.6 Educational vs Career Decision-making:	61
5.1.7 Faith/religion (INDV-FTHX):	65
5.1.8 Finances:	68
5.1.9 Coloured Identity:	71
5.2 EXPOSITION OF THE FINDINGS:	76
6. CONCLUSION:	86
APPENDICES:	88
APPENDIX A – ‘Mean Education Attainment by Race and Parent Education Category’ (Louw, Van Der Berg & Yu, 2006):	89
APPENDIX B – SES Levels Indicators by Suburb (City of Cape Town, 2001b):	90
APPENDIX C – Services Levels Indicators by Suburb (City of Cape Town, 2001a):	91
APPENDIX D – Explanations from Romanovsky & Gie (2006):	92
APPENDIX E – ‘Ideal Types’ of Minority Choosers from Reay et al. (2005: 111)	95
APPENDIX F – Details of respondents:	96

APPENDIX G – Interview Schedule:..... 97
APPENDIX H – List of Codes: 99

REFERENCES: 104

GLOSSARY:

<i>APS:</i>	<i>Application Points Score</i>
<i>BEE:</i>	<i>Black Economic Empowerment</i>
<i>CAPS:</i>	<i>Cape Area Panel Study</i>
<i>EDM:</i>	<i>Educational decision-making</i>
<i>FET:</i>	<i>Further Education and Training</i>
<i>HE:</i>	<i>Higher education</i>
<i>LFS:</i>	<i>Labour Force Surveys</i>
<i>NSFAS:</i>	<i>National Student Financial Aid Scheme</i>
<i>PGCE:</i>	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Education</i>
<i>SAIRR:</i>	<i>South African Institute of Race Relations</i>
<i>SES:</i>	<i>Socio-economic Status</i>
<i>UCT:</i>	<i>University of Cape Town</i>
<i>UWC:</i>	<i>University of the Western Cape</i>

University of Cape Town

ABSTRACT:

In the past two decades there have been significant improvements in the levels of educational attainment amongst South Africa's youth; however, these levels remain quite low among those youths whose parents have had a very limited education. Coloured youths have not only displayed low levels of educational attainment, but also the lowest levels of educational aspirations when compared with other South African population groups. Additionally, these low aspirations result in comparatively few Coloured first-generation students in higher education. Consequently, this study aims to determine some of the significant mechanisms or processes whereby Coloured first-generation university students at the University of Cape Town have been able to accomplish the transition into higher education. This study was significantly influenced by the seminal, yet much critiqued, study by Paul Willis, which examined why working-class youths get working-class jobs. Additionally, attention was paid to other theorists who have looked at how working-class and/or ethnic minority youths have managed to accomplish this transition. During the design phase, attention was paid to the critical realists' understanding of 'emergence', as discussed by Andrew Sayer: that it is possible that students' accomplishments are achieved on the basis of a combination of factors – and are irreducible to just one. Data collection was done by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews on the university campus with 8 of the 9 respondents being interviewed twice. A key finding was the way in which a combination of personal agency and strategically significant relationships, as well as the parents' attitudes towards education, exercised significant influence on the educational decision-making of the respondents, and enabled them to overcome any structural constraints. Lastly, in the midst of these education-related decisions, the data show that these respondents have had to negotiate the potential and/or perceived conflict between constructing their identities, their aspirations, and the beliefs about Coloured identities held by those around them.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Recently, I have often commented that if, 10 years ago, someone had told me that I would be doing a Master's degree in sociology, as well as tutoring and lecturing, I would most likely have answered by saying: "What is sociology?"

At times when reflecting on this anecdote, I have looked at the key experiences, encounters and relationships that have shaped my educational pathway, especially considering that, although I had what could be described as a middle-class upbringing, both my parents only ever attained their Junior Certificate¹. Furthermore, having lived in a number of different cities – encountering the affluence of London on the one hand, and the poverty of some residents in Cusco, Peru, on the other – I have continually asked questions relating to social inequality and social mobility.

This interest was somewhat enhanced by my Honours research project entitled: 'An Investigation into Social Networks in Job-Search. Does the Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis Apply?' This centred on the social and spatial dynamics of the labour market in Cape Town. It focused specifically on how unskilled or semi-skilled individuals living in spatially dislocated residential areas in Cape Town² are able to make use of social networks to find employment. What became evident in those findings was the way in which job applicants at some of those companies were following in the footsteps of their parents, siblings and/or others, in their social network by working there (Solomon, 2010). Consequently, I wondered how it might be possible for some to be socially mobile, while others were not.

It is against the backdrop of these experiences, as well as the relevant literature I have read, that I arrived at this dissertation's central research question: 'How have Coloured first-

¹ That is the equivalent of grade 10.

² Particularly those on the Cape Flats.

generation university students at the University of Cape Town accomplished the transition to higher education?’

Firstly, I will address the broader context in which this study has taken place. I will address, amongst other things, the persistent and racialised inequalities in South Africa, the educational attainment of the various racial or population groups³, as well as the attitudes towards education and the labour market. The third chapter will focus on the research design; and this will be followed by a chapter focusing on a review of the key theorists and concepts to be used in this study. The final chapter, before the conclusion, will focus on the findings – firstly presenting and discussing the themes in the data, and secondly discussing the relationships between those themes.

³ In this dissertation I will make use of the terms for racial or population groups (i.e. Black or Black African; Coloured; Indian; and White) that have their origin in the Population Registration Act of 1950. While that piece of legislation has since been rescinded, the terms used in that study may still be used in some contexts in contemporary South African society. That said, it is worth acknowledging that the meanings of these terms may have changed over time, as well as that the boundaries between the groups are not necessarily as clear, nor are they policed in the same way. Furthermore, I have ensured that each of the respondents identified themselves as Coloured, and/or acknowledged that on official or formal documents they select ‘Coloured’ when categorising themselves.

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT:

In the years following South Africa's first democratic election, the idea of a post-apartheid society has been experienced unevenly. Material inequalities and the unequal distribution of wealth and income still persist. Two related areas where these inequalities are clearly evident are education and employment (Bray, Gooskens et al. 2010, Crouch 2005).

These areas are related because, in the South African context, one of the key reasons for disparities in income is that not everyone has the same access to income-earning opportunities, due to insufficient education. Whereas interracial inequality was a consequence of the apartheid era, this has changed somewhat in the post-apartheid era. Seekings and Nattrass (2005) have shown that intra-racial inequality has increased in all four population groups, with the greatest degree of inequality being amongst Black South Africans, followed by Coloureds⁴.

Furthermore, changing income patterns are evident in the shifting racial profiles of high income earners – with Blacks, Coloured and Asians now making up greater proportions of the highest income deciles (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

The aforementioned disparities are at least in part due to the development of a skills-intensive formal sector (Louw, Van der Berg & Yu, 2006). Looking at Cape Town, we see that there have been significant shifts in the occupational structure – both in terms of levels of educational attainment and occupational distribution. For example, 26% of Cape Town's working population in 1980 had completed high school or more; but by 2001 this figure had increased to 48% (Borel-Saladin & Crankshaw, 2009).

⁴ Using Census 2001 data, Seekings and Nattrass (2005) show that the Gini coefficient for Black South Africans increased from 0.47 in 1975 to 0.66 in 1996. Over the same period, the Gini coefficient for Whites increased from 0.36 to 0.50, for Coloureds from 0.51 to 0.56, and for Asians from 0.45 to 0.52.

Furthermore, in terms of occupational distribution, the most significant growth, in terms of the rate of change, has been in skill-intensive high-income occupations, such as professionals⁵, as well as for associate professionals and technicians⁶ (Borel-Saladin & Crankshaw, 2009).

Whereas Borel-Saladin and Crankshaw (2009) demonstrated the shift towards skills-intensive occupations, Branson, Leibbrandt and Zuze (2009) demonstrated a more explicit link between education and income. In their report, *The Demand for Tertiary Education in South Africa*, they demonstrate that there is a definite correlation between education and socio-economic wellbeing – due to differing access to labour market opportunities. While this might be seen as a common-sense observation, they showed the extent of that impact, using data from both Labour Force Surveys (LFS) and the Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS)⁷ for the period 2000 to 2007.

For example, as compared with those who do not finish high school, the data show that those who complete matric are not only 30-60% (Branson et al., 2009:9) more likely to find employment, but can, on the average, expect to earn 40-70% more (2009: 12). On the other hand, someone with at least some tertiary education (e.g. certificate, diploma or degree) is twice to three times more likely to find employment than someone with less than matric (2009: 9). With regard to earnings, the data suggest that someone with a certificate or diploma could expect to earn 180-210% more; whereas, someone with a degree could expect to earn 320-350% more than someone who has not finished high school (2009: 12).

⁵ It increased by 68.1% between 1980 and 2001.

⁶ It increased by 171.7% between 1980 and 2001.

⁷ “The Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) is a longitudinal study of the lives of youths and young adults in metropolitan Cape Town, South Africa. The first wave of the study collected interviews from about 4800 randomly selected young people age 14-22 in August-December, 2002. Wave 1 also collected information on all members of these young people’s households, as well as a random sample of households that did not have members age 14-22.” In total, there were 5 waves of interviews (Lam, Ardington, Branson, Case, Leibbrandt, Menendez, Seekings & Sparks, 2008).

Consequently, underlying the persistent income disparities in South Africa is the unequal access to income-earning opportunities in an increasingly skills-intensive economy, with many being excluded from formal employment due to insufficient educational attainment (Louw, Van der Berg & Yu, 2006).

While the benefits and importance of education are clearly evident, this is not necessarily accessible to all South Africans, with a limited range of real opportunities being available to South Africa's poor – at least in part – being due to the lasting relationship between class, race and neighbourhood (Bray et al., 2010). One of the ways this is evident is that young people living in the poorest communities have access to poorer schools, resulting in a lower quality of education. While there is a belief in education as a means to success, in some poorer (particularly Coloured) communities that belief is tempered by the obstacles observed in the labour market, a lack of knowledge about further education, and the belief that they are disadvantaged by Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment, or BEE (Bray et al., 2010).

In addition to the study by Bray et al. (2010), work by Louw, Van der Berg and Yu (2006) made use of the census data from 1985 to 2001 – to investigate the relationship between the levels of education achieved by parents and their children's educational outcomes. Their findings show that, although Coloured learners generally performed better than Blacks in the lower grades, this advantage disappears once they are in high school. Coloured youths drop out of high school by the age of 15; and the authors argue that this is at least partially linked to Coloured communities having had better labour-market access and networks – due to higher degrees of earlier urbanisation relative to Blacks⁸, as well as pregnancies and the cost of education.

⁸ That is, under apartheid.

Their data also show that the educational attainment levels of Whites and Indians are significantly higher than those of Coloured and Blacks (the latter being the lowest)⁹. Nonetheless, what is of interest for this study is that the above research data suggest that the gap between Blacks and Coloureds has shrunk between 1985 and 2001.

The data from the 1985 census show that, regardless of the level of parental educational attainment, Coloureds out-performed Blacks. With regard to educational attainment in 2001, this has shifted (See: Appendix A). Firstly, for those whose parents had either no schooling or incomplete primary schooling, Blacks were outperforming Coloureds, albeit only marginally. For those whose parents had some high school education, or had completed high school, Coloureds were still outperforming – but the gap had decreased.

The 1985 data show that for those whose parents had not completed high school, the mean educational attainment for Coloureds was 0.57 years higher than that for Blacks; but by 2001, this was reduced to 0.34 years. For those whose parents had completed high school, the level of education attained by Coloureds was 1.25 years higher than that for Blacks in 1985; but by 2001, the difference was only 0.53 years (Louw, Van der Berg & Yu, 2006).

In addition to these data, initial reports using the data from the Census 2011 paint an even bleaker picture of the educational attainment of Coloured South Africans. Although an increasing percentage of South Africans are completing secondary school and/or obtaining higher education, Coloureds are now the worst-performing population group in these categories, while Indians and Whites are far ahead (Statistics South Africa, 2012)¹⁰.

⁹ The educational attainment levels of Whites were the highest, whereas the levels for Blacks were the lowest.

¹⁰ The percentage of Indians over 20-years who completed matric increased from 34.9% in 2001 to 40% in 2011; for White South Africans over the same period the figure decreased 40.9% to 39.5%; for Coloureds it increased from 18.5 to 25.2%; and for Blacks from 16.8 to 26.9%. The data on higher

The low levels of educational attainment among Coloured youths¹¹ in South Africa may not be surprising when looking at the low level of educational aspirations in that same population group. According to the data from wave 3 of CAPS, only 26% of the Coloured respondents expected to complete an undergraduate degree, compared with 38% of their White peers and 49% of Black youths. The differences are even starker when one looks at the expectation of finishing a postgraduate degree. Once again, a minute proportion of Coloured youths (6%) expect to attain this level of education compared with their Black (9%) or White (26%) peers (De Lannoy, 2008).

In addition to the data on educational aspirations, the decision to focus on race in this dissertation – as an explanatory variable – is further supported by its correspondence with other socio-economic factors, as well as the role that race plays in identity formation. Even in post-apartheid South Africa, race remains a salient issue, particularly in the lives of young people, with many seeing their racial categorisation as a central aspect of their identity (Bray et al., 2010)¹².

One reason for this is the ongoing, yet decreasing, correspondence between race and class. While there is an increasing representation of previously disadvantaged population groups¹³ in middle-to-high income jobs, resulting in greater intra-racial inequality, interracial inequalities persist. Consequently, while race is still used as a proxy for class, the accuracy of that proxy is increasingly being questioned, as the relationship between the two erodes (Crankshaw, 2008 & 2012)¹⁴.

education show a similar dynamic with Indians (21.6%) and Whites (36.5%) leading the way, with Blacks (8.3%), and Coloureds (7.4%) considerably further back.

¹¹ This was one of the key reasons for this study.

¹² Citing Seekings (2008) & Soudien (2007).

¹³ The term 'disadvantaged population groups' refers to those racial/population groups which were most disadvantaged by South Africa's apartheid system – Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans.

¹⁴ Crankshaw's studies on the changing social and spatial dynamics of Cape Town (2012) and Johannesburg (2008) have shown that in the post-apartheid era, interracial inequality has decreased, as can be seen in the increased representation of previously disadvantaged population groups in

Secondly, Bray et al. (2010) also argue that race is still relevant today, because it could be an indicator of different cultures, which might comprise specific attitudes and identity formations, as well as distinct belief and value systems.

Thirdly, and this is specifically relevant for South Africa's Coloured population, Bray et al. (2010)¹⁵ point out that in contemporary South Africa, there remains a salient belief in a distinct 'Coloured' identity. Rather than diminishing in post-apartheid South Africa, this "racialised conception of 'Colouredness'" has strengthened (Bray et al., 2010: 165). Coloured identity is significant in this study, because young adults' decisions about their educational paths form part of a broader process in constructing their identities (De Lannoy, 2008).

While family and home play major roles in shaping children's values and attitudes, schools play a major role in shaping their potential. Additionally, schools are sites where different kinds of knowledge are developed – knowledge which, at times, takes specific racialised forms. Therefore, it is important to look at the relationship between racial identities and education, because economic and educational institutions are dominated by White 'racial knowing' (Soudien, 2007).

Lastly, a substantial amount of literature has been produced focusing on, or including race, and specifically ethnic minorities, as an explanatory variable when looking at educational decision-making (EDM) and educational outcomes (e.g. Apple, 2004; Rizvi, 2004; Reay, David & Ball, 2005).

professional jobs and living in previously Whites-only middle-class neighbourhoods. That said, these occurrences are not the norm – with interracial inequalities continuing, albeit now somewhat less pronounced.

¹⁵ Citing Adhikari (2005).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS:

3.1 Research Design:

In a discussion on research designs by Sayer (1992: 242), this author considers what Harré refers to as 'intensive' and 'extensive' research designs. Sayer (1992) argued that in extensive research the aim is usually to use inferential or descriptive statistics, in order to determine something about the population that is the focus of the study. This is usually done by means of questionnaire surveys focusing on taxonomic groups¹⁶. As such, the individuals are only of interest to the extent that they are representative of the broader population. Whereas in intensive research designs the entire research process, including the sample, is determined prior to commencement, an intensive or qualitative study can be designed in such a way as to be truly exploratory. As such, both the sample and the research design can be further developed once the process is under way.

Therefore, depending on what emerges from an interview, the researcher can decide who to focus on next – with the aim of building a causal group and an understanding of the mechanisms that link them.

Sayer (1992) also argues that with qualitative research one is able to look at actual or causal relations and the interdependencies between events and individuals, as opposed to formal relations of similarity and the statistical correlation between taxonomic groups. Additionally, the critical realist perspective incorporates the view that "the world is characterised by emergence". In other words, situations may come about as the result of the combination of two or more factors that result in new phenomena, which are irreducible to their constituent elements (Sayer, 2000: 12).

¹⁶ Groups where the individuals may share similarities, but are not necessarily connected in any causal way

When applied to this project, it became evident that certain events or factors had coalesced in specific ways in the lives of these first-generation university students. Consequently, their transition into higher education (HE) might not be traceable back to a single factor.

In addition to Sayer (1992, 2000), the ways in which Miles and Huberman (1994) characterised qualitative research have also been particularly useful. They explained that qualitative research designs cannot simply be taken off the shelf, but need to be developed with the research question in mind (Fielding & Lee, 1998). Miles and Huberman further argued that qualitative research has a cyclical or iterative character. Therefore, it is quite possible that various steps in the research process, such as sampling and analysis, could in fact be occurring concurrently (Fielding & Lee, 1998).

3.2 Sampling:

The approach was a non-probability purposive sampling; the aim was to find respondents exhibiting very specific criteria. For various reasons, including practical ones, the study was limited to students at the University of Cape Town (UCT). For example, gaining access to students on other campuses through informal means could have been quite difficult, causing unwanted delays. Furthermore, getting permission from multiple institutions could also have resulted in delays. In addition to these practical reasons, focusing on students from one institution meant that it would not be necessary to account for the possible variety of factors associated with these institutions.

Later, in conversation with my supervisors, the decision was taken that additional boundaries needed to be placed on the sample, such as limiting it to one racial or population group: Coloured youths. As with the decision to focus on one university, there were a number of reasons for this, including the lack of research focusing exclusively on the EDM of Coloured students, as well as the aforementioned attitude among some Coloured youths

toward education, affirmative action and BEE. Additionally, a more homogenised sample, although somewhat small, could potentially provide more accurate insights into the decision-making of that particular group.¹⁷

Initially I did interview students from different racial groups, prior to finalising the decision to focus on Coloured students only. Although the data were not used in the analysis, they functioned effectively as pilot interviews to augment the development of the interview schedule and my awareness of any potentially significant factors.

While initially I had not expected the sampling process to be a significant challenge, it became clear that finding students at UCT who fit this narrow profile¹⁸ was difficult. The steps taken to develop a suitable sample included: visiting tutorials, communicating with students through various departments¹⁹, as well as informal conversations with various people on the main campus.

During the sampling process it also became evident that I needed a clearer definition of 'Coloured first-generation university students'. Earlier, I had mistakenly assumed that someone was Coloured. Consequently, later in the sampling process I ensured that the potential respondents identified themselves as Coloured. Additionally, within the bounds of this study, a first-generation university student was defined as someone whose parents and/or the legal guardians who had raised them had never attained any educational qualification beyond grade 12, or the Further Education and Training (FET) equivalent²⁰ thereof.

¹⁷ Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that samples can be specified before fieldwork begins but, as in the case of this study, can evolve once it has begun. One of the reasons that there was speculation regarding the boundaries of this sample was the initial challenge of finding respondents who fit the profile.

¹⁸ Coloured first-generation university students.

¹⁹ Including, their academic development programmes.

²⁰ Initially, the definition excluded only those whose parents had attended university. Through further reflection on the literature and on one of the pilot interviews (where the respondents' parents were

Although it would have been advantageous to have focused on respondents who were the first of the children in their families to attend a tertiary institution, it became impractical to add that parameter – due to the difficulty of finding suitable respondents. Among the participants, there was one whose older brother was at university, two with older siblings who had dropped out of HE institutions, and one whose older sister did not complete her FET qualification²¹.

Additionally, two of the respondents were sisters (Andrea and Alexia²²), with the older of the two being the first of her siblings to attend a HE institution. The reason for including siblings in this study was that it was an opportunity to explore whether they would have encountered similar influences in similar ways, as well as what influence the older sister's pursuit of an HE qualification had on the younger sister²³. All in all, 14 participants were interviewed. However, the discussion of the findings will focus on only 9 of them.

Another decision that had to be made was how large a sample was necessary. In one article, the authors explain that the standard by which sample size in qualitative studies is determined is the concept of 'theoretical saturation'; yet at the same time, they acknowledge that there are not always clear guidelines on how to operationalize that concept. One definition posits that the point of saturation has been reached once no new data are being

college-trained teachers) it became clear that it would be best to exclude anyone whose parents had some post-secondary qualifications.

²¹ This means that none of the respondents have a close relative who has completed a post-matric qualification.

²² Pseudonyms are used for respondents. Additionally, with regard to the neighbourhoods where they lived, I made use of the names of the broader areas within which their neighbourhoods were situated instead of the exact locations being given. However, the data for their specific neighbourhoods were used when looking at the SES and service-level indicators.

²³ In late 2012, my struggle to find relevant respondents was explained by the data compiled by the Admissions Policy Review Task Team, and which was included in the agenda for a senate meeting. In the data they differentiated between 'first generation university students' and 'first generation tertiary students', with the former label including those students whose parents had attended some kind of post-secondary college. The study reported that based on 1,677 first-year students (from all population groups and nationalities), only 23% of the Coloured respondents had identified themselves as 'first-generation tertiary students' – that was the cohort of students I was interested in, but referred to as 'first-generation university students' (University of Cape Town, 2012).

found, but instead similar occurrences are being found over and over again (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). In this particular study, certain patterns emerged as significant during the analysis of the initial interviews; and these issues continued to be central themes, with minor variations, throughout the interviews²⁴.

These included the importance of the role of parents, the significance or passion and/or talent, as well as the role played by teachers or other third parties. Another significant constraint limiting the size and scope of this study was that this was a minor dissertation, which limited the amount of time dedicated to the study and the length of this report.

3.3 Interviews:

Prior to the interviews it was necessary to develop a structured, yet flexible interview schedule. The initial questions²⁵ were based on the literature relevant to the research question. Throughout the interviews, some issues²⁶ arose that appeared to be significant; and those were included or given more emphasis – where applicable – in subsequent interviews (including the follow-up interviews).

In discussing the role of interviews in qualitative research, Kvale (1996: 3, 4) describes the researcher as a miner seeking “nuggets of essential meaning”, or as a traveller who “wanders through the landscape” of the country s/he is visiting. The former metaphor regards the knowledge being sought as a given; whereas the latter engages with a more postmodern constructive understanding of knowledge. In this particular study, one example of an

²⁴ This is not to suggest that these patterns are representative of a broader population, but rather that they were indicative of an emerging point of ‘theoretical saturation’.

²⁵ These included background questions regarding their families, the occupations of their parents, the neighbourhoods where they lived, the high schools they had attended and when/where/why they first thought of pursuing a university education.

²⁶ These included how they and/or their parents decided on which high school they would attend, their relationships/interaction with their teachers, and, later, a realisation that it was necessary to take a more direct look at their sense of Coloured identity.

important nugget²⁷ of meaning was determining how their aspirations had developed, and were maintained en route to university.

An important discovery that was made through wandering through the landscapes of the narratives was the significance of the role that parents played in motivating young people to pursue further education. Additionally, the ways in which the parents' lack of knowledge on the field of HE limited that role, were also particularly significant.

The type of semi-structured interviews used in this project are those that Kvale refers to as 'professional interviews', which, unlike spontaneous everyday conversations, are "characterised by a methodological awareness of question forms, a focus on the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee, and a critical attention to what is said" (Kvale, 1996: 20).

Most of the interviews were conducted in an unused office in the Leslie Social Science building on UCT's Main Campus. This allowed me to accommodate changes in students' schedules or plans; and it allowed for the interviews to go on as long as necessary. It was also convenient for students to meet there between their lectures; and I had the flexibility to come and go as I needed. The corridor where the office was situated was quiet, thereby assisting the anonymity of the respondents.

I emphasised to the participants that they were under no obligation to participate, and that they could stop the process at any time. I also made sure that they understood that I was interested in hearing their story, and that there was no 'right' answer per se to the questions I had. This was an important point because I was aware of the potential impact of the asymmetry of power between the participant (i.e. an undergraduate student) and myself – a postgraduate student (Kvale, 1996; Swartz, 2011).

²⁷ Because it was something I knew needed to be focused on, based on the literature reviewed.

3.4 Data Analysis – Miles and Huberman:

The data analysis was informed by the fact that there is a body of work on EDM, and that this study is not aimed at addressing a completely new question. Instead, the focus was on a refined question in a specific context, with the hope of contributing to the existing body of literature. I, therefore, chose to make use of the approach put forward by Miles and Huberman (1994).

Their method involved three processes, the first being 'data reduction', which they described as selecting and condensing material based on the conceptual framework as it develops. Secondly, they emphasised the importance of 'data display', which involves arranging and displaying the data in such a way as to facilitate the discovery and selection of possible interpretations of the data. Lastly, the process of 'conclusion drawing/verification' involves interpreting the displayed data (Fielding & Lee, 1998).

Two important methods involved in the data-reduction process are 'coding' and 'memoing'. Codes are meant to pull material together and to facilitate the process of identifying themes in the data. In their method, Miles and Huberman (1994) differentiated between first-level codes and pattern codes. First-level codes focus on developing a working set of codes and are purely descriptive. Pattern codes are aimed at finding the patterns and connections in the data; and they therefore have an explanatory dimension (Fielding & Lee, 1998).

Whereas proponents of grounded theory²⁸ insist on a purely inductive approach to data analysis, where the themes emerge from the data, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested using a start-list of codes. While they acknowledged that this could result in imposing a framework on the data, it could also prevent the development of a bulky and incoherent set

²⁸ Such as Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1992, 1994).

of codes. Nevertheless, throughout the analysis process, the code list²⁹ remained subject to modification (Fielding & Lee, 1998).

The final interview schedule³⁰ was an important resource in developing the start-list of codes. Since I knew which issues were to be addressed in the interview, I had an idea of some of the themes or issues, which were to be discussed, although without knowing the eventual significance of those data. The start-list included codes for such things as the background and context of the high school the participant had attended (HSCH-INST), the details of who lived in the home where they grew up (HOME-FMLY), the role of their parents in shaping their attitudes toward education and EDM (PRNT-EDMR), their information about where they lived – including details about the area/neighbourhood (HOME-NBHD), as well as details about their interaction of relationships with various groups of people, such as their siblings (FMLY-SIBR), high school friends (HSCH-FRND), and those who, at some stage, were role models or mentors (RLTN-RMOD).

While many of these initial codes were connected in some way to specific contexts (e.g. family, home or school), some of those which surfaced during the early analysis, including those used to label data regarding race (GNRL-RACE) or class (GNRL-CLAS), were not.

The process of 'data display' was particularly helpful once the descriptive or first-level coding was under way. A network diagram showing the connections between major codes or themes was also developed over time. Initially, it contained just five codes³¹ or clusters of codes³², which throughout the data were connected. The display of the data in this way,

²⁹ For the full list of codes developed and used during the analysis, turn to Appendix H.

³⁰ See: Appendix G.

³¹ e.g. PRNT-EDMR.

³² e.g. HOME-CASH (family's financial position) and UNIV-CASH (which is how their university tuition was paid) were part of the 'Finances' cluster. However, at a later stage it became necessary to deal with HOME-CASH and UNIV-CASH separately, as can be seen in Chapter 5.

including the use of arrows to show the direction of the influence or relationships, facilitated the discovery of other patterns or connections within the data. An example of this is the relationship between the aforementioned PRNT-EDMR and a cluster including their exposure to universities or HE in general (UNIV-EXPO) and the application process (UNIV-APPL). As mentioned earlier, for a number of these students, there was a gap between the PRNT-EDMR code, the UNIV-EXPO, and the UNIV-APPL cluster, with some third party, such as high school teachers (HSCH-TCHR) or the career-guidance programme at the school (HSCH-GUID) providing the necessary information or knowledge.

The network diagram was particularly useful in drawing conclusions from the data. A deeper understanding of PRNT-EDMR that developed showed that for some of the students their parents had chosen specific schools, in order to give their children a better chance at a good education, thereby being a catalyst of sorts for the role the teachers and the guidance curriculum at that chosen school would come to play.

4. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL CONCEPTS:

As stated earlier, the development of this study was influenced by my Honour's research project that focused on how unskilled or semi-skilled individuals living in spatially dislocated residential areas in Cape Town could make use of the social networks to find employment. The study showed that the job applicants at some of the companies in question were following in the footsteps of parents, siblings and/or others in their social network by working there (Solomon, 2010). In order to understand how this had taken place, it was necessary to make use of some work by Portes (1998) on 'social capital'.

Portes (1998: 3) used Bourdieu's (1985: 248) conceptualisation of social capital: "[T]he aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to [the] possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition". During the final stages of that particular project, the question surfaced regarding what it would take for someone to choose a path that was different to those around them. I was especially interested in understanding how someone from a family and/or neighbourhood where HE is not the norm, would find themselves at UCT.

In *Learning to Labour*, Willis (1977) discussed the ethnographic study of working-class youths in a British town, which he pseudonymously referred to as Hammertown. The book opens with two sentences that concisely put forward the issues he aimed to address:

"The difficult thing to explain about how middle class kids get middle class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves." (Willis, 1977: 1)

In essence, Willis aimed to explain how class identity and lifestyle were reproduced, as well as the role that a specific "working-class counter-school culture" played in the process (1977: 2). Some of these elements include an opposition to authority, a rejection of conformity, 'dossing' (or sleeping) in class, 'wagging off' (i.e. truancy), as well as the

importance placed on 'having a laugh'³³ (1977: 11, 26-27, 31). He also focused on explaining the decisions that shape the educational and occupation outcomes of the working-class 'lads' that, in turn, lead to typical working-class jobs.

On the other hand, a group of school conformists (referred to as 'lobes'³⁴ or 'ear'oles' by 'the lads') had a significantly different orientation to that of 'the lads'. The names given to these conformists by 'the lads' suggest a perceived "passivity and absurdity", because it seems as though "they are always listening, never doing" (Willis, 1977: 14). Furthermore, whereas 'the lads' were constantly engaged in 'having a laugh' or 'dossing' in class, the 'ear'oles' had invested themselves, and even their identities, in their belief in the importance of formal education. As such, they waived the right to 'have a laugh', in order to get the most out of their education, at least to some extent (Willis, 1977).

As can be seen in the opening sentence of his book, job market outcomes and the choices that shape them, were central to the research that Willis (1977) was doing. One issue that Willis (1977) engaged with was the idea of 'job choice', which, as far as 'the lads' were concerned, was a middle-class construct. The 'lads' were not helplessly subject to social structure, but were making conscious decisions about their chosen career path (if one can call it that). Those decisions involved a commitment to a future of generalised labour, because, as far as they were concerned, all manual and semi-skilled jobs³⁵ were the same.

Their view was that work is inevitable and unpleasant; and, regardless of the job one chooses, they all involve 'grafting'³⁶ and lead to a wage at the end of the week. Willis goes on to explain that for those who do come to realise the shortcomings in their decision-making

³³ This can be understood as actions (often of an anti-social sort, like emptying bins or defacing property) that engender laughter or enjoyment for themselves and or others.

³⁴ As in, 'ear lobes'.

³⁵ That is, the only types of jobs they would consider pursuing.

³⁶ Or, manual labour.

process, this happens too late. What he found was that “as the shopfloor becomes a prison, education is seen retrospectively, and hopelessly, as the only escape” (1977: 107).

It is also worth noting that although *Learning to Labour* by Willis (1977) is regarded as one of the most significant early studies in this area, it has not been free of criticism. One of the criticisms of his study, which he acknowledged (Willis, 2004), was that his study did not address the issue of race and/or ethnicity.

For Kaufman, it was the aforementioned ‘ear’oles’ that were of particular interest. Kaufman’s (2003) work responded to what he regarded as a dearth of literature focusing on ‘social transformation’. He contrasted the idea of ‘social transformation’, a process he sees occurring in the lives of Willis’ ‘ear’oles’ (1977) with the ‘social reproduction’ of Willis’ ‘lads’. Although others have engaged with this idea of ‘social transformation’, the way in which Kaufmann approaches those concepts was particularly useful for this study. He argued that those who aim to transform their ascribed social-class position³⁷ actively make use of various strategies in the context of interpersonal relationships, in order to achieve that goal.

He then posits three processes he sees as central to social transformation. He focuses on what he refers to as: ‘associational embracement’, ‘associational distancing’ and ‘presentation of self’. Through each of these processes, they are “engaging in a process of ‘reflexive monitoring’ whereby they evaluate both the structural resources at their disposal and their capabilities for action” (Kaufman, 2003: 488, citing Giddens, 1984).

Kaufman (2003) explains that ‘associational embracement’ involves associating with significant others whose social-class position is what the individual hopes to achieve. He explains that this process can be either proactive³⁸ or retroactive³⁹. ‘Associational distancing’

³⁷ The social position into which they are born.

³⁸ Initiated by the individual in question.

³⁹ In response to an initial embracement instigated by the significant other who has the targeted social-class position.

would be the opposite of this process, where the individuals hoping to transform their class position distance themselves from those with whom they share an ascribed social-class position. While this distancing is centred on interpersonal relationships, it could also include disassociating oneself from certain types of activities. He explains that this might be necessary where those relationships are inconsistent, or where they conflict with their aspirations.

Kaufman explains that this process, of distancing oneself from contexts and interpersonal relationships with which one is familiar and comfortable, could be reasonably straightforward for some, but extremely difficult and taxing for others (Kaufman, 2003).

Furthermore, in order for these processes to be successful, Kaufman (2003) states that these individuals might make changes to their speech patterns and dress code. This is part of what he refers to as the 'presentation of self'. This involves engaging in impression management, which is aimed at using the available resources, as well as their understanding of the rules associated with those in their target social-class position, to best model the behaviour of that group.

The combination of the three processes posited by Kaufman culminates in creating a new identity. This potentially, changes their "subjective reality" in such a way that it not only reinvents the present, but might go so far as to reinvent their history too (2003: 484). While some might not go so far as to reinvent their past, Kaufman argues that, at the very least, the individual might feel obliged to provide some explanation or justification of past actions that is consistent with the newly created identity.

In the South African context – where race and class boundaries still often coincide – these processes could take on a specifically racialised character. For those young people whose behaviour and/or social circle does not conform to the expectations of others in their racial or population group, they might find themselves ostracised (Bray et al., 2010, Dolby,

2001, Ramphele, 2002). Because this study has focused specifically on Coloured youths, it was necessary to look at the literature that addresses the position of Coloureds in contemporary South African society.

As stated earlier, EDM processes in youth form part of the constructing of their identities; and their population group remains at the core of this identity construction (De Lannoy, 2008; Bray et al., 2010). One contemporary researcher that has focused on Coloured identity in South Africa, especially as it pertains to young people, is Soudien (2007, 2012). In one publication, focused on youth identity in South Africa, he argues:

... to understand young people, we need to keep in mind that they are rooted in social structures (including family, race, ethnic and language group, and class); and that they have the capacity to relate to these social structures as individuals (Soudien, 2007: 4).

Furthermore, in order to understand youth identity formation, there needs to be a focus on “the socio-temporal nature of the category of youth” (Soudien, 2007: 5). In other words, it is necessary to understand the position of young people – not only in terms of society at large – but also in terms of their place in history.

Therefore, when looking at Coloured youths in South Africa today, it is necessary to keep in mind not only how their identities are shaped by contemporary social factors, but also to pay attention to historical processes. For Erasmus (2001), conceptualisations of Coloured identity, as well as how those have been shaped by racial discourses in South Africa, were significantly shaped by the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950.

In it, a ‘Coloured’ person was defined as someone who was ‘not a white person or a native’. Thus, Colouredness was not regarded as an identity in its own right, but was “defined in terms of ‘lack’ or taint, or in terms of a ‘remainder’ or excess, which does not fit a classificatory scheme” – while also being associated with “immorality, sexual promiscuity, illegitimacy, impurity and untrustworthiness” (Erasmus, 2001: 17).

Ultimately, Erasmus' (2001) conceptualisation of Coloured identity has four pillars. Firstly, coloured identities should not be seen as a mixture of races, because any such notion inevitably buys into some idea of racial purity. Secondly, Coloured identities are not only differentiated by borrowing per se, but that the cultural borrowing and creating occur under very specific conditions. Thirdly, central to this process of creolization was a racial hierarchy that positioned Coloureds as being midway between White and Black African. Lastly, in the context of the New South Africa, we should not privilege simplistic notions of 'blackness' or 'Africanness' as being more credible or authoritative (2001: 16-17).

Another theorist whose body of work was particularly useful in this study was that of Pierre Bourdieu. In addition to Bourdieu's thoughts on social capital, it was beneficial to focus on some of his other concepts too: in particular, 'cultural capital', 'habitus' and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1985; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Wacquant, 2006).

Since Bourdieu developed his conception of cultural capital, the idea has become increasingly complex and more difficult to define (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). This complexity is apparent when one considers that, according to Bourdieu (1985), cultural capital could exist in three related yet distinct states. According to Bourdieu (1985), the various states of cultural capital are: The 'embodied state' (i.e. dispositions of body and mind); the 'institutionalised state' (e.g. education⁴⁰); and the objectified state (e.g. material objects or media, such as paintings and music).

Lamont and Lareau (1988) proposed the following concise definition:

"institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion, the former referring to exclusion from jobs and resources, and the latter, to exclusion from high status groups" (1988: 156).

⁴⁰ Which Bourdieu viewed as a certificate of cultural competence.

An important aspect of this definition is that the cultural signals that are regarded as valuable are decided on by those in the high status groups, and that the most prestigious and/or respectable cultural signals form a part of what Bourdieu (1985) referred to as 'legitimate culture'. Whereas Bourdieu (1985) regarded legitimate culture as something that is determined by the dominant status group, Lamont and Lareau (1988: 157) expanded their understanding of this process by positing the idea that even "lower class high status cultural signals (e.g., being streetwise)" could perform exclusivist functions comparable to legitimate culture among the middle and upper classes.

They argued that cultural capital is "important because it has improved our understanding of the process through which social stratification systems are maintained"; and it is useful in understanding social reproduction, social mobility, as well as the exclusionary practices used by some to prevent the mobility of others (Lamont & Lareau, 1988: 154)⁴¹. Its importance is due to the fact that although the theory is structural, it also allows for an agent to play a role.

Wacquant, who collaborated with Bourdieu, posits that when Bourdieu's concept of capitals⁴² is combined with his concepts of 'habitus' and 'field', they form a valuable "conceptual triad" that should enable one to better understand the processes of social reproduction, as well as transformation (2006: 9).

Bourdieu's 'habitus' refers to a collection or systems of enduring, yet not static, dispositions people hold, and which shape their attitudes towards their perceptions and understanding of, as well as actions in, the world (Wacquant, 2006). Bourdieu argued that the dispositions "are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings" (Wacquant, 2006: 6). Thus, habitus is not only a "structuring structure", which

⁴¹ As seen in the work by Bourdieu and Passeron (1992).

⁴² In its various guises, such as social and cultural capital.

organises practices and perceptions, but also a “structured structure”, since it is the principle by which the world is perceived to be logically divided into social classes (Bourdieu, 1994: 405, 408).

In their study focusing on the British youth, Reay et al. (2005: 61)⁴³ employed the idea of a ‘familial habitus’, which they depict as “the deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share”.

While habitus refers to those internalised dispositions, which shape perceptions and actions, Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’ refers to the various spheres of life that we encounter. Wacquant (2006: 7-8) explains that fields, such as art, science, religion and education “tend to form distinct microcosms endowed with their own rules, regularities, and forms of authority”. Furthermore, Bourdieu depicts fields as sites of struggle for dominance that include a struggle for the right to determine the aforementioned rules and regularities.

Consequently, those who are dominant would resist any change to the structure of the field, which could be perceived as a threat to their dominant position (Wacquant, 2006).

According to Wacquant (2006: 8), what is decisive with regard to determining social action is the relationship between habitus and field, that is “the correspondence (or disjuncture) between mental structures and social structures”. It is this correspondence or disjuncture that is central to some of the work done by Diane Reay⁴⁴, which is focused on choice regarding HE, and how this is influenced by race, class and gender.

In one particular study, Reay, Crozier and Clayton (2009) discuss the consequences of the likely disjuncture when a working-class habitus encounters the middle-class dominated field of HE. They argue that, when this happens, it is possible that it would result in “disquiet,

⁴³ Citing Reay (1998) and David et al. (2003).

⁴⁴ Reay, Davies, David & Ball (2001) and Reay, Crozier & Clayton (2009).

ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty” for those working-class students (Reay et al., 2009: 1105). However, for some of these students just getting into universities has been a challenge; and it has probably involved avoiding those students/groups who were not serious about their schooling. Where those groups formed the majority, the students were likely to feel excluded. While they are not using the same terminology, the processes described by Reay et al. (2009) echo the associational embracement and distancing strategies posited by Kaufman (2003).

Reay et al. (2009) draw on Bourdieu’s conceptual triad⁴⁵ to explain the experiences of the working-class students. They show that while a correspondence between habitus and field can result in a formidable synergy, this is not the case for the working-class students in their study. In the university context they cannot take anything for granted, as they come to terms with the disjuncture between their working-class habitus and the middle class-dominated field of HE (Reay et al., 2009).

When one considers Bourdieu’s idea that a field is a site of struggle, it makes sense that in the context of predominantly middle-class universities, those working-class students are at a disadvantage; whereas those with middle-class dispositions are able to benefit from the synergy between those and the field they are encountering in the university (Reay et al., 2009; Wacquant, 2006).

Therefore, whereas a middle-class student might be like a “fish in water” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127) in the university context, his/her working-class counterpart is engaged in a process that involves reinvention of the self, creating a new identity, and of pursuing dreams (Reay et al., 2009). Through those experiences, the habitus of those working-class

⁴⁵ Habitus, field and the various capitals – as mentioned by Wacquant (2006).

students is “restructured, transformed in its make-up by the pressure of the objective structures” of the field of HE (Reay et al., 2009: 1110)⁴⁶.

One publication that was of particular usefulness in this study was the aforementioned book by Reay et al. (2005), which discussed distinct patterns in the data regarding the EDM of ethnic minorities in Great Britain.

As stated at the end of Chapter 2, there is a substantial literature that discusses the impact of race and/or ethnicity as an explanatory variable for EDM and its outcomes. One publication that was of particular importance for my study was *Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education* by Reay et al. (2005). This discusses the findings of a study on the university choice of British youth.

They found distinct patterns of decision-making among ethnic minority students in their sample; and they developed two ‘ideal types’⁴⁷ of HE choosers from ethnic minority groups: ‘contingent choosers’ and ‘embedded choosers’. While acknowledging the shortcomings of the approach, they constructed these ideal types using simple binaries⁴⁸ – also recognising that very few, if any, of the students in their sample would fit neatly into either of the ideal types of minority chooser.

Reay et al. (2005) explain that contingent choosers are most likely first-generation university students, whose families have no tradition of attending HE institutions. Those regarded as embedded choosers come from families where attending a university is something normal, necessary and/or expected. Consequently, the choice of university education for contingent choosers is usually something that is distant and somewhat unreal

⁴⁶ Citing Bourdieu (2005: 47).

⁴⁷ “An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised view-points into a unified analytical construct.” (Shils & Finch, 1949: 90; as cited in Reay et al., 2005: 138)

⁴⁸ See Appendix E for the full list of binaries used to construct these ‘ideal types’.

and not part of the normal biography of their families and of themselves. Furthermore, because contingent choosers come from families with no tradition of HE attendance, they are more likely to come from working-class families. Therefore, when deciding to pursue a university education and choosing an institution, finance is a key issue and a definite constraint. Additionally, many contingent choosers are not only unfamiliar with the field of HE, but they are also less likely to have access to the experiences of university-educated people in their social networks.

Thus, when making decisions, they have to rely on 'cold knowledge' from phone calls and information handbooks or prospectuses from universities. Lastly, there is also a considerable difference in the roles played by the parents of embedded choosers versus those played by other parents. Due to their unfamiliarity with HE, the parents of contingent choosers know as little about universities as their children, if not less. Consequently, whereas the parents of embedded choosers are actively involved in framing the educational careers of their children and participate in the decision-making processes, many contingent choosers might only have the moral support of their parents, usually their mothers (Reay et al., 2005).

This chapter has focused on the literature centred on understanding how youths make decisions regarding their career and/or educational pathways, with specific emphasis on how decisions are made with regard to pursuing university education. It has addressed how some working-class youths might reproduce their ascribed class position due to their commitment to a particular "working-class counter-school culture" (Willis, 1977: 2).

It has also discussed how others in similar ascribed class positions are able to transform those ascribed class positions by means of specific interpersonal strategies (Kaufman, 2003). Furthermore, Bourdieu's "conceptual triad"⁴⁹, has been particularly

⁴⁹ 'Habitus', 'field' and 'cultural capital'.

effective in explaining the processes of social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1992; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Wacquant, 2006).

One way Bourdieu's conceptual triad has been useful is in understanding the challenges faced by working-class (particularly ethnic-minority) students when pursuing a university – specifically, the potential disjuncture between the working-class habitus of the students and the middle-class dominated field of higher education (Reay et al., 2009; Wacquant, 2006).

Lastly, while some might question the use of racial labels or categories in this type of study, it has been shown that in the South African context, it is still a relevant variable to account for. Among the reasons for this are the ongoing correlation between race and class, as well as the fact that race could be an indicator of specific belief and value systems (Bray et al., 2010; Soudien, 2012).

5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS:

The aim of this chapter is to present, describe and discuss the main findings of this study. The first section will primarily be a description of the central and most prevalent themes found in the data, with some links made to the literature. The order in which the themes are presented are not intended to imply the importance (or lack thereof) of each theme, nor is the intention for it to be understood chronologically. Also, although the themes are being dealt with in discreet subsections none should be seen in isolation. That said, in the second section, the causal, chronological and/or other relationships between these themes will be addressed.

5.1 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS:

5.1.1 Role of Parents:

As already mentioned, Louw, Van der Berg and Yu (2006) show that there appears to be a relationship, albeit not a linear one, between the educational level of parents and the educational attainment of their children. However, that study did not address the nature of that relationship. In this study, it is issues like the nature of parents' involvement that was of particular interest. Of the 9 students interviewed, 8 of them identified their parents as having a definite impact – whether inspirational, motivational or in the form of actual direct assistance – on the EDM processes that brought them to UCT⁵⁰.

One respondent, whose transition into HE clearly exhibits significant influence from her parents, is Natasha⁵¹. She is 21-years old; and her parents have done well for themselves in spite of their lack of tertiary education. Her mother works as a credit manager for a local

⁵⁰ Angelo was the only one that did not place any significant emphasis on the role his parents played.

⁵¹ Pseudonyms are being used for the respondents and the schools they attended for the sake of confidentiality. Also, the ages mentioned were correct at the time of the first interview. For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F.

hospital; while her father, having worked at a large financial services company for over 20 years, more recently started two companies (transportation and office supplies) with a friend. Based on her parents' occupations, Natasha's class position would be between 'upper class' on the part of the father, because of the business ownership, and 'intermediate class'⁵². Her parents' job mobility enabled them to send Natasha (and her sisters) to good schools, such as North West High School⁵³, a former Model C⁵⁴ school in Cape Town's northern suburbs.

At present she is completing a degree in organisational psychology and industrial sociology at UCT. In talking about the difference between her experiences of primary school and high school Natasha explained her father's attitude in relation to her previous involvement in various extramural activities:

And at the time I think I was more... not more, but more my daddy pressuring me, was like 'education first', get that whole thing. 'cause obviously he saw like I have potential, whatever, so he was pushing me to focus on that.

– Natasha, 21

This experience was not always a positive one.

... but like grade 4 when they did that my report came and I came first in the grade; and my father was still like 'you can do better in Afrikaans' ... And I like told my mother that like 'I'm first in the grade, there's no higher ranking I can get at this grade. Like does he want me to be the teacher? Like what does he want from me?'

– Natasha, 21

On the whole, Natasha's relationship with her father has remained strained; and the way in which he communicated his emphasis on the importance of education seems to have

⁵² The class categories discussed by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) are: Upper Class (i.e. managers & professionals; as well as the upper wealth or entrepreneurship categories); Semi-professional class (i.e. teachers & nurses); Intermediate class (i.e. routine white-collar, skilled and supervisory workers); core working class (i.e. semi-skilled and unskilled workers; except farm and domestic workers); petty traders; and marginal working class (i.e. farm labourers and domestic workers).

⁵³ Pseudonyms are used for all the schools mentioned in this dissertation; however, certain descriptions are included that emerged as significant.

⁵⁴ This term comes from the 'Models System' developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, applied to (White) House of Assembly schools and implemented by the Minister of Education. So-called 'Model C' schools became semi-privatised – meaning they continued to receive a state subsidy, but could levy additional fees to make up their budget, as well as admit Black, Coloured and Indian learners up to a maximum of 50% of the student body (SAIRR, 2011; Soudien, 2012).

added to that strain. Natasha contrasted her father's harsh approach to that of her mother, which she regarded as being more understanding, encouraging and hands-on. She too placed great emphasis on Natasha getting a good education, which involved choosing a good high school. When deciding on which path to take when applying to university, Natasha's mother assisted in finding the necessary information regarding her options. She also discussed an instance of her mother's practical support on a morning when she had to write an exam. Natasha was having car trouble and her mother opted to take public transport, so Natasha could get to campus on time with her mother's car.

For Natasha, this was a significant gesture and one which, for her, epitomised her mother's support for her education.

Another participant whose parents placed significant emphasis on education from an early age was Rene, who is currently studying Geomatics⁵⁵. Whereas Natasha was between 'upper class' and 'intermediate class', Rene would be positioned between 'intermediate class' (her mother does office administration) and 'core-working class' (her father, however, works as a butcher)⁵⁶. Furthermore, while Rene's mother completed high school, her father dropped out of school in standard 7 (grade 9).

Rene explained that, from a young age, her mother had ensured that she was focused on her school work:

From very young, I mean like grade 2, grade 3... she used to force me to sit with my books and I didn't know what that meant at that age. She used to say 'go sit with your books, read over your work'; and that kind of structured me for where I am now.

– Rene, 21

⁵⁵ In the 'School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics', which is part of the 'Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment'.

⁵⁶ This is based on the class categories put forward by Seekings & Natrass (2005).

Although she acknowledges that at that age she did not really understand what her mother was doing, she now believes that her mother's insistence on her doing her homework and reading over her work must have played a role in her being where she is today.

There are two aspects of Rene's path, which are significant, especially when comparing it with Natasha's. Firstly, Rene does not mention her father at all in relation to her EDM or the application process for UCT. Although Natasha's perception of her father's involvement was not necessarily positive, she does acknowledge that his involvement was a 'push' factor. Secondly, while Natasha's mother was involved in matters pertaining to her education, this was, according to Natasha, limited to emotional support and gathering information for university.

In contrast, Rene depicts her mother as playing a significant role in instilling what might be regarded as a 'culture of learning' in their home.

In addition to those early lessons mentioned by Rene and Natasha, another tangible way that some parents showed the emphases they placed on education was evident in their choice of high school for their children. When it came to choosing a high school, Natasha's parents placed so much emphasis on getting their children into good schools that they relocated to a different neighbourhood, in order to facilitate that process. Although Natasha lived in Goodwood with her family at the time of the interview, prior to that they had lived in the Southern suburbs, which is close to the financial services company where her father worked at the time.

Both the Southern suburbs neighbourhood and Goodwood where she lived were, in SES terms, quite well-off suburbs.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ In Goodwood, the 2001 Census data show 53% of the adults over 20-years old had completed high school, with only 7% of the economically active individuals not employed. The figures for Pinelands

Having grown up in Pinelands, Natasha went to a primary school there, and hoped to attend the local high school with her friends; but her father held a dim view of that school due to a perceived prevalence of drug use. By the time Natasha was due to enter high school, her older sister was already attending North West High School, and her father intended her to do the same – because he had heard numerous positive remarks about the school.

In order to attend North West High School, it was necessary to live in a specific catchment area, so when it was time for Natasha's older sister to enter high school, the family moved to Goodwood, which was in the school's catchment area. While Natasha's parents' commitment to their children's education and the steps they were willing to take was undoubtedly significant, not all parents have access to the means and resources they had – thanks to their job mobility.

While limited means and income were a significant hindrance for some, Mandy and Rene's parents were still determined to get their children into good high schools. Mandy is 19-years old and grew up in the greater Athlone area⁵⁸, where she lives with her mom, aunt and older brother⁵⁹. However, at the time of the interview, she was staying in a student residence while at UCT. Her mom never completed high school, dropping out in grade 10 (standard 8), and has since worked in various receptionist and secretarial jobs.

As high school drew nearer, Mandy's mother was reluctant to send her daughter to a school in or near Athlone – due to her experience of having grown up there. She was also aware of some of the social issues and trends in the Athlone area⁶⁰.

are even better with 83% of adults having completed high school, and only 3% of the economically active individuals being unemployed (City of Cape Town, 2001b).

⁵⁸ A predominantly Coloured area on the Cape Flats. For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F.

⁵⁹ He dropped out of university.

⁶⁰ Census 2001 data show that 78.2% of the adults in Mandy's neighbourhood had never completed high school. Furthermore, 18.9% of the economically active population were unemployed, with 13.1% of the labour force being employed in unskilled occupations (City of Cape Town, 2001b).

... she was like 'there's no way you're going to a school in this community, there's no way you're going to a school nearby'... because she didn't want us to socialise with people in the area because she knew how it was. She was like 'these schools are just going to encourage alliances and friendship you don't want and you don't need in your life ...
 – Mandy, 19

Consequently, Mandy attended Dreyer High School, a former Model C school in the Southern suburbs, where the majority of the learners are now either Black or Coloured. In addition to getting her into that school, Mandy's mother also arranged transport between home and school, so that, as Mandy puts it: "[T]here's no time for you to socialise" with anyone in Athlone. Rene had a similar experience, as her mother did not want her to attend a school in the Cape Flats neighbourhood, near Bonteheuwel, where they were living at the time. Instead, she managed to get Rene admitted to North East High School, a former Model C school. She said:

... my mother always wanted something better for her children. So she was not going to put us in a school in the community. She was not going to do that because the drop-out rate was so bad; matric pass rate was probably like 20% or something. And so she put us in North East High and that was great because it was a really good school...
 – Rene, 21

Rene lived in a predominantly Coloured neighbourhood on the Cape Flats. Based on the SES and service-level indicators for that neighbourhood, one could argue that Rene's mother's concerns were well-founded. Additionally, the SES indicators were also considerably worse than Athlone. According to Census 2001 data, 89.6% of the adults had never finished high school; 43.7% of the economically active population were unemployed (City of Cape Town, 20010b).

Those indicators placed Rene's neighbourhood in the worst 20% of Cape Town's suburbs in terms of both SES and service-level indicators (Romanovsky & Gie, 2006).

Having insisted on her daughter doing her homework from a young age, the aforementioned culture of learning instilled by Rene's mother's hands-on approach continued in the decision-making on which high school to attend. While for some this hands-on

approach of the parents was evident in the expectations that their children were focused on, (their education and/or that they attended a better school than the one in their immediate vicinity), this was not the experience of all the respondents.

Another example is Charlene, who is 29-years old and has spent most of her life in Mitchell's Plain⁶¹. She is the second of four children – with an older brother who works for an undertaker, a younger sister who works in a factory, and a younger brother who works in security. Over the years, her family has experienced some financial hardships, including unemployment, which resulted in them losing their house and temporarily staying in separate entrance accommodation or with relatives. She went to a school in her immediate vicinity, and always believed that her parents would not be able to afford to send her to university.

However, they always encouraged her to take whatever opportunities came along; and they communicated their belief in the importance of education. The combination of a belief in the importance of education and the reality of her family's financial situation contributed to her ambivalent attitude towards education. This is evident when Charlene speaks about her subject-choice decision:

I wanted easy subjects, I didn't want difficult subjects. So my combination of subjects were [sic] like... ooh, stupid really... It wasn't like a combination to go into a particular field. It was just to get done with matric, and as by that time I knew I wasn't going to go on to varsity. That's the thing, so mine is just, my aim was just for my matric certificate...
– Charlene, 29

It is clear that although she was focused on completing high school, Charlene did not consider tertiary education at all likely. As a result, she made it as easy as possible to get her matric certificate. At a later stage, she realised there were ways of getting around her family's financial challenges and to enter university; but this will be discussed at a later stage.⁶²

⁶¹ For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F

⁶² Refer to the section on 'Finances'.

The data here show that these students' parents played significant roles in their attitudes toward their schooling and education in general, yet not necessarily in the same way. Although the role these parents played in getting their children into university was perhaps limited due to their lack of knowledge about the field of HE, they demonstrated their belief in the importance of education.

This consisted of their insistence on spending time on homework, ensuring that their children got into good high schools and/or offering practical support in various forms. Although this practical support is what Reay et al. (2009) foresaw with regard to the parents of minority contingent choosers, these parents were not merely onlookers, as was found in that UK study. These attitudes toward education could suggest that the familial habitus shared by the families of these students had already undergone a shift away from the dispositions held by those in their communities. It suggests that the perceptions of and attitudes towards education of these parents were not limited by their own educational and/or career experiences (Reay et al., 2005; Wacquant, 2006).

Instead, they understood that in order for their children to have a better life than they had had (see the next section), their children needed to pursue higher education. This is not only something they had not experienced, but also something which they possibly did not understand.

5.1.2 Motivations:

Although these respondents do not have quality high school education or class position in common, and although only some parents took a hands-on approach to their education, there were two outlooks that were common throughout the interviews with regard to the motivations behind the emphasis placed on education and the pursuit of tertiary education. The first was that each participant had hopes, dreams, and/or aspirations for a better future—a life that would be better than what their parents had had. The second theme was that their

parents' lack of educational opportunities under the previous dispensation was used as a motivation for these students to make the most of whatever opportunities were available to them today.

A good education was regarded as the first step towards that better life – an idea which, for eight of these students, originated with their parents, as was seen in the previous section.

Angelo is 18-years old, the youngest of 4 children⁶³, and he has spent most of his life living in a predominantly Coloured community in the South Peninsula. For Angelo's family, life has not been easy. His parents and brothers have held various low and semi-skilled jobs, although his father is currently unemployed. Both his brothers have worked in retail, although one is planning on attending an FET college in the near future. While Angelo's neighbourhood is not in the worst 20% of Cape Town's neighbourhoods, the SES and service-level indicators do not paint a very positive picture.

According to the 2001 census data, 82.4% of the adults living there had not completed high school, with 21.2% of economically active residents being unemployed. Furthermore, 33.9% of those who were employed in 2001 were in unskilled occupations (City of Cape Town, 2001b).

Angelo's portrayal of his background was that it included struggling with poverty – something he was determined to overcome. He also had a strained relationship with his father and felt bullied by his older brothers. Those experiences impacted his behaviour on entering high school, because he was afraid of provoking that kind of behaviour in older learners. Additionally, during his high school career he developed a good rapport with some

⁶³ He grew up with his two older brothers, but his paternal half-sister lives in another part of Cape Town.

of his teachers, particularly the physics teacher, who taught him the importance of independence and having a “do-it-yourself mentality” with regard to his schoolwork.

The value of that experience is now evident in the ability to think for himself, to work things out; and these qualities have served him well at UCT. While he did not credit his family in any direct way for the change in his attitude toward his education, he admitted that he did not want to be like them⁶⁴. He wanted a better life than that, which he and his neighbours had experienced.

Both Andrea and Alexia⁶⁵ were also driven by dreams of a better future, something their mother initiated. The sisters grew up in Mitchell's Plain. According to the 2001 Census data, 68.2% of the adults in that part of Mitchell's Plain had never finished high school, with 17.7% of the economically active unemployed, and 12.1% of the labour force in unskilled occupations (City of Cape Town, 2001b). Even though their mother passed away when Andrea was in grade 8 and Alexia in grade 4, their focus on their education was inspired by her memory – because “she planted [in them] the seeds of coming to university”⁶⁶.

She would always tell us that our lives were going to be better. You know? She would always paint the picture that we're going to have the big house, we're going to have a pool in the back, in our backyard. You know? Live good lives. And the only way we can have that is if we go study and have good jobs [and so on].

– Alexia, 18

Their mother not only encouraged them to dream, but also made the connection between that dream and the importance of education. However, although it was their mother who planted those seeds, they had to take it seriously and choose to stay focused at school. When asked how she managed to do that, Alexia explained that she had continually reminded herself that she wanted to be successful and that the challenges she was facing would not last forever. One factor that made this difficult was that she felt her personality

⁶⁴ He was referring to their attitudes, behaviour and socio-economic circumstances.

⁶⁵ The aforementioned sisters.

⁶⁶ A quote from Alexia's first interview.

conflicted with her aspirations. She wanted to have an active social life and a group of friends; but she felt she was always seen as a nerd.

Based on her experience in Mitchell's Plain, being smart and having friends did not necessarily correlate therewith. It was not until she arrived at UCT that she met people who were outgoing and had active social lives, while also being conscientious students.

For Natasha and Rene, their aspirations were shaped by encouragement from their parents, which had a very specific gendered dimension, since they were both encouraged to be independent, without having to rely on having a man or husband to support them. According to Natasha, it was her father who would occasionally bring this up:

It is, because like I said he teases us, we 'need to marry a rich man 'cause we, to fill our needs'. But at the same time he tells me, like... he wants me to do well and, like, I don't need the guy. I can do this on my own and be successful on my own.

– Natasha, 21

Rene was also given similar advice by her mother.

She's been like 'I don't want this for you guys; I [want] you guys to have your own things; I don't want you to be dependent on anyone; don't get married for financial reasons ...

– Rene, 21

When asked about her mother's reasons for saying this, Rene explained that it was based on her mother's own experiences, since, as Rene understands it, her mother and father were financially dependent on each other, whereas she wants her daughter to be able to be independent. Consequently, Rene's mother insisted that she focus on school work from a young age, emphasising the importance of education in order to obtain that independence.

Whereas the first theme was focused on hopes for the future, the second was centred on what the parents lacked in the past, in terms of career and educational opportunities compared to what is available to their children today. Consequently, they wanted their children to use that opportunity.

... she feels she didn't have a chance to be a teenager, and do these things, and have the choices like I have. Like she had, was forced to go and work, because she had to support her mother them. – Natasha, 21

Here Natasha explained how her mother had told her that what she was accomplishing at university was what she had hoped to do, but could not. In a sense, she was achieving it vicariously through Natasha's experiences of university. Natasha's mother's recollection of her family was that their financial position required that she start working, that studying was not an option. For Natasha this was not a concern because her parents had managed to pursue occupations that enabled them to send their children to good schools and to cope with the costs of their tertiary education.

Randall is another student whose mother was not able to pursue post-secondary education, even though she had wanted to do. At the time of the interviews, Randall was 21-years old, the younger of two children⁶⁷. His parents were divorced approximately 10 years ago. Since then, he has lived with his mother and has not had much contact with his father.

Since Randall's mother completed high school, she has had a number of different jobs. At one stage, while working at a home-based crèche, she indicated that, if she had had the opportunity, she would have liked to have studied teaching. But, as Randall explained "obviously back in those days, money wasn't always available, so she went to work", suggesting that the family in which his mother grew up was not financially able to assist her in furthering her education. Although Randall's mother was not able to pursue tertiary education, over time something changed in her family because both her younger brother and sister completed some form of education after high school – with her sister now working as a primary school teacher, and her brother working as an accountant for a local company.

In addition to the crèche, she had worked at various administrative jobs, including at a hospital; and she had also worked as a laboratory technician for a textile company, where

⁶⁷ For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F.

she had tested the labels the company manufactured. That particular experience enabled her to take up an opportunity at a company where her younger brother worked as a financial manager. Although she went on to become a supervisor, her experiences have made her insistent that her children should get a good education.

She's been very... she's always said she wanted both me and my sister to go to university because she never got the chance. And she made sure that we did our best at high school, even though I was very lazy... When my sister dropped out, she was upset....

–Randall, 21

Although Randall acknowledges that over the years the family struggled financially, they had managed to keep going with him still being at university at the age of 21⁶⁸. It is worth noting that although the financial change started in Randall's mother's generation⁶⁹, this was not the case in Charlene's family. While there are some in her extended family who have received some nursing training, for the most they are employed in low and semi-skilled occupations, such as factory workers. Although neither of her parents were able to complete high school, the only one of their children not to have done so was the youngest⁷⁰.

Also, while her father always wanted them to be able to study further, this did not seem possible, due to her family's financial situation. Until just a few years ago, nobody in the family was aware that it was possible to obtain bursaries to pay for HE. So although they were not able to provide her with the finances, nor the necessary knowledge or information to aid the process, they encouraged her in her pursuit of a better education, and promised to support her as far as they could.

⁶⁸ As I will discuss later, this would not have been possible without the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) loan and bursary, which his mother researched online and for which he successfully applied.

⁶⁹ Because her younger siblings were able to further their education.

⁷⁰ Charlene attributes this to a learning difficulty that may stem from complications when he was born

In the quote below, Charlene reflects on her time in high school and what she now knows about bursaries, realising the impact of that lack of knowledge on her educational and career path.

Because I always say to my mom if my father knew about, there was bursaries available or my mom even, if they knew that there was bursaries available I could've been done with my degree long time already.

– Charlene, 29

Each one of these students held strongly onto the hopes, dreams, and aspirations they had for a better future by pursuing something different to that which they had known growing up, something different to that which their parents had known in their youth. Also, they have each used their parents' lack of opportunities in the past to motivate them in the present. While some of these students might not be categorised as working class, particularly Natasha and Zita⁷¹, none of them have displayed the kind of “working-class counter-school culture” that Willis (1977: 2) found in his study.

In her study focused on Black youth in Cape Town, De Lannoy (2008) also discovered the lack of a ‘counter school culture’ among her respondents and a strong belief in education as the pathway to a better life.

What is also apparent in this study is that parents played a role – not only in shaping the students' attitudes to education in general – but also in motivating them to dream of, and work towards something better. In reflecting on the data from a study of Canadian working-class first-generation university students, Lehmann explains that “[at] the core of nearly all interviews was a narrative of social mobility” (2009: 635). He explains that the participants in that study “spoke about the limitations placed upon them (and their parents) by their class origins, discussed their hopes to ‘break free’ from these class constraints” (2009: 635).

⁷¹ Both Zita's parents worked in the motor industry (white-collar jobs) in the past. At present, her father works in IT, while her mother is a housewife.

Although for some, the narrative of social mobility began with their parents⁷², there is an overwhelming sense in these narratives that having an education could result in a better life in the future. Of particular interest is that these findings correspond with those from a study conducted by De Lannoy (2008, 2011), who also focused on the Cape Town youth, even though those respondents were younger than those in my study.

While these parents had encouraged their children to dream, Mandy posited that the lack of aspirations and motivation among Coloured youth in South Africa today is, at least in part, due to a lack of encouragement from their parents.

I don't think parents are allowing them to dream. I think dreams play a major role and I don't think parents allow them to dream because they think they can't provide for that dream so they don't, they don't wanna put a hope there and then have it be unattainable...

– Mandy, 19

While some parents of first-generation students might be mere onlookers, it is true that in some instances, parents might rather insist on their children pursuing employment (Reay et al., 2005). This line of thought suggested by Mandy could be worth further investigation in the South African context, especially when one considers the significant role played by the parents of the respondents in this study.

5.1.3 Academic Ability:

The majority of these students⁷³ appear to have been among the best students in their class and/or grade. Perhaps the clearest implication is that their performance at school would have needed to be above average for them to qualify to get into university. This is especially important when one considers the Application Points Score (or 'APS')⁷⁴ at UCT.

⁷² Epitomised by Natasha's father becoming part owner of two companies.

⁷³ Six of the nine participants.

⁷⁴ APS is calculated as follows: "The percentages achieved in National Senior Certificate examinations (preliminary and final examinations) will be allocated an admission score equal to that percentage. The sum of six subjects, excluding Life Orientation, but including English and any required subject(s) for the relevant programme, is considered when deciding on admission." (UCT, 2013)

When asked about the standard of scholastic performance at high school, Angelo had the following to say:

There was a couple that wanted to come here, but they just couldn't. And I could understand that because of the APS... Admissions points score. Because my APS was relevant, it was enough, but the others weren't. Because, I said the pass rate was well but it wasn't quality.
– Angelo, 18

When Angelo mentions “quality” here, it is in reference to an earlier comment, where he explained that although he believed his high school’s matric pass rate was over 90%, the quality of those passes were not good enough to enter high education. While Angelo was near the top of his class that was not necessarily enough to get into his preferred programme:

To be honest, as I said I wanted to become an accountant, so obviously I did apply for BCom accounting, but I wasn't accepted. Actually, the problem of the rejection was English. The requirement was 50% and I got 49%. Aahhh, 1%... I went for a remark, I got my 50%.... And next year I'll most definitely, I'm going to come here and do accounting.
– Angelo, 18

While performing adequately in high school was a necessity to get into UCT, there is another consequence of academic performance that needs to be taken into account. While still at high school, the top-flight academic performance of these students resulted in a number of them gaining extra attention from teachers at their schools. This not only shaped their relationships with those teachers, but, for some, also determined the type of exposure they had towards knowledge on and/or experiences of HE processes and contexts.

Additionally, it had an impact on the way their peers saw them, and consequently on how they saw themselves, in some ways not unlike the so-called ear'oles discussed by Willis (1977).

Andrea struggled, both emotionally and socially, at high school after her mother died during her grade 8 year. By that time, she had already proven herself as a capable student;

and, prior to her mother's passing, her lively personality and academic ability had already caught the attention of the teachers.

And like we went to a parent meeting, and I was in the choir and my mommy was smiling at me (laughs) and stuff so... And my teacher that "there's something about Andrea, like she's really vibrant" and "she can go far in life"...

– Andrea, 22

So in grade 9 I almost dropped out of school and then my teachers were very worried... and then, ya, I spoke to them and I told them, like I feel like I'm not here, I'm not living, so why still go to school and whatever. But they knew that I had potential, and if it wasn't for them, if they didn't see that interest...

– Andrea, 22

According to Andrea, the attention the teachers paid to her and her educational path was a major influence on what she believed she could achieve. They were also a significant factor preventing her from dropping out. Additionally, at least one teacher made a concerted effort to encourage her and tell her that she was "a star", and that she has "so much to offer".

Alexia⁷⁵, initially attended Ridge Senior Secondary School with the majority of her primary school friends, but later transferred to Gordon High School⁷⁶, also in the Mitchell's Plain area. Her experience at Gordon High was similar to that of Andrea's, because her academic ability invited attention from a number of teachers, including the school principal.

I was known by everybody because they knew I was smart, because I was probably like, because the teachers... you know teachers used to speak about students, when they're in the staffroom. So I was always brought up in the staffroom. So, as the grades went by the teachers, they like knew about me.

– Alexia, 18

So in grade 12, my one teacher told me, because I didn't do my homework, I didn't do homework for maths and then she was so disappointed. And she was like I'm a model, "you're a model student, other students look up to you". And I was like "do people, do they still", like because I felt... so depressed at the time (laughs)...

– Alexia, 18

⁷⁵ Andrea's sister.

⁷⁶ She transferred to Gordon High, also in the Mitchell's Plain area, because it had a better academic track record and not necessarily because Andrea was there. Ultimately, Gordon High did not live up to her expectations.

For various reasons, including the loss of her mother at a young age, she became quite depressed and lost interest in her schoolwork⁷⁷. In spite of this, and due to her academic performance, she was regarded as a role model, at least according to the teachers. It is evident that this was a compliment that Alexia did not necessarily believe; yet at the same time she felt that she needed to perform well.

I was quite smart and like the teachers made it known to me that I was quite smart and... I always felt like I don't want to let them down or let the other students, the other learners in the class, down...
– Alexia, 18

As stated earlier, academic performance also shaped the exposure to HE enjoyed by some students. For Alexia, her marks enabled her to participate in a research project connected to Stellenbosch University.

I think it was a top-5 students in grade 11, we were evaluated by this guy from Stellenbosch University, also something like this where we did a survey on how, how we are going to get to tertiary education, and why we want to, and are we equipped enough and talented enough to be...
– Alexia, 18

Randall had an opportunity to spend a day at Stellenbosch University, in order to experience campus life.

Stellenbosch University would come to our school and take our top-40 students there and give us like a personal tour. I remember it was called 'A day in the life of a Matie'⁷⁸. We were taken on a tour. We were given lunch. We saw everything: the library, classrooms, everything. And we were brought on tours of UCT and stuff like that. So we were very fortunate...
– Randall, 21

For Randall this experience, which was pivotal in his awareness and understanding of HE, was a direct consequence of being a strong student. Thus, the students' academic performance meant that they were more likely to be granted access to the knowledge required, in order to make university education a reality.

5.1.4 Making it a reality – Contacts, relationships and information:

⁷⁷ Similarly, her older sister Andrea also struggled to deal with depression at times, including during high school.

⁷⁸ The nickname for students at Stellenbosch University.

All 9 of the participants were driven by a belief in the value of HE and the benefits to be gained from it, including how that related to the type of future they wanted. Additionally, for all of them, their parents played a role, whether supportive or more active, in getting them to the place where they could be students at UCT. This parental support alone, however, was not enough to get them there. This relates to the findings of Reay et al. (2005), that the parents of ethnic minority first-generation university students are more likely to play a limited role in their children's choices.

These parents are more likely to be "onlookers or weak framers" compared with the more active participation of university-educated parents (Reay et al., 2005: 112). A key reason for this difference, in terms of Bourdieu's thinking, is that the university-educated parents know the rules and acceptable practices in the field of higher education (Wacquant, 2006).

In this study, when the students were asked when and/or why they first thought about pursuing HE, they pointed to various motivations in their home, and/or the family context. However, when asked about how they came to learn about the options open to them at university, and what it would take to get there, the answers were not just centred on family, but also on other significant relationships and institutions.

Because there was nobody in their families who was like "a fish in water" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127) in the HE context, these students had to rely on information and/or knowledge from others outside their families. Alternatively, they had to actively pursue the necessary information, wherever possible, relying on cold facts from prospectuses and other online resources (Reay et al., 2005).

In addition to the elements of career guidance that form part of the life-orientation curriculum⁷⁹ at high schools, there were a number of other experiences or occasions that provided memorable exposure to the field of HE. Firstly, representatives from various universities visiting high schools were important introductions to HE for students like Rene and Mandy. Mandy mentioned that while at high school, there was an open day at her school with people representing various faculties at UCT, offering them information and talking to them about what their options were.

For Rene, her early introduction occurred in grade 9⁸⁰, when a lecturer from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) visited her school.

I think it was a UWC lecturer that came to North East High School, um, it was a parent meeting and the subject-choosing night. And he came to come and speak to us. He was like 'guys, this is the subjects you need, if you are going, if you want to go to university... the recognised subjects are...'. And because I was in the new system you had to have maths and not maths literacy, accounting, biology and physics. And I was like 'that's it, that's what I'm taking because I'm going to university'.
– Rene, 21

Although Rene's parents had instilled in her the importance of higher education, this was an encounter she remembers as having a direct impact because, although she was not quite sure what she was going to study, she did not want to be limited in any way.

Secondly, visits to universities were significant early introductions for a number of the participants. In addition to Randall's experience at Stellenbosch University that was mentioned earlier, Andrea, Angelo and Alexia each took part in the annual Maths Olympiad⁸¹ held at UCT. Angelo found his first experience of a UCT campus to be a motivating one. While in grade 8, Angelo's mathematical aptitude became evident to his teacher, who then approached him about joining the school's Maths Olympiad team.

⁷⁹ Most of the participants did not cite this as a significant influence.

⁸⁰ Around the time she had to decide on the subjects she would carry through to grade 12.

⁸¹ Thus, this was also as a result of their academic performance.

So when I came here⁸² I was like ‘wow!’ you know; like ‘I can’t wait to come here... I would love to come here’. It was just a dream, ya ‘I would love to come to this place.
– Angelo, 18

Alexia had a similar experience.

Yes, we would have the Maths Olympiad from grade 8 at UCT. So then I was obviously part of that. And I came to this big massive place, this beautiful buildings and so on... and I knew ‘this is where I want to be... this is the UCT my mom spoke about’ ...
– Alexia, 18

It is clear that the experience of being exposed to UCT’s main campus left a lasting impression on Alexia. Because of that experience at UCT, the university was no longer the mysterious place her mother had spoken about, but something tangible and, potentially, within her reach. For Alexia, and her sister Andrea, the experience was significant since they connected it to the dream their mother had for them. As Alexia said, she had no idea where the UCT campus was or what it looked like, something that Capetonians more familiar with academia might take for granted. Additionally, due to the legacy of apartheid-era segregation laws and the predominantly working-class community where they lived⁸³, it was unlikely that these sisters would have come across someone familiar with UCT.

At a later stage, Alexia also spent some time on a Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) campus when attending some extra classes with her classmates, but what she saw there did not, in her opinion, measure up to the environment she encountered at UCT. However, she acknowledges that her only exposure to CPUT was one of the smaller campuses, and it was at the weekend; so her first impression was that it was a boring, bland and plain institution. She added she was not interested in CPUT, because it was “just a

⁸² UCT’s main campus.

⁸³ Where more than two-thirds of the adults drop out of school.

technikon⁸⁴... it wasn't world-renowned". The latter experience added to the emphasis her mother had previously specifically placed on UCT.

As stated earlier, Randall also had the opportunity to visit a few university campuses while at Portia High School. In addition to those experiences, at Portia High he was strongly encouraged to pursue a university education. They were "were given almost every opportunity that like most Coloured schools don't get". Randall explained that certain members of staff, particularly the vice-principal gave them every opportunity to find their way into HE.

So we were very fortunate. It was probably mainly due to our vice-principal, Mr Benson. He always went to look for those things, for bursaries, all those kinds of things. So he was very..., he made sure that we didn't have an excuse not to go and study; unless it was like the thing you really didn't want to do and you couldn't if your marks weren't good enough.

– Randall, 21

Randall also explained that Mr Benson went so far as to gather information on possible study and bursary opportunities that could benefit his students. This is a good example of how the school environment itself shaped and/or directed the educational pathways of those young people beyond what their families alone could have done.

Rene mentioned that, as part of a life-orientation assignment at North East High School⁸⁵, they were expected to think about and research what they might consider studying after high school, or what career they would like to pursue.

And you'd have to go do research about what you're going to go study and what subjects you need to go and study that. You'd have to; there's this big book in the library, and there's all this [sic] careers in there. And under each thing it would say subjects required, recommended subjects.

– Rene, 21

⁸⁴ The 'technikons' were higher education institutions that emerged in the 1960/70s. They came out of the historically white technical college system. In the early 2000s, the technikons became 'universities of technology', with some of them merging with other institutions (Cooper, 2011; Habib & Bentley, 2008).

⁸⁵ A former Model C school.

This, along with the visit from a university lecturer, was particularly helpful for her in understanding what was possible, and what would be required of her in terms of academic performance. The fact that she did not pursue any of the careers she researched is secondary to the fact that she was exposed to the information that was out there. Also, she was learning how and where to access information, especially since her parents were not actively involved in the application and decision-making process.

Ultimately, it was one of Rene's closest school friends (with university-educated parents), who shared the information she had about UCT, and which played a vital role in Rene's entrance into UCT.

Both Natasha⁸⁶ and Alexia⁸⁷ were encouraged and assisted by their teachers in different ways. Natasha found that certain teachers took a particular interest in those learners who were serious about their schooling, and who appeared to be keen to enter HE. The teachers would check up on those students at times, reminding them of the deadlines for applications and for submitting their high school marks.

For Alexia, a while after changing schools, and still generally struggling to stay motivated at school, there were teachers who encouraged her by reminding her that she was capable of more.

So the role that teachers played was, they gave me, like when I was feeling, when I was not feeling good, they would like, randomly, just give me that... that little thing that I needed. You know? That... I wouldn't say 'inspiration', but, what's that word? But like that... lift... Reminding me... of what I was capable of!

– Alexia, 18

While these participants were able to access 'hot knowledge' through their teachers, two of them were able to access it through contacts away from the school context. Although neither Zita nor her parents had first-hand experience of UCT, Zita mentioned that her

⁸⁶ She attended North West High School. For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F.

⁸⁷ She attended Gordon High School. For more details on the respondents, see Appendix F.

mother had a friend who worked at UCT. Through that contact, Zita was able to arrange an appointment with someone who walked her through the application process, so that she understood what it entailed.

Additionally, Angelo not only found out about an open day through an English tutor he met when attending extra lessons; but prior to that his aspirations were significantly shaped by an accountant whose mother was a family friend. Thanks to his mother, Angelo was able to connect with this accountant at a time when he was trying to decide on the best path for his future. In one particular conversation with her, she encouraged him to pursue a future as an accountant – because of his aptitude with numbers. From that point on, becoming an accountant was his focus.

Another key factor that surfaced during the analysis was the relationships and/or friendships the students had pursued, and/or avoided, along the path they had travelled to UCT. The analysis of the comments on the role of friendships, particularly during high school, revealed three noteworthy themes. These were: the tendency to focus on friendships with individuals who share similar attitudes and/or aspirations; having to choose between school and friends; and the impact of parents on their various associations.

Firstly, the data showed that some of the participants were inclined to associate with others with similar aspirations, and/or who had been ascribed with the class position they desire. For Randall, this process was not necessarily the result of a conscious decision, but rather having a mutual interest or friend as a classmate. At high school he initially spent lots of his time in the library, although he later had a close circle of friends that started to develop when he got to know a classmate who was related to a family friend.

What developed was a group of around seven friends who spent lots of time together, and were at least somewhat alienated from others who might have been hanging out with them. This group, which he later described as a “nerd group”, were quite studious, but they

also enjoyed spending time at each other's homes and watching films. When discussing what those friends had done in the years since completing high school, he said that the majority had pursued, or at least attempted to pursue, HE qualifications. Three of them were studying at UCT⁸⁸. Additionally, two of them were academically excluded from UCT, with one going on to study at Wits, and the other working at Eskom full-time⁸⁹.

The last two were a couple that Randall described as "party animals", who had not attended university. While the first five mentioned are in touch with one another, that couple was not in contact with the rest of the group any longer.

Rene's decisions regarding friendships, both at school and home, were more conscious than those made by Randall. When Rene started at North East High School⁹⁰, her contact with her friends closer to home in Valhalla Park started to wane.

I had no friends when I went to high school. It was like people just cut me out of their lives because it's like "Rene thinks she's better than us". And that was not what I was thinking and so I was just like "I'm not going to upset myself because people think that of me", so I just cut everything out of my life, in Valhalla Park. And I just kind of focused on my school career. – Rene, 21

I thought they were my friends, but then I don't know. It was probably something about that North East High blazer or something that just changed their mindset about me and so. I don't know, they didn't take life as seriously as I did. – Rene, 21

In order to make sense of the decisions students, like Rene and Randall, made with regard to their friendships and other acquaintances, it is worth keeping in mind the processes posited by Kaufman (2003) – associational embracement⁹¹ and associational distancing⁹².

⁸⁸ That is, including Randall. The other two are focusing on medicine and chemical engineering, respectively.

⁸⁹ Randall added that this was probably the best thing for that friend, because he was learning a lot in his job and was enjoying it.

⁹⁰ A former Model C school.

⁹¹ The interpersonal process(es) by which an individual associates with significant others whose social-class position he/she hopes to achieve.

⁹² The interpersonal process(es) by which individuals hoping to transform their class position distance themselves from those with whom they share an ascribed social-class position.

Rene describes this process of associational distancing as something that was initiated by her former friends in Valhalla Park, but something which she did not contest. She knew when to be focused on school, while those friends did not take life as seriously as she did – and they, consequently, ended up failing.

This explanation provides an example of the kinds of explanations (or justifications) that people going through a process of social transformation could feel as being necessary (Kaufman, 2003). Rene wanted me to know that she did not think she was better than those friends; she was still the same normal teenager she had been before.

This contrast between Rene's attitude and that of her friends leads to another point, that at times a choice was or needed to be made between friends and schooling. At another point in the first interview, Rene explained that there came a point when she had to make a clear-cut decision between her friendships and her schooling. When she saw her exam results at the end of grade 11, she was not satisfied and came to realise that her friends and her social life had had a negative impact on her performance.

Consequently, she decided that she needed to spend more time focusing on her schoolwork; and, if necessary, cut her friends out of her life.

No, you aren't going to be there for me after school and if you are my friends
you are going to respect what my wishes are now and you would understand why
I'm doing it...
– Rene, 21

According to Rene, there was only one friend who really understood what she was going through and supported the decisions she was making – that was also the only one of her high school friends with whom she has maintained contact. This friend was also instrumental in Rene coming to study at UCT.

Angelo also made a similar decision during high school. While he acknowledges that he had been a bit of a trouble maker during primary school, his attitude had changed by the

time he reached high school. Because of that change in attitude, he felt that he could not relate to other young people his age in his neighbourhood – because they were “doing bad things” with which he did not want to be associated (e.g. smoking).

But you know, I didn't really have too many friends because I started working harder and really rather spent time with my books than anything. Because that's what a person that's hard-working will do. They will stop playing outside and start playing inside, well working inside. So I didn't have too many friends really ...

– Angelo, 18

Part of his focus on his schooling included his inclination to spend additional time in the classroom discussing things with his teachers. That further isolated him from his peers.

The third friends-related theme that surfaced in the analysis was the impact of strict parents on their friendships and/or associations. The two individuals who epitomise this are Charlene and Mandy. Charlene discussed the “tough love” her father showed when placing strict boundaries on what they were allowed to do, and with whom they were allowed to interact.

What I can remember was that my father was very strict... and I think during, for him being strict with us has led us into a better future... for ourselves. Because if he had been like “you can do whatever you want to do” then obviously I don't know where would we have landed up. Or if there were like drinking and partying, then I don't think I would have had what I have now... Examples could be like, 6 o'clock you must be in the house. If you are a girl, you're not supposed to be out late. He was very strict on friends; you can't bring anyone home now. And if he now see your friend that I bring home is not like good in his eyes, then he would say “that person is not right”... he also said that “I'm strict with you because I love you”

– Charlene, 29

Charlene believed that in the context where she grew up she might not have been where she is today, if it had not been for those boundaries her father put in place during her childhood.

Mandy's mother went beyond just the verbal instructions with regard to the people with whom Mandy could associate. As stated earlier, Mandy's mother was insistent that her

daughter would not attend a high school in the Athlone area where they lived, but she took additional steps to limit Mandy's interaction with people in the community.

My mother; she was like "there's no way you're going to a school in this community"... I like had transport picking me up at home and dropping me off at home and dropping me off at school, there's no public transport, there's no time for you to socialise... because she didn't want us to socialise with people in the area because she knew how it was. She was like "these schools are just going to encourage alliances and friendship you don't want and you don't need in your life, so rather, outside of the community"...

– Mandy, 19

Consequently, when discussing her friends during her teen years, she only spoke of those with whom she had interacted at school. It is noteworthy that her school friends did not necessarily have a positive impact on Mandy's decisions and behaviour. On the contrary, one could argue that she had achieved what she had – in spite of her friends, because none of her close friends at Dreyer High School⁹³ had gone on to university. One is pursuing a singing career in Johannesburg, and another is doing a film course at a college.

The rest of her friends are neither working nor studying full time; but they are, in Mandy's words, "just chilling" with some of them working in part-time jobs.

5.1.5 Passions, interests and talents:

As shown, all but one⁹⁴ of these students depict their educational pathways as being significantly influenced by their parents' beliefs in the importance of education, including the notion that their children should make the most of the opportunities they did not have in their youth. One of the issues that has been the focus of the analysis is whether the students are making career choices prior to entering university⁹⁵, or whether in fact they pursued a university education due to a generalised belief in the instrumentality of HE. While that issue

⁹³ A former Model C school.

⁹⁴ Angelo was the only exception.

⁹⁵ That is, did they have a post-university career path or plan laid out?

requires more attention⁹⁶, focusing on it revealed another theme in the data with regard to how these decisions are being made.

Every one of these students made the decision on which qualification to pursue, based on something they were passionate about, something they were interested in and/or where they had already discovered a talent. What is significant is that, in spite of the motivation for a university education being driven by the hope of a better future, their choices were not purely pragmatic (i.e. choices based on the most stable and/or lucrative career). Instead, what each of these students have accomplished is that they were not only able to find their way into HE (i.e. turn the hope/dream/aspiration into a reality), but they did that by converting a passion, interest or talent into a potential educational qualification.

That, in turn, could transform their social class position for the better. Additionally, for some, this process was shaped or enhanced by experiences or activities beyond the high school or the family context. Three students whose experiences show this most clearly are Randall, Alexia and Mandy⁹⁷.

In the first interview with Randall, he mentioned that he is passionate about cricket. Although he has never taken the game seriously as a player, he is a qualified umpire and follows the national team closely. Through his passion for that sport and staying up to date with the statistics and results, he discovered his enjoyment of dealing with numbers. Having initially attempted and failed first-year physics⁹⁸ at UCT, he switched his focus to statistics and economics. These decisions were driven primarily by his interest in and enjoyment of working with numbers, while having no specific career path in mind.

⁹⁶ It will be dealt with in the section on educational and career decision-making.

⁹⁷ For more details on respondents, see Appendix F.

⁹⁸ It was a prerequisite for the general BSc he was pursuing.

At the end of the second interview with Randall, which took place during the second semester, he mentioned that he had had the opportunity to travel to the United States of America during the mid-year break. He had been invited to work in a short camp for young people⁹⁹ run by a church during their summer holidays. Randall described one of his most meaningful experiences during that trip was getting a troubled 16-year old to open up about the challenges he was facing at home. Randall explained that having dealt with his parents' divorce, he was able to relate to that teenager in a way that apparently nobody else had been able to.

Although he had considered switching his major to psychology at various points during his time at UCT, it was not something that he pursued wholeheartedly, especially since his mother was insistent that he should focus on finishing up at university. However, that experience in the USA was what ultimately convinced him; and after sharing the story of that experience with his mother, she finally supported the decision¹⁰⁰.

Alexia, on the other hand, was particularly interested in science, at least in part because she was good at it.

Ya, I always knew that I liked science. So, and I was highest achiever in natural science, so it just came natural to be that I chose the science stream... I wanted to be in the science department, in the science world, so... I guess, and the fact that I could understand it and it was so interesting... it appealed to me more than business and commerce and so on...
– Alexia, 18

Because of this interest in science, she intended to pursue a qualification in some type of engineering (e.g. chemical or civil), although she also considered a pharmaceutical focus¹⁰¹. Towards the end of her time in high school, her marks dropped somewhat, and she

⁹⁹ Working with young people in this type of context was not new for Randall, as he was quite involved in a church-based youth group.

¹⁰⁰ At the time of writing, Randall mentioned that he had been accepted into the psychology programme at UCT.

¹⁰¹ This was due to a cousin who worked as a pharmacist and who had employed her on a part-time basis.

was no longer the top student in her grade – something which had a significant impact on her confidence. Consequently, she started looking beyond her initial ideas, but was still drawn to the physical sciences – with no serious thought being given to other fields, like commerce or the humanities¹⁰².

Another respondent who was significantly driven by what she was passionate about was Mandy. Since her childhood she had been involved in drama.

Drama... I've done drama like forever... But I do know like drama is something that I've always loved, something that I've always been doing since like preschool. So I always just kind of continued that and because I love it, it's easier to just continue. And time goes by so fast when you're involved in drama you don't need anything else to keep you busy really.

– Mandy, 19

This passion for drama continued to develop through her engaging with another of her interests, namely working with children. She worked as a volunteer with a local youth-oriented NGO, and has volunteered as a Sunday school teacher at her church for a number of years. One of the key reasons she decided to pursue a degree in drama at UCT was because of the connection she saw between those two passions and the potential for combining that with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

When asked how she arrived at that decision, she said:

I actually, um (laughs)... Um, I think... I think it's my passion because I love English and I love drama. And I saw how passionate my teacher was and I saw how that influenced me. And I thought "how amazing if I could have that same effect on another person?"... like just take that passion and use it constructively... Because I just looked at him and his life and like "that's who I want to be, I want to inspire people the way he inspires me"...

– Mandy, 19

One other noteworthy issue in Mandy's statements about her choices regarding her field of study was that she claims that pursuing a financially stable or secure profession was not high on her priority list when considering her choice of a major at university.

¹⁰² At the time of the interviews she was still pursuing a degree in environmental science.

I'm doing drama, I'm not even secure, like I'm not even like a secure job. Like an accountant it would be okay because you know for sure there's work there and you're going to find a job somehow, you can start your own firm or something. Like I don't know where I'm going but I'm going; that's all that matters to me. I don't care where I end up; I just want to keep moving...
 – Mandy, 19

The three cases discussed here – Randall, Alexia and Mandy – indicate that, when they started at UCT, they did not have any clear career path in mind. They were following a particular passion, interest or talent, and not aspiring to a particular professional life. This distinction is noteworthy because it lays the foundation for a key issue addressed in this study – determining whether these students are pursuing an HE qualification or a specific career.

5.1.6 Educational vs Career Decision-making:

This study's central research question has, from the outset, been focused specifically on the EDM of first-generation university students. A key issue that surfaced during the analysis is whether the students did in fact decide to pursue a general HE qualification or whether they were pursuing a career-specific HE qualification (because they have a specific career in mind). Although some of these students mentioned specific careers or jobs, which they had in mind when deciding on their educational futures, they were not necessarily certain about any particular career choice.

Two students who were clearly focused on specific occupations from the outset were Angelo and Charlene.

Because I wanted to do social work since I was in primary school already and on high school still but I knew that, I'm not gonna... you see when I was in matric I knew I'm not going to go to university, my parents don't have money for me... The influence for that was that I wanted to help people, especially children.
 – Charlene, 29

It is clear that Charlene had a specific career path in mind, and because of that career choice, she would need to attend university. On the other hand, as will become evident below, a number of the other students in this study also had careers in mind when

approaching university; but due to various circumstances (including academic exclusion), they have since changed direction. Charlene's pursuit of further education was also shaped by frustration due to being stuck in a factory job with which she was unhappy, and the belief that education was an essential step toward a better life. Her desire for a better life was not only for herself; but it was also focused on wanting something better for her son¹⁰³.

Angelo too was primarily focused on a specific career – accounting. In fact, when asked when and how he came to the decision to pursue a university education, he said:

The fact that I wanted to become an accountant. Also, I had spoken to teachers about accounting and they said “you have to go to university”.

– Angelo, 18

It is worth mentioning that while the other respondents were focused on getting a university education before they were certain about their chosen career path, that does not necessarily mean that they did not have possible careers in mind when entering university. As previously stated, Randall indicated that since primary school, he had wanted to be a doctor. He was not sure exactly where that idea had originated; but he had held onto that dream until he realised that the grade 11 physics curriculum was too difficult.

For Randall, his educational and career paths were not necessarily centred on a particular career, but on the potential benefits of having a university degree.

Besides the statistical side where it¹⁰⁴ increases your salary by like 60%. I find it very important because... to think economically, obviously the job market these days without further education is very narrow. And I don't want to be one of those people that are stuck where they are, menial labour or just a job, any old job because they didn't go study. I want to do something that I will enjoy and that I'll be good at.

– Randall, 21

Like Randall, Zita also had a few ideas regarding her possible career path, particularly while in grade 9:

¹⁰³ Her son was 7-years old at the time of the interview.

¹⁰⁴ Having a university degree.

Because I knew I was going to take a gap year anyway, so I kind of, I was banking on when I'm done with my gap year, I will have made up my mind then. I think I kind of thought of journalism, teaching ... because I've always liked to meet new people, always been like a people person, getting, hearing people's stories that sort of thing... and I've always been interested in news and whatever...

– Zita, 21

In the first part of this quote, Zita was discussing the factors she considered when deciding on the subjects she would carry through to grade 12. While it might appear as though she was considering specific careers – and the fact that she would need a university education for them – it is important to take into account her comments regarding why she believed it was important to pursue HE in general:

I suppose it was my mom, and my parents always said like “you have to study further”. And I always did want to study further. I know that, to get a good job you kind of need a degree, without it you can't really find a good job so... it kind of just guards you in a sense if you have a degree behind your name.

– Zita, 21

It is clear that she understood that pursuing one of her proposed career options required going to university; yet she also stated that she believed that having a degree “guards you”, because in order to get a good job you need to have a degree.

As mentioned earlier, Rene grew up on the Cape Flats, but went to a former Model C high school in the Northern Suburbs, in large part due to her mother's pivotal role in shaping her educational path. Earlier, Rene had mentioned that her subject choices were shaped by the fact that she wanted to attend university, and by what she had heard about the entrance requirements from the university lecturer visiting her school. She further explicated her mother's impact on her educational path:

I was so set on it like “if my mother's going on about studying and schooling then...”, just light bulbs went off. I was like “she has to have a reason for going on like this”. And so I was like “I have to go and study when I'm done with school, I'm not going to work in a factory, I will not do that”. Not because I think I'm better again, but because I want something stable.

– Rene, 21

One interesting aspect of this quote is Rene's caution not to appear arrogant, emphasising that she did not think she is better than anyone else. The significance of this is that young people in Rene's position¹⁰⁵ can be regarded as arrogant when they dream of great things for themselves (Ramphela, 2002; Willis, 1977). Rene also connects the impact of her mother's early involvement in her education to the decisions she made, as well as her aspirations for her future. She mentions that she was "not going to work in a factory", a decision that was also shaped by the way she saw others in Valhalla Park struggling financially and the instability of their employment.

Initially, this aspiration for HE was not connected to a specific career, but was based on the understanding that education was a key path to a better life. Due to the curriculum at the school she attended, she was also required to research the careers she was considering so that she could make the necessary subject choices prior to entering grade 10. In spite of her research and the aforementioned exposure to a university lecturer, she still was not certain about the choice of a particular major at university, or a career.

And I always, I always knew I wanted to take physics and maths, that was, I was going to do that. And so when he said "you can do anything with those subjects", those 4 subjects, then I'm definitely taking that because I don't want to be limited I don't know what I'm going to study yet. And so I just took those subjects.

– Rene, 21

Here, Rene confirms that her decision to pursue HE was independent of her choice of any specific career path; but it was primarily shaped by her belief in the instrumentality of education, that is, that it could lead to improved socio-economic circumstances. In fact, some of Rene's statements implied that not that much thought had been given to her choice of a major.

¹⁰⁵ That is, someone whose aspirations are significantly greater than those of her peers in her community.

Initially, she considered studying engineering because she believed that engineers were financially stable, as well as because of her interest in maths and physical science. It was those interests that, ultimately, led to her choice of Geomatics. Once again this corresponds with De Lannoy's (2008, 2011) study that also found evidence for a general belief in the instrumentality of education.

5.1.7 Faith/religion (INDV-FTHX):

Nearly all of these students¹⁰⁶ mentioned religion and/or faith as being a part of their lives. This was an unexpected discovery that exemplified Kvale's (1996) idea of the qualitative research being like a traveller wandering across a landscape. However, what became evident during the analysis was that these respondents spoke about their faith/religion in at least two distinct ways. On the one hand, some were involved in religious practices, as well as involvement and/or attendance at an institution. The second was how some spoke about their faith: God and/or spiritual matters as playing a significant role in the directions their lives took.

There were three ways that their faith might have played a role – dealing with peer pressure; overcoming disappointments/challenges; and trusting that God was guiding their lives.

Firstly, the commitment to their faith occasionally shaped their decisions regarding deviant or illegal behaviour, in which others around them might be engaged. In Mitchell's Plain, where Andrea¹⁰⁷ grew up, the residents have to deal with challenges like high crime rates, unemployment, as well as the presence of shebeens and drug dens (City of Cape

¹⁰⁶ Alexia was the only participant who did not mention faith/religion. However, I do not assume that this lack of data is evidence of a lack of faith or religious beliefs.

¹⁰⁷ And her sister Alexia.

Town, 2003)¹⁰⁸. During a difficult period in Andrea's early teen years, she mentions that although she lost confidence in herself and cut her hair in a shorter style than usual, she still drew the line at taking drugs.

I didn't do drugs or anything because I would never do anything like that, never. Because, I love my body too much, you know, and my body is a temple of God and whatever. But I was hurting myself in other ways... – Andrea, 22

Not only was she determined not to subject her body to narcotics, but she illustrated that decision by alluding to a biblical text that reminds believers that their bodies are temples of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Randall also made faith-based decisions regarding what he would or would not do, because his being 'saved'¹⁰⁹ was something that emboldened him, at least initially, to refuse the alcohol offered to him.

It was only really in grade 12 when the others liked to, they started to branch out to like the alcohol. I would be like, what you would call a Goody two-shoes¹¹⁰. But it was because I was saved in grade 9 already, so I never, I was always the one to say "no, thank you, I don't really want any alcohol". I tasted it from time to time... – Randall, 21

Secondly, their faith in God enabled them to deal with challenges and disappointments they had encountered because, they believed He¹¹¹ is involved in their lives. Although Andrea had a difficult time following her mom's death, her faith helped her to get through that period and to persevere thereafter.

So I think if it wasn't for that relationship I had with Jesus, because He was like the fatherly figure in my life; and He was like my mother; and He was everything to me, maybe I wouldn't have made it thus far. I wouldn't have made it to UCT, and I wouldn't have been this person I am now. So I'm grateful that my mother reared us like in a Christian manner, ya. – Andrea, 22

¹⁰⁸ As stated earlier, the 2001 Census data showed that 68.2% of the adults had never finished high school; 17.7% of the economically active were unemployed; and 12.1% of the labour force were in unskilled occupations (City of Cape Town, 2001b).

¹⁰⁹ A term that has its origin in the Bible and is used by some churches to convey that someone is a committed Christian – it is used most often in Evangelical and Charismatic churches.

¹¹⁰ "A person who is goody-goody; *also* : a person who is uncommonly good" ("Goody Two-Shoes", 2013).

¹¹¹ When the words 'He' or 'Him' are capitalised, it is referring to God.

Here Andrea depicts her faith as being a “relationship”; and she specifically mentions His being a “fatherly figure” – at least somewhat significant due to the absence of her biological father. Her faith not only enabled her to deal with her mother’s death; but it was also instrumental in enabling her to pursue her dreams, at least in part – because she believed she was not as alone, as she appeared to be. Angelo too credited God for the outcomes of some pivotal periods in his life, as well as his change in behaviour and attitude towards school.

if you’d speak to my mom, my mom would tell you “this person will never be good”. Because I always used to steal I always just; my mind was bad, my mind was filled with bad things... And then I grew up, I grew up like that and things started to get better. I started to become more calm. And my mom was praying for that... because of her prayers. You know, because she always prays for me.

– Angelo, 18

While he acknowledges that he was a bit of a trouble maker at school, he attributes his change in attitude and behaviour in high school not only to his concern about bullies, but also due to his mother’s constant prayers. With this quote Angelo placed some of the agency for change outside of himself, because he credited God as being the reason for his changed behaviour. Still, there were other instances where he depicted himself as being capable of making the right decisions on his own.

This was particularly in relation to his educational and/or career path.

Lastly, these students saw God as being involved in guiding their lives, including opening some doors. When certain expectations were not met, they trusted God that He had something better planned for them.

I believe that He decides, He guides what my decisions are. Before I make any decision I pray about it. If it’s His will it happens, if it’s not, obviously I still have to do everything I can, and if after that it still doesn’t happen, then obviously it’s not what He wanted...

– Randall, 21

Here Randall explained his overarching belief regarding God's involvement in the events of his life. He expanded this idea in relation to the time he spent abroad after high school. While still in grade 11 there was an opportunity to attend a conference connected to an organisation called Global Classroom, which provides young people from around the world with international learning opportunities. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the conference.

Randall believed that was one of those things that did not happen because it was not God's will, because God had something better planned for him. In the end that 'something better' was that – instead of attending one of Global Classroom's conferences – Randall had an opportunity to visit a number of countries in Europe, as part of one of their programmes. Mandy held a similar view regarding her application to study at UCT.

Because like when I applied I had no idea how I was going to make it through and stuff, but by the grace of God I'm going to make it through, just like something is going to happen here and I'm going to study. And I just acted on that faith, I was just like "okay, just going to do something". And then, ya that's how I'm here ...
 – Mandy, 19

While she was also initially concerned about how she was going to be able to study at UCT and pay for it, she chose to "act on that faith", trusting that God was going to see her through.

5.1.8 Finances:

For most of these students, being able to cover the costs of attending a university was a significant concern. Of the nine, Zita and Natasha, were able to proceed without any form of financial aid, although Zita acknowledged that her father, as the only one in their family earning a salary, had to apply for a loan to cover the tuition. The majority of the parents of

these students, if present in the home and employed, are in core working class occupations¹¹².

However, it is worth noting that the occupations held by Randall, Rene and Mandy's mothers might be categorised as Intermediate Class¹¹³ (Seekings & Natrass, 2005)¹¹⁴, although their level of education and the data concerning their families' financial positions suggest that these were not necessarily significantly lucrative jobs. Moreover, the study by Reay et al. (2005) in the UK also found that contingent choosers were more likely to be concerned with or to face challenges with regard to financing their university studies.

This is because they are more likely to come from working-class families because of the lack of an HE tradition. However, some of these respondents (e.g. Randall, Alexia and Rene) being able to cover the cost of their education was something that was already of concern when they started high school.

As mentioned previously, at the time of the interview, Randall's parents had been divorced for more than 10 years already; and the financial burden on his mother was considerable at times. One consequence was that during his teens Randall had no choice but to get a part-time job, because his mother simply could not afford to give him pocket money. However, prior to that the family's financial position also affected his choice of high school. He applied to both Portia High and a former Model C school, nearby. In the end, he attended Portia High, in large part because his mother could not afford the fees at the other school.

¹¹² Semi-skilled and unskilled workers, excluding domestic and farm workers (Seekings & Natrass, 2005).

¹¹³ Routine white-collar, skilled and supervisory workers (Seekings & Natrass, 2005).

¹¹⁴ Although there are other schemas that could be used, the one suggested by Seekings and Natrass (2005) suited the purposes of this study. Furthermore, it was important to use one that originates in South Africa due to the considerable difference in occupational and earnings distributions from one country to the next (Borel-Saladin & Crankshaw, 2009).

Alexia, on the other hand, was presented with an opportunity to attend a former Model C school, but was prevented from taking it. By the time she was entering high school Alexia's mother had already passed away, and she was being raised by her grandparents. A neighbour had offered to pay for her to attend a school outside Mitchell's Plain (including the travel costs); but her grandparents were concerned that if the neighbour was no longer able to cover the costs, this would place too great a burden on their family.

While Alexia and Randall were not able to attend the schools they had hoped to, Rene was more fortunate. As mentioned earlier, Rene's mother was determined to get her children into a school outside the community where they lived at the time. According to Rene, the problem with that was that her mother did not know how she was going to afford it. Fortunately, North East High School offered a type of bursary or financial aid for families who could not afford the fees; so in the end, her mother was able to get her into the kind of school she had in mind.

As already discussed, an important part of the journey to university for these students was getting the information they needed, in order to be aware of the options open to them. An essential component of that information was regarding the financial options available to them. Some, like Randall and Rene, knew that UCT was expensive. In fact, Rene indicated that this was one of the reasons that, initially, she did not apply to study there. Others too, found themselves in a position where although they had worked hard and motivated themselves to pursue a university education, they realised that without financial assistance of some kind it was unlikely to happen.

Although Randall's mother had held various jobs over the years, she often struggled financially. Consequently, when it was time to consider Randall's options with regard to university, it was his mother who did most of the research regarding loans and bursaries. This was at least in part because she had access to a computer and the internet at work.

Fortunately, he was able to obtain financial aid through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), consisting of a bursary portion, as well as a loan portion, which he would need to pay back – once he graduates.

Like Randall, Charlene's family's financial situation had also been quite tenuous at times, with the loss of her father's job at one stage resulting in the loss of their home. Although she stated that while at high school she wanted to pursue a university education, she knew that this was unlikely to happen – due to her family's financial position – and she proceeded to work in a factory for the next 10 years. During that time she became increasingly unhappy with both her factory job and her prospects for the future, which resulted in her decision to pursue a university education. However, figuring out how she was going to pay for university, without her job, was a major concern.

And the acceptance letter came before the financial aid letter telling that I was successful and whatever. And that was also a bit, I mean, getting the acceptance letter not knowing if, if you're gonna get financial aid.

– Charlene, 29

Although Charlene was excited about receiving her acceptance letter, she knew she would not be able to use the opportunity without funding (which was approved). Fortunately, her parents, with whom she still lives, promised to support her; and they encouraged her to take this opportunity, which they believed would not come her way again.

5.1.9 Coloured Identity:

During the analysis of the first round of interviews, the significance of being (classified as) Coloured for the participants became evident. It was a reference point that was often in the background. For example, being Coloured was part of the description of the neighbourhoods where some of the participants had grown up, or the schools they had attended. Because it was so pervasive, yet in the background, it became necessary to address it in a more direct manner. Consequently, in the follow-up interviews, the

significance of being Coloured in contemporary South Africa was addressed, as well as the impact, if any, those thoughts had on their path towards – and their transition to HE.

When asked what being Coloured, or being classified as Coloured, meant to them¹¹⁵, what was of particular interest was the overall sense of uncertainty regarding what it meant to them. Some, like Alexia, openly admitted that it was a difficult question, which they had thought about, but for which they did not have any definite or concise answer. Following that initial hesitation, Alexia said that she feels that being Coloured means being previously and currently disadvantaged. She added to that:

... burdened by race and culture... what we are indoctrinated to believe, that like, we're underdogs or we're lazy in fact... we don't wanna work, we're not smart people, we're not hard workers... we give up... and we're chilled with what we have now, with the lifestyles we're living – the mediocre lifestyles we're living, we're chilled with it. We know there are better things out there, but those things are not for us, we're okay with what we have... being a Coloured is being mediocre...

– Alexia, 18

In this particular instance, Alexia appeared to have focused on some of the most common negative stereotypes of Coloured people, similar to those discussed by Erasmus (2001). In addition to being seen as lazy and accepting of mediocrity, she also mentioned some of the other connotations like: drinking, partying and drugs. She did qualify these comments, by stating that there are those who do not necessarily fit this *gam*¹¹⁶ stereotype, although in her experience they are rare. One of the themes that Alexia touched on – immediate gratification – was also discussed by Rene.

Coloured people think that material things are very important... for example cars, houses... have really nice shoes and clothes and... you need to have it all, materialistically [sic]

– Rene, 21

¹¹⁵ It is worth mentioning again that the participants were self-identified as Coloured.

¹¹⁶ This is a derogatory term used in reference to Coloureds. Haupt (2008: 237) explains the background to this term as follows: "The term *gam* refers to Ham of the Bible's Old Testament. The implication is that 'coloured' subjects are cursed in the way that Noah cursed Ham for his drunkenness. 'Coloured' subjects are thus alcoholics who have themselves to blame for their subjugation under apartheid."

While others also mentioned some of these negative connotations, there were those who focused on the more positive perspectives of their Coloured identity. Mandy emphasised solidarity or commonality; a sense of community that involves helping one another. When asked to explain how this happens, and how common that kind of assistance is, she said it is “quite common”:

That’s the Coloured culture. Like your next door neighbour will be like ‘I need a potato’ and you’ll give them a potato... everybody’s struggling so everybody knows what you’re going through... we’re all having a tough time, so we might as well do this together

– Mandy, 19

Charlene added to the positive associations by emphasising the importance of her family in relation to her sense of ‘Colouredness’, and also connecting it to both community and faith.

How I would define Coloured is from my spiritual beliefs and from my family and communities; that’s how I would identify ‘Coloured’.

– Charlene, 29

She explained that her family, the people in her community, and her Christian faith all contribute to constructing her sense of her Coloured identity. Whereas Charlene saw her faith as part and parcel of her Coloured identity, Angelo saw his faith as something that was juxtaposed with any thoughts regarding his racialised identity. He was not really interested in racial and/or cultural issues because, according to him, “I have God in my life” – meaning, God and his faith were beyond any racial and/or cultural issues.

Secondly, some attention was also paid to their views on the position of Coloured people in South African society at large. What was particularly noteworthy was the tendency of the majority of the participants to describe Coloureds as being ‘in the middle’, and/or somewhat invisible; and they do not expect this to change any time soon. As Angelo puts it, Coloureds are in the middle between Whites, who he argued generally have more money,

and Blacks, who are generally worse off. On the other hand, he does recognise that there are some Coloureds who are better off¹¹⁷.

He expanded on this thought by acknowledging that while Whites were in power during the apartheid era, Black South Africans now hold more sway in the corridors of political power, but that Coloureds remain 'in the middle'. Charlene's comments on this very issue contribute a more nuanced perspective on this change.

We are undermined, or how can I say... disadvantaged in jobs... and um, even in education levels as well. Because if you go to a high school, a Coloured high school you don't have the resources that the Whites maybe have. And if you look at jobs, they would rather, with this BEE¹¹⁸ thing, then they would rather appoint a Black person instead of a Coloured.
– Charlene, 29

In the discussion and additional probing that followed this statement, Charlene explained that she believed Whites in South Africa have had significant advantages over the years, with some of those gains being evident in the resources available to learners at former Model C schools. Conversely, she argued that although Blacks in general are not necessarily well off at the moment, it is that population group that is most likely to benefit from the current dispensation (e.g. BEE).

In other words, this notion that Coloured people are 'stuck in the middle' is for her not only a product of the past; but it is also an ongoing reality.

In the process of exploring their thoughts on their Coloured identity, they were asked how their own sense of their Colouredness and their beliefs about the position of Coloured people in South Africa impacted their own journey toward university. The answer coming from the majority of the participants was that at some point they had realised that they did not want to be stuck in the type of socio-economic circumstances – with which they saw most Coloured people they knew had to deal. This view was communicated most strongly by

¹¹⁷ A group that, according to Crankshaw (2012), is growing.

¹¹⁸ Black Economic Empowerment.

Mandy, Alexia, Rene and Angelo – each of whom live in predominantly Coloured neighbourhoods, where at least some of their neighbours have to deal with the challenges of unemployment and/or poverty.

In various ways they each explained that they wanted something different to what they saw around them; but in addition to that, they also believed that something different and better was, in fact, possible.

Alexia said she felt that her peers in Mitchell's Plain were “going nowhere slowly... stagnating”. On the other hand, Angelo argued that the young people he saw in his neighbourhood were not willing to work hard; instead, they wanted things to be handed to them. It is noteworthy that this desire to be different was not necessarily a denial of their Coloured identity. Mandy stated that while she knew where she was from, she wanted more out of life than those around her. However, pursuing those ambitions was not an easy task in the communities where they lived, because their drive, attitude and work ethic was not understood.

In her study of the Cape Town youth, De Lannoy (2008) also found that embedded in the positive educational decisions made by some young people, there was the choice to avoid elements of the ‘mainstream’ lifestyles in their communities.

An example in this study is the type of responses Rene would get when she told her neighbours and peers that she would be studying after high school. It was not unusual for someone to respond by saying: “Are you crazy? Jy kon lankal vir jou ‘n kar gekoop het!”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Translation: “You could have bought a car a long time ago!”

5.2 EXPOSITION OF THE FINDINGS:

In Chapter 3, I discussed Sayer's (1992, 2000) explanation of the critical realist standpoint that focuses on causal relations and interdependencies between events and individuals. Furthermore, that standpoint also sees the world as being characterised by emergence – where situations may come about as the result of the combination of two or more factors. Although the 'presentation-of-findings' section focused on themes in distinct segments, the data in this study have shown that these students' transition to higher education have emerged (Sayer, 1992, 2000) as the result of a combination of these themes interacting in certain ways. This section will address those interdependencies, based on the diagram below.

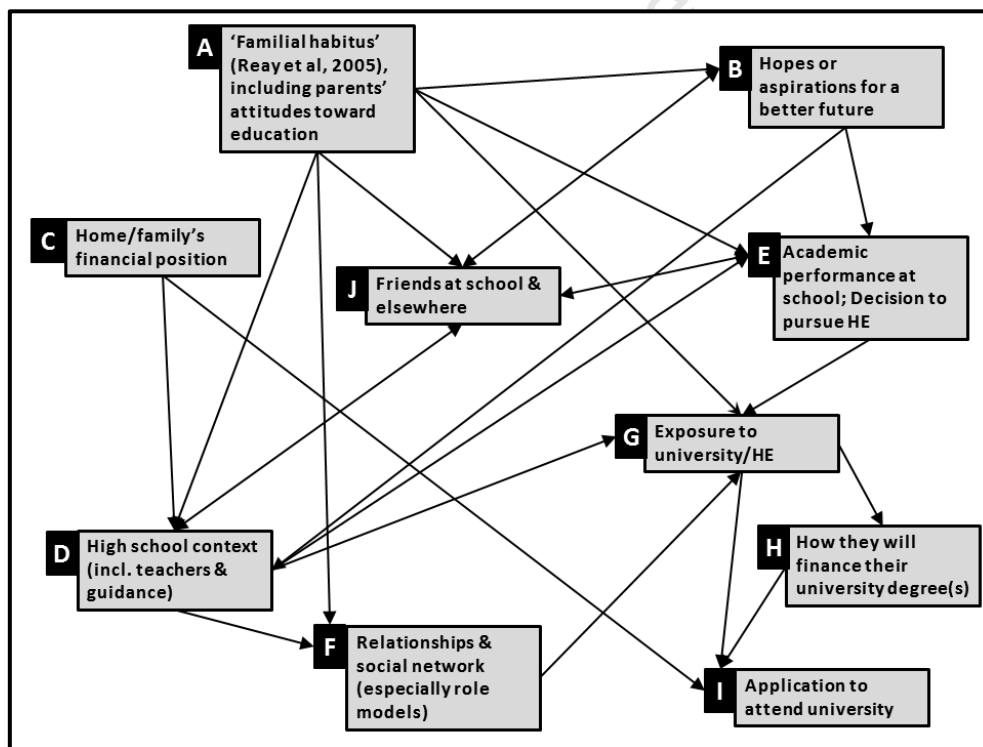


Figure 5.1: Causal relationships between key nodes

For these students, the transition to higher education started with their parents¹²⁰, with 8 of the 9 respondents making definite connections between their parents' influence and their

¹²⁰ Node A

educational progress. Their parents' influence consisted in holding and portraying a positive mindset toward education, as well as urging their children to do the same. Additionally, that influence was shaped by the parents' lack of higher education, which had resulted in a desire for their children to make the most of the opportunities available under the current dispensation, as well as a belief that this was possible.

Furthermore, the data suggest those parents believed that the best, or only way, to a better future started with a good education. For example, while Charlene's parents were not actively involved in her EDM processes, they had encouraged her to take her schooling seriously. On the other hand, both Randall and Rene's mothers were considerably more involved. Rene's mother insisted that she complete and read over her homework, whereas Randall's mother encouraged him at school and was fully involved in the EDM and university-application processes.

The combination of these factors gives valuable insight into what Reay et al. (2005: 61) labelled the 'familial habitus', described as "the deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share". It is worth noting that Bourdieu viewed habitus as something that has been "acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings" (Wacquant, 2006). Yet these families had little or no exposure to higher education. Furthermore, the data suggest that their attitudes toward education were somewhat anomalous in the social contexts where they lived and worked, which suggests that they were resisting the social norms with which they were familiar.

While it was not within the limited scope of this particular study, it would be interesting to investigate (if possible) how "deeply ingrained" those predispositions are; and whether they (the respondents) would be able to withstand the obstacles or challenges (Reay et al., 2005: 61)¹²¹. The fact that the respondents' parents' predispositions were shared by their

¹²¹ I want to acknowledge Prof Sharlene Swartz for helping me make this connection.

children is evident in that the respondents developed hopes or aspirations of a better future¹²² that were connected to a belief in the instrumentality of education, and without any indication of a counter-school culture, as found by Willis (1977).

Furthermore, the data suggest that, at least with these students, the familial habitus and their own aspirations for the future were the foundational factors, without which they would not have accomplished this transition. This does not contradict Sayer's (2000) conceptualisation of 'emergence' because, as will be seen below, these foundational factors would not have brought about these transitions on their own.

Another significant influence was the high school the respondents attended. The choice of high school¹²³ was a significant factor, with 4 out of 9 respondents attending former Model C schools and another 2 stating that their choice of high school was based on the schools' reputation for high standards¹²⁴. Those decisions show that a number of years before they applied to university the families' attitudes toward education were having an impact on cogent decisions¹²⁵. Those 6 respondents each conveyed the influence of the guidance, both formal and informal, they received, in addition to the significant impact of the positive relationships they had with some high school teachers.

Rene and Alexia both discussed the encouragement and support they had received from some of their teachers when they were dealing with depression and some challenging family issues. Additionally, Randall noticed that he was treated differently by some teachers

¹²² Node B.

¹²³ Node D.

¹²⁴ My personal experience can attest to these assessments. Regarding the two schools in question, my sister-in-law attended one in the late 1980s, while my cousin attended the other in the 1990s, where my uncle was also the vice-principal. Over the years, both of these schools have consistently been regarded as being among the best-performing predominantly-Coloured schools in the greater Cape Town area, and they are known for that within certain Coloured communities.

¹²⁵ The others attended more schools closer to home, not for convenience alone but also, because they could not afford anything else at the time.

and had a particularly good relationship with his geography teacher¹²⁶. However, it is worth keeping in mind that some of these respondents indicated that the good rapport they had with their teachers was at least somewhat dependent on their good scholastic performance, or their potential to do well¹²⁷.

Each of the previous nodes¹²⁸ had some influence on the respondents educational outcomes while still at school¹²⁹, which 6 of the 9 respondents stated was closely linked to their EDM processes. While their familial predispositions ensured that they paid attention to their schooling, this was then emphasised by their own drive and desire for a better future. For example, when Rene and Charlene decided to enter university, neither of them had any practical assistance with the application process or information gathering from their families. They believed that a university education was something they wanted, because that would lead to a better life. Furthermore, for some, success was dependent on and predicated upon their high school context, particularly the positive relationships they developed with their teachers.

It is also noteworthy that the data show that for 6 of the 9 respondents there was a connection between the respondents' choices regarding friends¹³⁰; and for at least one of the following: their hopes for the future; their high school context; or their academic performance at high school. On occasion that was a reciprocal relationship. This is perhaps epitomised by Alexia's transition from high school into university. While at school, Alexia felt socially isolated, much like her older sister Andrea. She explained that one of the reasons for this was that in the neighbourhood where she lived being a diligent student and having an active

¹²⁶ The same teacher that told him about the Global Classroom opportunity.

¹²⁷ Node E.

¹²⁸ Especially referring to nodes A, B and D.

¹²⁹ Node E.

¹³⁰ Node J.

social life were seen as being diametrically opposed – an explanation for past actions and choices (Kaufman, 2003).

It was not until she reached UCT, that she encountered people of her age who were able to combine and balance those characteristics she previously thought were incompatible. Although she has always been an outgoing person, she could not bring herself to prioritise friendships over her schooling because – she believed that getting a good education was the best way to achieve the kind of life she dreamt of – a dream she that started with her mother. When she found it especially difficult and emotionally challenging it was often her teachers who reminded her of what she was capable of achieving. It was that encouragement that helped her regain her focus. Additionally, for both Mandy and Charlene their parents' role in their lives also shaped the friendships they had or were allowed to have.

Earlier, I discussed the theory that social action is, at least to some extent, determined by the correspondence or disjuncture between the habitus of an individual and the field which he/she encounters (Reay et al., 2009; Wacquant, 2006). The data in this study suggest that although the respondents' familial habitus was predisposed towards the pursuit of higher education, they did not have the necessary cultural capital¹³¹ to navigate the field of higher education without additional assistance. Therefore, without exposure to, experience of, or information about the field of higher education¹³², it is unlikely that the aspirations¹³³ held by these students would have resulted in sufficiently effective actions or decisions.

In this study, the exposure was primarily the result of parental involvement, personal agency driven by their aspirations, their high school context, and/or people in their social networks¹³⁴. For example, both Randall and Natasha's mothers were actively involved in

¹³¹ As defined by Lamont and Lareau (1988: 156) and mentioned above.

¹³² Node G.

¹³³ Node B.

¹³⁴ Nodes A, B, D and/r F.

sourcing the necessary information for their university applications¹³⁵. On the other hand, Charlene did not have any assistance in getting information or prior exposure to any university; but she believed that going to university gave her the best chance of getting the life she wanted.

When she decided she wanted to attend a university, she pursued the necessary information by going to UCT's campus to find it. Both Mandy and Rene encountered university representatives at high school, whereas Randall had the opportunity to spend a day at Stellenbosch University – although that opportunity was only open to the top learners in their grade¹³⁶. Lastly, Angelo's exposure and information came through an English tutor he had met through the extra lessons he was taking, as well as through an accountant who was a friend of his family¹³⁷.

The necessary information or knowledge regarding the field of higher education included finding out whether there was some way to fund their studies, because a number of the respondents had significant concerns about how they were going to cover the costs. Only 2 of the 9 respondents did not need to access some form of financial aid or bursary, in order to pay for their studies. Not only did the other seven respondents need assistance, they were also uncertain of whether financial aid would be available.

With Figure 5.1 in mind, it is worth considering where the choice of their major at university fits into the diagram, especially for those who had not made any definite career decisions by the time they entered university. While it does not fit into any specific node¹³⁸, that choice developed somewhere along the path from their aspirations, to their academic

¹³⁵ Node A.

¹³⁶ Therefore, that points to the connection between nodes D and E.

¹³⁷ Node F.

¹³⁸ This is due to variations in their pathways.

performance at school, to their exposure to HE and their eventual application to university¹³⁹.

Figure 5.2 is a depiction of how these choices were made.

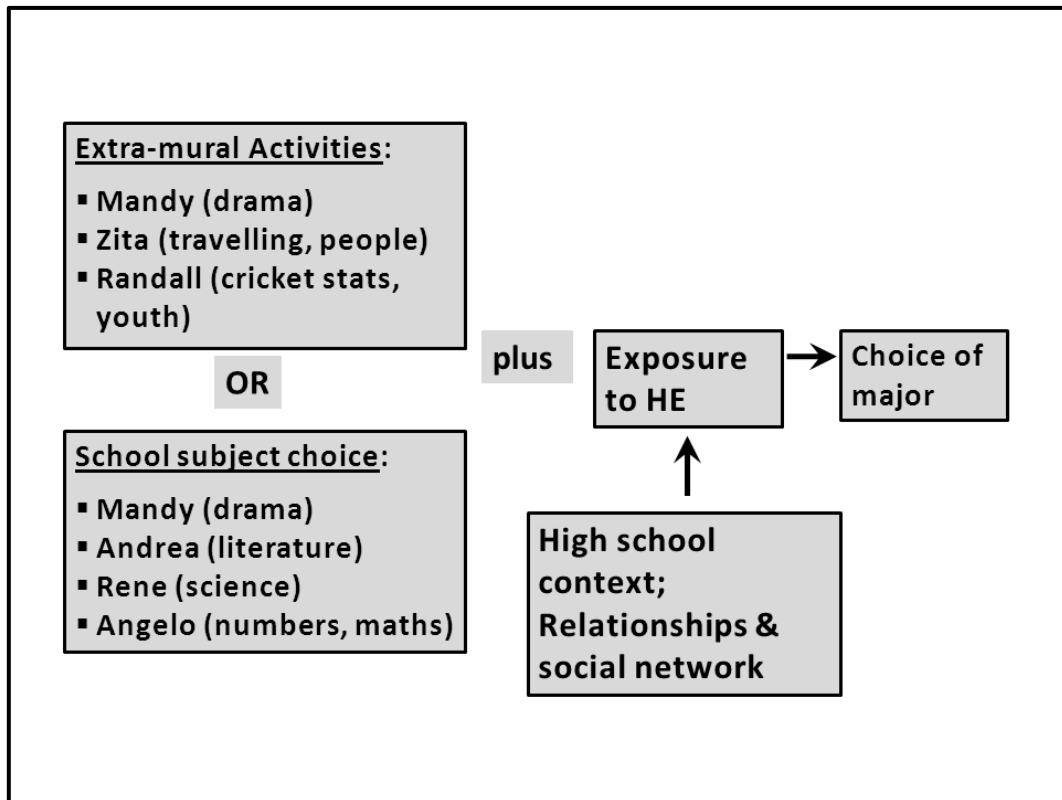


Figure 5.2: Causal relationships between nodes affecting choice of major

Earlier, I indicated that each of the respondents in this study had pursued something they were already passionate about, they were interested in, and/or they had already revealed a talent. This was particularly interesting because, during the research design phase, a number of researchers and professors pointed to a trend they expected me to find – for working-class and/or first-generation university students to pursue more career-oriented professional degrees – with the more general degrees only being a second choice.

The data showed two ways that this passion or talent was discovered and/or developed. This occurred either through extramural activities, or by way of a school subject they particularly enjoyed. For example, Randall never played cricket at school or at a club,

¹³⁹ That is, from node B, through E and G, toward I.

yet he developed a keen interest in the national side and in the game as a whole. It was through this that his interest in numbers and statistics was discovered, and started to develop.

It was that interest that had significantly shaped his pursuit of a degree in economics and statistics. For Mandy, her choice of a major came out of an extramural activity: drama, which she then took as a subject at high school. On the other hand, Rene really enjoyed maths and science at high school, which is particularly useful for studying in the engineering faculty. Also, through excelling in and enjoying maths, Angelo discovered that he enjoyed working with numbers. When he shared that interest with a family friend¹⁴⁰, she was the one who saw the potential in using that interest to pursue a career in accounting.

While, with the benefit of hindsight, the connection between those interests and their choice of majors is clear, it was not all that clear for these respondents during the EDM processes that lead them to university. For each of them, transforming their passion or interest into a potential educational qualification was something that required exposure to, or information about the field of higher education, or some relevant life experiences beyond the classroom.

As first-generation students, they are what Reay et al. (2005) would regard as 'contingent choosers'; and they would, therefore, be expected to have no direct access to any form of 'hot knowledge' about HE within their families. Nevertheless, even though most of these respondents did not have access to that 'hot knowledge' within their families, the transformation of those interests was aided by the 'hot knowledge' they were able to access

¹⁴⁰ The aforementioned accountant.

at high school: through their close ties to their teachers, as well as in the context of relationships with mentors, role models or someone in their social networks¹⁴¹.

For both Mandy and Rene, this transformation started while at high school. The advice given at Rene's school by a professor from UWC helped her realise that subjects like maths, accounting, biology and physics could open lots of doors at university and beyond. Rene had researched various careers during her life-orientation classes; and she knew that she might consider something related to the engineering field. When reading the information about UCT she had received from a friend, she ultimately chose her major – based on the focus on maths and physics, combined with her understanding that engineers are, generally speaking, financially stable.

Mandy, who had been involved in drama since her childhood, was inspired by her high school drama teacher. It was as a result of that passion, as well as seeing how her drama teacher was able to inspire others, that she decided that she wanted to do the same for other young people.

Through the various sources of information Randall received regarding university – including at school, through his visit to the Stellenbosch University and his mother's online research – he was aware of the possible avenues where he could develop his enjoyment of numbers and statistics. After his initial attempt at physics was unsuccessful, he switched to economics, adding that to his other numerically oriented major, statistics. Ultimately, in spite of his enjoyment of working with numbers, it was his passion to work with and support young people that became his focus – in large part due to his experience in that area.

At the start of the 2013 academic year, he was successful in his application to move to the psychology department.

¹⁴¹ Although Randall and Mandy each had an older sibling who had attended and then dropped out of university, Alexia and Zita were the only ones who communicated some benefit (e.g. 'hot knowledge') gained from their siblings who were at university at the time of the interviews.

Another respondent who has enjoyed working with numbers was Angelo, who always did well in maths at high school, and had also taken part in the Maths Olympiad. Initially, he was uncertain about which direction to pursue after high school, but thanks to a family acquaintance, who worked as an accountant, he was advised to pursue accounting as a career. Another person who also gave him some input was the English tutor he met while taking extra lessons at the weekend. It was his tutor who informed him of an Open Day being held at UCT, which is where he was able to get the additional information he needed regarding his options and the application process.

University of Cape Town

6. CONCLUSION:

In contemporary South Africa, interracial inequalities have persisted, even though there has been some social mobility within previously disadvantaged population groups. Greater levels of educational achievement have enabled some Black, Indian and Coloured South Africans to access more lucrative labour market opportunities; however, this mobility has been limited to very small portions of those population groups. This has led to increased inequality within all South Africa's population groups, with many still unable to access those opportunities.

One trend that has been discussed in this paper is the evidence showing that young people whose parents had limited educational opportunities or success, are less likely to attain high levels of education.

The young people in this study have been able to accomplish the transition to higher education, even though their parents have not been able or had the opportunity to do the same. Their accomplishments are more striking when one considers that evidence in other studies indicates that Coloured South Africans have the lowest educational aspirations, compared to other population groups, as well as the fact that levels of educational attainment for that group do not compare favourably with those of other South Africans.

In the 'Research Design' chapter, I indicated that Sayer's (2000) conceptualisation 'emergence' was a significant influence on this project. Keeping that concept in mind not only ensured that I was open to the discovery of influential factors or events in the data that I could not have foreseen, but also that I remain vigilant, as I discovered the various relationships and interdependencies between those factors.

As shown in Figure 5.1, the transition to HE accomplished by these students was irreducible to any single factor or event. The data in this study have suggested that the

familial habitus and the hope the respondents had for the future (including the agency they demonstrated by acting on that hope) were foundational.

The dispositions demonstrated by the respondents and their families made it necessary to take a closer look at the concept of habitus. Bourdieu saw the habitus as something that was the product of “lasting exposure to particular social conditions” (Wacquant, 2006: 6), yet the parents of these respondents did not have any lasting exposure to HE. Instead, the data suggest that their dispositions, particularly with regard to the importance of education, developed in resistance to the norms in their social context.

While the data in this study do not directly address the parents or their actions, they suggest that the parents were demonstrating a type of agency that could have been a catalyst for the actions taken by the respondents in their EDM processes, especially in the light of the significant influence of the parents.

Lastly, since this study has focused solely on Coloured students, it was necessary to address the relationship between the respondents' EDM and their understanding of their Coloured identity. The respondents demonstrated considerable ambivalence regarding their views on their 'Coloured identity'; and they also indicated that, at times, it was quite challenging to negotiate the apparent contradictions between their aspirations and the generally accepted, yet occasionally unspoken, understanding of that identity in their social contexts.

Nonetheless, they found ways to avoid the potential pitfalls presented by that contradiction through the strategic use of certain interpersonal relationships, as well as those actions focused on their aspirations.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A – ‘Mean Education Attainment by Race and Parent Education Category’ (Louw, Van Der Berg & Yu, 2006):

data set	race group	0yrs: no schooling	1-6yrs: incomplete primary	7-11yrs: incomplete secondary	12yrs: complete secondary	>=13yrs: tertiary qualifications	total
Census 1985	Black	4.94	6.86	8.36	7.84	7.19	6.65
	Coloured	5.49	7.1	8.93	9.09	8.5	7.72
	Indian	9.61	10.07	10.74	11.4	11.57	10.44
Census 1991	White	9.75	10.16	10.81	11.26	11.43	11
	All	5.2	7.16	9.28	10.45	10.55	7.79
	Black	6.8	8.04	9.33	10.04	10.64	8.06
Census 1996	Coloured	6.55	7.94	9.62	10.88	11.34	8.81
	Indian	10.15	10.59	11.06	11.4	11.63	10.93
	White	10.56	10.74	10.94	11.39	11.59	11.2
Census 2001	All	6.85	8.12	9.76	10.98	11.32	8.64
	Black	7.55	8.41	9.48	10.17	10.64	8.54
	Coloured	7.46	8.44	9.93	10.94	11.31	9.35
Census 1996	Indian	10.46	10.81	11.13	11.41	11.72	11.12
	White	10.4	10.6	10.86	11.27	11.51	11.16
	All	7.58	8.46	9.77	10.8	11.18	8.92
Census 2001	Black	7.56	8.86	9.83	10.4	10.81	8.87
	Coloured	7.23	8.74	10.17	10.93	11.43	9.73
	Indian	9.54	10.71	11.32	11.49	11.86	11.3
Census 2001	White	8.39	10.24	10.72	11.21	11.49	11.13
	All	7.56	8.87	10.04	10.82	11.23	9.23

APPENDIX B – SES Levels Indicators by Suburb (City of Cape Town, 2001b):

Suburb (2001) %	Adults (20+) with highest qualification < Matric	% of economically active unemployed	% Households earning < R19300 pa	% of labour force in unskilled occupations	S.E.S. Index
Bonteheuwel	87.17	36.07	39.12	24.50	46.72
Mandy's neighbourhood (greater Athlone area)	78.15	18.94	29.34	13.12	34.89
Randall's neighbourhood (Northern Suburbs)	79.23	32.53	24.49	29.12	41.34
Randall's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	38.38	7.10	17.53	8.39	17.85
Natasha's neighbourhood (greater Goodwood area)	46.98	7.17	9.75	6.77	17.67
Angelo's neighbourhood (first home on the Cape Flats)	86.32	38.09	47.68	28.96	50.26
Randall's neighbourhood (south peninsula)	48.11	8.59	15.21	6.29	19.55
Mitchell's Plain (Charlene's neighbourhood)	72.49	50.32	69.68	35.00	56.87
Mitchell's Plain (Andrea & Alexia's neighbourhood)	68.15	17.73	16.94	12.13	28.74
Angelo's neighbourhood (South Peninsual)	82.38	21.21	29.66	33.92	41.79
Natasha's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	16.78	3.60	9.27	4.13	8.45
Rene's neighbourhood (Cape Flats)	89.56	43.68	58.47	33.65	56.34

APPENDIX C – Services Levels Indicators by Suburb (City of Cape Town, 2001a):

Suburb 2001 (%)	Households living in Informal Dwellings %	Households with no access to electricity for lighting %	Households with no flush or chemical toilet %	Households with no potable water on-site or indwelling %	Households with no refuse removal by local authority weekly or less	Service Index
Bonteheuwel	10.49	0.50	4.48	5.87	0.21	4.31
Mandy's neighbourhood (greater Athlone area)	0.56	0.27	2.43	2.18	0.27	1.14
Randall's neighbourhood (Northern Suburbs)	5.06	1.37	5.03	4.58	0.46	3.30
Randall's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	1.07	0.00	0.71	2.52	0.35	0.93
Natasha's neighbourhood (greater Goodwood area)	0.25	0.00	0.72	2.40	0.00	0.67
Angelo's neighbourhood (first home on the Cape Flats)	6.65	0.56	5.42	4.60	0.35	3.52
Randall's neighbourhood (south peninsula)	0.17	0.34	1.18	2.19	0.17	0.81
Mitchell's Plain (Charlene's neighbourhood)	15.28	9.00	4.03	3.02	6.87	7.64
Mitchell's Plain (Andrea & Alexia's neighbourhood)	0.58	0.21	1.22	3.18	0.14	1.07
Angelo's neighbourhood (South Peninsular)	7.40	1.46	5.23	5.34	0.38	3.96
Natasha's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	0.74	1.01	1.26	2.61	0.84	1.29
Rene's neighbourhood (Cape Flats)	7.89	1.68	5.82	8.90	0.14	4.89

APPENDIX D – Explanations from Romanovsky & Gie (2006):

S.E.S. INDEX:

“Interpretation of Scores: Those suburbs that registered high scores, above 60, on the S.E.S index were predominantly characterized by informal housing developments whereas individual and households in the low income public and private housing suburbs registered scores between 40 and 60.” (2006: 6)

SERVICE LEVEL INDEX:

Interpretation of Scores: Service level scores above 60 were registered by a number of informal settlements whereas the more formal low income suburbs recorded scores below 60. Appendix 3 shows that for a number of informal settlements, such as Airport Informal, Du Noon, Modderdam and Wallacedene, 90% of households did not have access to electricity for lighting, have no flush or chemical toilets, no potable water on the site or in the dwelling and between 30% and 80% of households had no refuse removals weekly or less. There were certain informal settlements, such as Khayelitsha Site C, Masiphumelele and Khayelitsha T3–V5 which, although characterized by low socio-economic status, registered scores which indicated a high level of service (2006: 9).

LEVELS OF LIVING INDEX:

Informal Settlement Areas: “Scores between 56.21 and 83.97 (colour code red) were registered by informal settlements residents.” (2006: 11)

Public Housing and Low Income Private Residential Areas: “Scores between 34.27 and 56.20 (colour code pink) were registered by residents in both low income (rented) public housing and low income private housing residential areas. Although these areas have access to a high level of services, they are characterized by poor social and physical environments that have manifested in high levels of violent crime, gangsterism, as well as drug and alcohol abuse.” (2006: 11)

Lower to Middle Income Private Residential Areas: “Scores between 20.44 and 34.26 (colour coded yellow) were registered by residents in lower to middle income suburbs. These suburbs are well serviced and the needs of these suburbs are related to maintaining the existing level of services and specifically the maintenance of public space, the control of traffic and the better policing of these areas.” (2006: 11)

Middle to High Income Private Residential Areas: "Scores between 0.00 and 20.43142 (colour-coded green) were registered by residents of middle to high income suburbs." (2006: 12)

¹⁴² Anything under 10.87 is regarded as the best off.

SUMMARY FOR THESE AREAS:

Bonteheuwel	In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of SES index Level of living index score: 25.51
Mandy's neighbourhood (greater Athlone area)	Level of living index score: 18.01
Randall's neighbourhood (Northern Suburbs)	Level of living index score: 22.32
Randall's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	Level of living index score: 7.69
Natasha's neighbourhood (greater Goodwood area)	Level of living index score: between 6.96 and 9.17
Angelo's neighbourhood (first home on the Cape Flats)	In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of SES index Level of living index score: 26.89
Randall's neighbourhood (south peninsula)	Level of living index score: 10.18
Mitchell's Plain (Charlene's neighbourhood)	In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of SES index In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of services level index Level of living index score: 32.26
Mitchell's Plain (Andrea & Alexia's neighbourhood)	Level of living index score: 14.90
Angelo's neighbourhood (South Peninsula)	Level of living index score: 22.88
Natasha's neighbourhood (Southern Suburbs)	Level of living index score: 4.87
Rene's neighbourhood (Cape Flats)	In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of SES index In the worst 20% of suburbs in terms of services level index Level of living index score: 30.61

APPENDIX E – ‘Ideal Types’ of Minority Choosers from Reay et al. (2005: 111)

CONTINGENT CHOOSERS:	EMBEDDED CHOOSERS:
finance is a key concern and constraint	finance is not an issue
choice uses minimal information	choice is based on extensive and diverse sources of information
choice is distant or ‘unreal’	choice is part of a cultural script, a ‘normal biography’
few variables are called up	a diverse array of variables are deployed
choice is general/abstract	choice is specialist/detailed
minimal support (social capital) is used	extensive support (social capital) is mobilised
ethnic mix is an active variable in choosing	ethnic mix is marginal or irrelevant to choice
choosing is short term and weakly linked to ‘imagined futures’ — part of an incomplete or incoherent narrative	choosing is long term and often relates to vivid and extensive ‘imagined futures’ — part of a coherent and planned narrative
first-time’ choosers with no family tradition of HE	followers embedded in a deep grammar of aspiration which makes HE normal and necessary
narrowly defined socioscapes and spatial horizons — choices are local/distance is a friction	broad socioscapes and social horizons — choices are national/ distance is not an issue
parents as onlookers or weak framers/mothers may give practical support	parents as strong framers and active participants in choice

Reay, David and Ball (2005: 112)

APPENDIX F – DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS:

NAME	FAMILY:	PARENTS' JOBS:	HOME:	SCHOOL:	MAJOR(S):
Natasha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, an older sister (now married) & a younger sister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad: business owner Mom: credit manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, greater Goodwood area Previously, in the Northern and Southern Suburbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Model C school in one of Cape Town's Northern Suburbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial sociology Org. psychology Initially focused on clinical psychology
Charlene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, 2 brothers & a sister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad: debt collector Mom: housewife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitchell's Plain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured school in the Mitchell's Plain area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social work
Zita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents & 2 brothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad: housewife Mom: housewife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johannesburg Cape Flats in Cape Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Model C school in Johannesburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Film & Media
Andrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother (now deceased), grandparents, 2 sisters & 2 aunts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandma & mom: clothing industry Aunt: retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitchell's Plain UCT res. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured school in the Mitchell's Plain area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English literature Media
Alexia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother (now deceased), grandparents, 2 sisters & 2 aunts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandma & mom: clothing industry Aunt: retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitchell's Plain UCT res. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured school in the Mitchell's Plain area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Science
Rene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents, 2 brothers & 2 sisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad: butcher Mom: admin assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The greater Bonteheuwel area on the Cape Flats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Model C school in one of Cape Town's Northern Suburbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geomatics
Randall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother & a sister (now married) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mom: variable data co-ordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Suburbs (predom. Coloured) Southern Suburbs (predom. Coloured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured school in the South Peninsula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously: Statistics & Economics Recently changed majors to Psychology
Mandy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother, brother & aunt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mom: receptionist/secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The greater Allure area UCT res. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Model C school in one of Cape Town's Southern Suburbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama Gender studies
Angelo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents & 2 brothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad: unemployed Mom: clothing machinist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured neighbourhood in the South Peninsula UCT res. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly Coloured school in the South Peninsula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics Hopes to change to Accounting, which was his first choice

APPENDIX G – Interview Schedule:

Background – “But first I’d like to just learn a little more about you and your life in general. Could you tell me a bit about yourself? And then please can you also tell me a bit about your family...” followed by the questions below:

- ✓ Please tell me about your family and where you grew up i.e.
 - Where do you live? Tell me about the area...
 - Who do you live with?
 - What was/is your home life like [i.e. I might need to formulate a question aimed at understanding who does what in the home, responsibilities etc]?
- ✓ What do your parents do for a living?
 - What about your siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins etc...? Any tertiary education?
- ✓ What are some of your most significant memories of your childhood and/or teen years (thus far)?
 - Who were some of the people you looked up to?
- ✓ What are/were some of your interests/hobbies growing up and/or what types of activities (other than school) take up a lot of your time?
 - Do you (still) spend time on these?

School etc:

- ✓ Which high school did you attend? (probe into why he/she attended that school, who made that choice, ...)
- ✓ What was your high school like? How would you describe it?
 - What were the teachers/students/facilities like?
- ✓ What types of sport/cultural/extra-mural activities/clubs are/were you involved in?
- ✓ Who were your closest friends?
 - Why were you such close friends?
 - What types of things did you do together?
 - Which classes and/or activities were they involved in?
- ✓ Which were some of the classes or topics you enjoyed at school? Why did you enjoy that so much?
- ✓ How did you decide on the subject (or learning area) choices you made at the end of grade 9 (any educational counselling or career guidance available)?

Pursuing a university education – “Now that I’ve learnt a bit about your family, friends and school I’d like to focus on how you came to be at UCT...”:

- ✓ **When did you first decide you wanted to go to university?**
 - How did you arrive at the decision to go to university?
 - Why was it important for you to go to university?
 - Who were the people who were encouraging you to go to university?
 - How do you think attending university will influence your future?
 - What made you choose university over doing something closer to what others in your family do or have done?
 - What was your exposure to universities or tertiary education in general prior to making this decision?

- ✓ **How did you decide on your course of study?**
 - What were the factors that shaped this decision?
 - Who helped you decide what educational path would suit your (or your aspirations) best?
 - Any educational counselling or career guidance available?

- ✓ **Who of your friends and/or classmates from high school are going to be attending this university? Or are they going to another?**
 - What are the plans of those who are not going to attend university?
 - How did you handle comments or questions from those who were not necessarily in favour of university education?
 - How did you manage to stay focused in spite of things that might have distracted you from your (academic and other) goals?

- ✓ **How did you arrive at the decision to attend the University of Cape Town?**
 - To which other universities or institutions did you apply?

- ✓ **How did you get information regarding what your options were at university?**
 - How did you find your experience of the application process?
 - How did access to information influence the decision-making process (incl. the decision of which university to attend)?

- ✓ **How are you going to pay for university?**
 - Parents?
 - NSFAS? - If so, how did you get the information about and/or access these?
 - Bursary? Loans? - If so, how did you get the information about and/or access these?
 - How much time do you plan on spending on part-time jobs?

- ✓ **How are you going to commute to and from university?**

APPENDIX H – List of Codes:

SIBI - WORK	Siblings (including cousins living in the home) vocation (also includes cousins or other youth/children living in the home)
SIBL-VOLU	Sibling (including cousins living in the home) volunteering
SIDL-EDUC	Siblings (including cousins living in the home) level of education (also includes cousins or other youth/children living in the home)
SIBI-WPWR	Siblings – Willpower, being driven, openly (?), motivation etc....
PRNT WORK	Parents'/guardians' vocation and/or employment status
PRNT-EDUC	Parents'/guardians' level of educ.
PRNT VOLU	Parents'/guardians' volunteering
ADLT - WORK	Vocation and/or employment status of non-parental adults in the same household
ADLT-EDUC	Level of education of non-parental adults in the same household
CHLD-EDUC	Level of education of child
RLTY-WORK	Vocation and/or employment status of relatives (i.e. members of extended family)
RLTY-FMHC	Level of education of relatives (i.e. members of extended family)
HOME-NBHD	Home – location/neighborhood & details
HOME-FRND	Home – friendships; include mentions of or info on various social activities
EXTD-FMLY	Information about extended family etc.
HOME-FMLY	Home – info about members of family etc. living in the household
HOME-LANG	Home – language
HOME-CASH	Matters pertaining to home finances etc.
FMLY-CASH	Matters pertaining to extended family finances etc. – including and perhaps especially parents' upbringing etc.
FMLY-HLTH	Matters pertaining to health etc.
FMLY SIBR	Relationships with siblings
FMLY-MOMR	Relationship with mum
FMLY DADR	Relationship with dad
FMLY-CHDR	Relationship with child
FMLY PRNT	Relationship with parents/guardians in general
FMLY-RI TV	Details about and relationships with extended family
FMLY LOSS	Loss of a family member, loved one, relative etc....
FMLY-DISP	Family attitudes and/or dispositions
HOME-RSPD	Roles or responsibilities at home (e.g. chores etc.)
RLTN-RMOD	Relationships with or views on role models and/or mentors (in whatever form)... Including the lack of role models.
PSCH-INS I	Primary school – context and background; including information about organisational culture (e.g. how they handled discipline etc.)
PSCH SPRT	Primary school – sport
PSCH-PEER	Primary school – peers/classmates

PSCI-FRND	Primary school – friendships & social interactions
HSCH-INST	High school – context and background; choice of institution and the dates etc.; including information about organisational culture (e.g. how they handled discipline etc.)
HSCH-TECHR	High school – teachers
HSCH-PEER	High school – peers/classmates and other learners
HSCH-FRND	High school – friendships & social interactions
HSCH-SUBJ	High school – subject choice; and favourite subjects
HSCH-GUID	High school – career and/or other guidance (incl. aptitude tests etc.)
HSCH-EXMU	High school – extra-mural activities
HSCH-EXTR	Extra lessons/classes etc..
HSCH-SPRT	High school – sport
HSCH-OLYM	Taking part in the Maths Olympiad at UCT...
SCHL-PERF	Academic performance at school in general
SCHI-LANG	School language
SCHL-BHVR	Behaviour at school; (lack of) discipline; leadership positions and/or responsibilities
SCHL-CASH	School (primary and/or secondary) – how it's being financed or paid for, including who is paying and/or its significance on school choice...
PFRF-EXPC.	Expectations connected/related to academic performance and/or abilities – including expectations placed on themselves and those placed on them by others...
UNIV-EDMX	University/HE – decision to attend/pursue
UNIV-INST	University/HE – choice of institution
UNIV-MAJR	University/HE – choice of major
UNIV-APPL	University/HE – application process
UNIV-COPE	University/HE – coping
UNIV-PERF	University/HE – academic performance
UNIV-SOCI	University/HE – social interactions; friends; peers; other non-academic activities
UNIV-EXPO	University/HE – prior (& ongoing) exposure/knowledge/information
UNIV-BYND	University/HE – life after graduation; thoughts and plans etc.; future etc.; includes thoughts regarding career plans etc..
UNIV-RSDN	University/HE – specific information about and comments on the experience of living in res at UCT
UNIV-CASH	University/HE – how it's being financed or paid for, including who is paying
PRNT-EDMR	Parents/guardians – attitude toward education and role in EDM
PRNT-OUTC	Parents/guardians – impact of involvement on the socio-economic outcomes of their children...
RELV-EDMR	Relatives – attitude toward education and role in EDM
EDMX-OPPN	Opposition to, questions regarding or obstacles affecting EDM & the pursuit of a university education

EXPR-GAPY	Gap year
EXPR-WORK	Jobs or work experience
EXPR-LRNX	Learning or training outside of high school and/or university (e.g. on the job training etc.)
EXPR-VOLU	Volunteering
EXPR-LEAD	Experience of leadership in any context
EXPR-TRV1	Travel – local
EXPR-TRV2	Travel – abroad
ACTV-RELI	Activity/pursuit – church or other faith-related activities
ACTV-SPRT	Activity/pursuit – sport
ACTV-EXMU	Activity/pursuit – artistic, cultural or other extra-mural activities; hobbies
ACTV-PLAY	Activity/pursuit – playing and other non-organised childhood activities
ACTV-BUSY	Activity/pursuit – generally just keeping busy etc. and the importance of that...
WORK-ADVT	Views/opinions about the advantages of work
EDUC-ADVT	Views/opinions about the advantages of (further) education
EDUC-OWNR	Taking ownership of education, making it a priority, choosing to focus on it etc.
FRND-WORK	Friends' vocations or jobs etc.
FRND-EDUC	Friends' education status at present and/or level of education achieved
PEER-EDUC	Peers' education status at present and/or level of education achieved
PFFR-WORK	Peers' education status at present and/or level of education achieved
OTHR-FRND	Friendships that aren't necessarily connected to home or to school, but rather to one of the 'experiences' (i.e. EXPR) or 'activities' (i.e. ACTV) I've labelled
EDMX-NWSA	EDM processes as it relates to a New (i.e. post-1994) South Africa specifically opportunities their parents never had etc...
WORK-CDMX	Future work/career plans/ideas (i.e. career decision-making)... this implies that there is some sort of choice involved and that it's not a forgone conclusion.
ENJY-CDMX	Enjoyment/passion/fun/interests as factors in CIM (regardless of whether they were fulfilled).
ENJY-EDMX	Enjoyment/passion/fun/interests as factors in EDM (regardless of whether they were fulfilled).
INDV-HIST	Age, time-line, relevant dates etc
INDV-FUTR	Hopes/dreams/visions/aspirations of a better future (incl. financial stability etc)
INDV-DISP	Reference to (changing) individual dispositions, preferences, attitudes etc...
INDV-RSPB	
INDV-RMOD	Respondent being, acting, or seeing self as a role-model

INDV-FTHX	Religious beliefs, faith, spirituality etc – specifically the role played by faith etc rather than just the institutionalised activities which are covered by ACTV-RFII
INDV BHVR	Different behaviours including in relation to friends and dealing with peer pressure etc.
INDV-NETW	Access to, pursuit of and/or use of useful and/or EDM-relevant personal contacts and/or networks in various contexts...
INDV-SHDY	The idea of 'being somebody' or 'doing something' ... there's an implicit notion of pursuing some kind of significance here. I think...
INDV-HLTH	Matters pertaining to individual health etc.
INDV-GRTH	Growing up including changes and puberty etc...
PSYC-WRNG	General comments about emotions etc., including matters relating to depression/anxiety/suicide etc., as well as positive emotions like being made to feel special etc.
PSYC-IDNT	Identity, perceptions/performances of self and changes therein...
PSYC-CONS	Sense of conscience and/or internal indicator of morality
PSYC-BLNG	Feelings/sense of belonging or lack thereof; being a one/lonely
PSYC-WPWR	Willpower; being driven; agency (?); motivation etc...
PSYC-RULS	Following rules and regulations in different contexts, including views/thoughts/feelings with regards to these
PSYC DEVT	Personal and/or psychological development as it pertains to growth, maturing and the experiences that lead to those...
GNRL-GNDR	Gender
GNRL-LANG	Language including wanting to learn new languages etc...
GNRL RACE	Race, culture and/or ethnicity...
RACE-BOUN	Racial, cultural and/or ethnic boundaries...
GNRL-CLAS	Class (i.e. socio-economic); incl. matters relating to lifestyle etc
GNRL-ALCL	Mention of the use of alcohol
GNRL DRUG	Mention of the use of drugs
GNRL-CRIM	Mention of the use of criminal activities
GNRL-TRAP	The word 'trap' comes from Rene's interview where she describes things that young people in poorer communities 'fall into' – i.e. drugs; gangsterism; pregnancy; dropping out of school
GNRL-SOCI	General social interactions not particularly linked to school, university or any other named context...
GNRL-MEDIA	Thoughts/comments regarding the role of various types/forms of media especially but not limited to online social networks etc...
NWSA-BEEX	Thoughts/comments regarding so-called Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)...
CLRD-IDNT	Thoughts/comments on 'Coloured' identity &/or experience (personal)
CLRD-DFNT	Thoughts/comments wanting/aspiring to be more/different to other and/or the majority of Coloured people... including the feeling of being different or an outsider...
CLRD-LFSI	Thoughts/comments on 'Coloured' lifestyle and/or culture...

CLRD-FMLY	Thoughts/comments on 'Coloured' family structures and related matters.
CLRD CLAS	Comments/thoughts regarding class position of Coloured (i.e. socio-economic etc.)
CLRD-MIDL	Thoughts/comments on ideas relating to 'Coloureds' being stuck in the 'middle' – socially, politically and/or economically... as well as issues around being mediocre...
CLRD-NWSA	Thoughts on the position of Coloured people in South Africa today – the (possible) future(s) for Coloured young people today...
CLRD-VSBL	The idea that Coloureds are rendered voiceless and/or invisible in contemporary South African society at large (incl. politics)
CLRD-EDMR	Role of CLRD IDNT and CLRD NWSA in their own EDM and/or journey to UCT
CLAS-UPPR	Upper Class (i.e. managers & professionals), as well as WF1 & WF2 (the upper 'wealth or entrepreneurship categories'). This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
CLAS-SPCX	Semiprofessional class (i.e. teachers & nurses). This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
CLAS-INTD	Intermediate Class (i.e. routine white-collar, skilled and supervisory workers). This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
CLAS-CWCX	Core working class (i.e. semi-skilled and unskilled workers; except farm and domestic workers). This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
CLAS-WE3X	Party traders. This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
CLAS-MWCX	Marginal working class (i.e. farm and domestic workers). This is referring to the possible class position of the family and/or the pursued class position based on comments about CDM. Broad class categories used by Seekings and Nattrass (2005) based on PSLSD data.
PKNI-UNEM	Parental unemployment (past and/or present).

REFERENCES:

- Adhikari, M. 2005. *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Apple, M. 2004. Between Good Sense and Bad Sense. In *Learning to Labor in New Times*. N. Dolby & G. Dimitriadis (with P. Willis), Eds. New York: Routledge Falmer. 61–82.
- Borel-Saladin, J. & Crankshaw, O. 2009, Social Polarisation or Professionalisation? Another Look at Theory and Evidence on Deindustrialisation and the Rise of the Service Sector. *Urban Studies*. 46(3):645-664.
- Bourdieu, P. 1985. The Forms of Capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. J. Richardson, Ed. New York: Greenwood. 241-258.
- Bourdieu, P. 1994. Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. In *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspective*. D. Grusky, Ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 404-29.
- Bourdieu, P. 2005. Habitus. In *Habitus: A Sense of Place*. J. Hillier & E. Rooksby, Eds. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing. 43-52.
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. 1990, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Branson, N., Leibbrandt, M. & Zuze, L. 2009. *The Demand for Tertiary Education in South Africa*. Cape Town: The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town
- Bray, R., Gooskens, I., Moses, S., Kahn, L. & Seekings, J. 2010. *Growing Up in the New South Africa: Childhood and Adolescence in Post-Apartheid Cape Town*. Cape Town: HSRC Press
- City of Cape Town. 2001a. *Suburb Service Indicators: 2001*. Available: http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/Documents/Suburb_2001_Service_Indicators_30102006144537_359.pdf [2012, July 26].
- City of Cape Town. 2001b. *Suburb SES Indicators: 2001*. Available: http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/Documents/Suburb_2001_SES_Indicators_30102006121734_359.pdf [2012, July 26].

- City of Cape Town. 2003. *Mayor's Listening Campaign: Analysis of Comments by Area*. Available: http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/stats/CityReports/Documents/Other%20City%20Reports/Analysis_by_Local_Area_196200312314_364.pdf [2012, July 26].
- Cooper, D. 2011. *The University in Development: Case Studies of Use-Oriented Research*. Cape Town: HSRC Press
- Crankshaw, O. 2008. Race, Space and the Post-Fordist Spatial Order of Johannesburg. *Urban Studies*. 45(8): 1692-1711.
- Crankshaw, O. 2012. Deindustrialization, Professionalization and Racial Inequality in Cape Town. *Urban Affairs Review*. 48(6): 836-862.
- Crouch, L. 2005. *Disappearing Schoolchildren or Data Misunderstandings? Dropout Phenomena in South Africa*. North Carolina: Research Triangle Institute.
- De Lannoy, A. 2008. Educational Decision-Making in an Era of AIDS, PhD. Thesis. University of Cape Town.
- De Lannoy, A. 2011. The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of: Narratives on Educational Decision-Making among Young Adults in Cape Town. *Journal of Education*. Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal. 51: 53-72.
- Dolby, N. 2001. *Constructing Race: Youth, Identity and Popular Culture in South Africa*. New York: SUNY Press
- Erasmus, Z. 2001. Introduction: Re-Imagining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa". In *Coloured By History, Shaped By Place: New Perspectives On Coloured Identities In Cape Town*, Z. Erasmus, Ed. Cape Town: Kwela Books.13-28.
- Fielding, N. & Lee, R. 1998. *Computer Analysis and Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Glaser, B. 1992. *Emergence vs Forcing: Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. 1994. *More Grounded Theory Methodology: A Reader*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine

“Goody Two-Shoes”. *Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster Online*. 2013. Merriam-Webster Incorporated. Available: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/goody%20two-shoes> [20 January 2013].

Guest, G., Bunce, A. & Johnson, L. 2006. How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field methods*. 18(1): 59-82.

Habib, A. & Bentley, K. 2008. *Racial Redress & Citizenship in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press

Haupt, A. 2008. *Stealing Empire: P2P, Intellectual Property and Hip-Hop Subversion*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Kaufman, P. 2003. Learning to Not Labor: How Working-Class Individuals Construct Middle-Class Identities. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 44(3). 481-504.

Kvale, S. 1996. *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lam, D., Ardington, C., Branson, N., Case, A., Leibbrandt, M., Menendez, A., Seekings, J. & Sparks, M. 2008. *The Cape Area Panel Study: A Very Short Introduction to the Integrated Waves 1-2-3-4 Data*. Cape Town: The University of Cape Town

Lamont, M. & Lareau, A. 1988. Cultural capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments. *Sociological theory*. 6(2): 153-168.

Lehmann, W. 2009. Becoming Middle Class: How Working-Class University Students Draw and Transgress Moral Class Boundaries. *Sociology*. 43(4): 631-647.

Louw, M., Van Der Berg, S. & Yu, D. 2006. *Educational Attainment and Intergenerational Social Mobility in South Africa*. Stellenbosch Working Paper No. 09/2006. Stellenbosch: Bureau for Economic Research/Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

Portes, A. 1998. Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 24: 1-24.

Ramphela, M. 2002. *Steering By the Stars: Being Young in South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Reay D, David, M. & Ball, S. 2005. *Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Reay, D., Crozier, G. & Clayton, J. 2009. Strangers in Paradise'? Working-Class Students in Elite Universities. *Sociology*. 43(6): 1103-1121.

Rizvi, F. 2004. The "Lads" and the Cultural Topography of Race. In *Learning to Labor in New Times*. N. Dolby & G. Dimitriadis (with P. Willis), Eds. New York: Routledge Falmer. 83-94.

Romanovsky, P. & Gie, J. 2006. *Information and Knowledge Management Department, The Spatial Distribution of Socio-Economic Status, Service Levels and Levels of Living in the City of Cape Town 2001*. Cape Town: City of Cape Town.

South African Institute of Race Relations. 2011. *South Africa Survey 2009-2010*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Sayer, A. 2000. *Realism and Social Science*. London: SAGE Publications Limited.

Sayer, A. 1992. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. London: Routledge.

Seekings, J. 2008. The Continuing Salience of Race: Discrimination and Diversity in South Africa. *Journal of contemporary African studies*. 26(1): 1-25.

Seekings, J. & Nattrass, N. 2005. *Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Solomon, J. 2010. An Investigation into Social Networks in Job-Search. Does the Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis Apply?. BSocSc (Hons) Research Essay. University of Cape Town.

Soudien, C. 2012. *Realising the Dream: Unlearning the Logic of Race in the South African School*. Cape town: HSRC Press.

Soudien, C. 2007. *Youth Identity in Contemporary South Africa: Race, Culture and Schooling*. Claremont: New Africa Books.

Statistics South Africa. 2012. Census 2011 Statistical release – P0301.4 . Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Swartz, S. 2011. 'Going Deep' and 'Giving Back': Strategies for Exceeding Ethical Expectations When Researching Amongst Vulnerable Youth. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1): 47-68.

University of Cape Town. 2012. Senate Outline agenda – 16 November, 2012 (unpublished).

University of Cape Town. 2013. *Applying to UCT: Criteria for Admission*. Available: <http://www.uct.ac.za/apply/criteria/eligibility/> [2013, January 19].

Wacquant, L. 2006. *Pierre Bourdieu*. Available:

<http://www.umsl.edu/~keelr/3210/resources/PIERREBOURDIEU-KEYTHINK-REV2006.pdf>

[2012, December 13]

Willis, P. 2004. Twenty-Five Years On: Old Books, New Times. In *Learning to Labor in New Times*. N. Dolby & G. Dimitriadis (with P. Willis), Eds. New York: Routledge Falmer. 167-196.

Willis, P. 1977. *Learning To Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

University of Cape Town