The Gift of a Scholarship:

The reflective accounts of scholarship recipients attending elite secondary schools in post-apartheid South Africa

by

Jennifer Wallace

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the experiences of scholarship students from historically disadvantaged communities who attend elite secondary schools in South Africa. Specifically, the study analyses the narrated accounts of a sample of former scholarship recipients who reflect back on their experiences of entering into, and engaging with, the field of elite schooling, having come from very different primary school contexts. Viewing the scholarship as a form of a 'gift' (following Mauss, 1969), and using a Bourdieusian framework and the concepts of habitus, field and capital as well as symbolic violence, the study investigates the dynamic and intricate interplay between the recipient of the scholarship on the one hand, and the elite schooling environment on the other.

In-depth, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 male and female scholarship recipients between the ages of 19 and 24 years. The focus of the interviews was on the participants' reflective experiences as scholarship recipients in elite South African schools. From the analysis of the narrative interview transcripts three main themes were explored: the interviewees' initial experiences of the elite school space; the adjustments that they felt were required of them in order to fit in and the strategies they employed to improve their positions within the field; and what their reflective accounts reveal regarding the impact of their secondary schooling experiences on their lives.

This thesis makes several key contributions to academic debates on schooling in the post-apartheid South African context. It shows that in this profoundly unequal setting, success in one part of the field does not necessarily equate to success in another. Moreover, any assumption that access to elite schooling through the awarding of a scholarship equates to 'equal access' is refuted by the recipients' narratives of their experiences. In addition, the accounts of the participants in the study reveal that accepting the gift of a scholarship is far more complex, multi-layered, and at times harsh and even painful for the individual recipients than is possibly realised by those involved in this practice. Thus, as is seen from the scholarship students' accounts, the giving of a scholarship as an opportunity for upward social mobility impacts on the recipient in fundamental and unanticipated ways.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and that it has not been submitted before, for any purpose, to any other institution.

Signature: Signed by candidate

Date: June 2020

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My Name is not Mandela

I was Secretary-General of the prefect body. … In the prefect body in our year, there were five black students and the rest were all white. And I think we both know that pronouncing a Xhosa[1] name is quite a difficult thing for most white people. But I don't think that that should take away from people trying, you know, how to pronounce [them]. But he literally did not … he literally called us all 'Mandela'. It doesn't make sense. I have a name. I mean, Bongani is not that bad [to pronounce]. I understand that you may struggle, but to not at least try, says something. Yes, we all know Mandela. But that's not my name. Why aren't you trying to call me something other than Mandela? And I thought that was, in some sense, kind of a weird way of treating black students compared to knowing every single white student's name in the student body. … I think for me, that is definitely the biggest memory that I have.

An account related by Bongani, a former scholarship recipient in his second year of studying Actuarial Science at a Cape Town university. In this extract, Bongani is reflecting on the behaviour of the teacher who was in charge of the prefects[2] in Bongani's final (Grade 12) year at an elite South African secondary school.

Globally, it is common practice for elite schools to offer scholarships to talented students who would not otherwise be able to afford the school fees. Within the context of post-apartheid South Africa, where this study is located, this practice assumes particular, localised complexities, nuances, and tensions, given South Africa's socio-historical landscape. Two in particular are worth mentioning. First, in the post-apartheid schooling dispensation, the category of 'elite' includes not only legacy private schools, almost all in the English-speaking sector of the population, but also a select number of former white public schools that are in a position to charge very high fees under the post-apartheid education dispensation. As schools that are able to charge high fees, most of these also offer various forms of scholarships.[3] Second, in addition to the broad requirements of 'displaying potential' and 'demonstrated financial need' for the awarding of a scholarship worldwide, South African full

[1] isiXhosa is an indigenous Nguni language with click consonants. There are, however, no click sounds in this particular isiXhosa name, 'Bongani'. isiXhosa is one of South Africa's 11 official languages.

[2] The term prefect within the South African school system refers to a student in their final year of school who has been elected to a leadership position by their peers and the school.

[3] Although in literature the terms 'scholarship' and 'bursary' are sometimes used interchangeably, this thesis uses the term 'scholarship' as this is the term used by the donor foundations for the financial aid provided for the students.

scholarship programmes offered by these schools are, for the most part, explicitly aimed at students who come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Within the South African context, the term 'historically disadvantaged' refers to communities and people who were discriminated against because of their race[4] under the apartheid laws. The significance of this traversing of the boundaries of both class and race that scholarships enable is heightened by the pervasive and profound inequalities that still exist in this country.

Almost a quarter of a century after the introduction of democracy in 1994, South Africa is still recognised as "the most unequal country in the world … [as a result of] the enduring legacy of apartheid" (The World Bank, 2018, p. 120). One of the dimensions of this inequality is that there exists, in effect, a two-tiered system of education in post-apartheid South Africa, with a persistent gap between poorly-functioning, under-resourced schools on the one hand, and high-functioning, well-resourced schools on the other. In a general sense, the relationship between class (indicated in terms of the ability to pay high school fees), is now deeply entwined with the socio-historical legacy of race as the most significant factors that determine the standard of schooling available to post-apartheid youth, with gender also featuring in different ways across the system (Chisholm, 2004; Christie, 2008). The markers of status for elite schools within this context are their academic achievements in an education system that generally performs poorly, their broad curriculum and extramural offerings, and their extensive access to resources and facilities when compared to the majority of South African schools.

The focus of this thesis is on the experiences of scholarship students moving from historically disadvantaged black communities to historically white elite schools. The core research question of this study is: *What do the accounts of scholarship students reveal about accepting the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite South African secondary school?* The study analyses

[4] Unfortunately it is not possible to avoid the terminology of 'race' in studying education in South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, racial terms and classifications have been removed from most of civil society with the passing of new legislation though they remain in use for affirmative action purposes – and because apartheid racial inequalities linger on. Within this thesis I have made reference to these race categories as they have direct bearing on the issues and experiences under discussion. I have used the term 'black' to denote all peoples discriminated against under the apartheid laws because of their race, and the terms 'African', 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'white' to refer specifically to how people would have been classified under these laws. I am uncomfortable with such usage and would like to acknowledge that these labels are entirely socially constructed.

the narrated accounts of a sample of former scholarship recipients who reflect back on their experiences of entering into, and engaging with, the field of elite secondary schooling, having come from very different primary school contexts. Viewing the scholarship as a form of 'gift' (following Mauss, 1969), the thesis explores this gift-giving practice that involves three leading players: donors, elite schools, and students from disadvantaged communities. With a focus on the recipients' experiences, the study uses Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and capital to analyse the participants' narrative accounts within the context of post-apartheid South Africa schooling, and the complexities and nuances that underlie scholarships as a form of gift-giving.

Analysing the interview narratives, three main themes are explored: the interviewees' initial experiences of the elite school space; the adjustments that they felt were required of them in order to fit in and the strategies they employed to improve their positions within the field; and what their reflective accounts reveal regarding the impact of their secondary schooling experiences on their lives.

The rest of this introductory chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section provides an overview of the contextual landscape of schooling in post-apartheid South Africa, within which this study is located. The notion of a scholarship as a form of a gift, and what this entails, is explored in greater detail in the second section of this chapter. The third and final section discusses the significance of this study. The chapter ends with a brief overview of the organisation of the chapters in this thesis.

The contextual landscape of the study

Historically, traditions of English-speaking schools in South Africa may be dated to British colonial interests, first through the establishment of colonies in the Cape and Natal in the 1800s after Britain took over the Cape from the Batavian Republic, and subsequently through the Union of South Africa as a British dominion after 1910. Church schools and other private schools were established in the Cape Colony in the 1800s, together with a number of prestigious First Class public schools, and the legacy of private and church schools was continued along with the expansion of English-speaking settlements and the growth of a public education system for whites across the country. Apartheid intensified the separation of schooling for whites along Afrikaans- and English-speaking lines. Until the imposition of

apartheid education and its infamous Bantu Education Act of 1954, all education for black people in South Africa was in the hands of missionaries.[5]

A significant aspect of this historical legacy is that before the early 1990s, the well-resourced public schools in the country were exclusively white, with all of the benefits of apartheid that were afforded to them in terms of extensive state subsidies for the public schools, access to well-qualified teachers, rich resources, well-positioned and maintained school buildings and land, and extensive school infrastructure. Though not all white public schools served wealthy communities, all were significantly better resourced than the segregated schooling provided for black people in communities divided by racial classification. Private schools and religious schools continued to operate separately from the state system, though were registered within it. From the time of the black student protests beginning with the 1976 Soweto uprising, Catholic schools, followed by other religious schools and private schools, began admitting black students in defiance of apartheid regulations to what were previously white-only institutions. This was known as the 'Open Schools' movement.

The decade of the 1990s that saw the ending of the apartheid laws and the ensuing negotiated settlement, followed by the first democratic elections that established Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president, brought with it significant changes in education in an attempt to redress the divisions and inequalities of the past. As apartheid was drawing to an end, the government introduced a system of state-aided schooling for whites, allowing these schools under powerful parent bodies to admit students of all races, provided they maintained their existing 'ethos' (see Christie, 1995). These 'Model C' schools still received a high percentage of state funding but had to raise the remainder of their budgets through school fees and donations, as the state's focus was now on finding ways to distribute funds more equitably across all public schools in the country as apartheid ended. The parent bodies of each Model C school were tasked with electing a governing body that was responsible for the determination and collection of school fees, as well as the resources and fixed property

[5] Under the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953), education was divided along racial lines, with separate education departments for white, Indian, coloured and African South Africans, as well as schools, curricula and the allocation of resources. The lion's share of government support and resources was allocated to the schools for white students, followed by those allocated to Indian and coloured students. The schools for African students received a negligible amount of the state coffers in comparison to the white schools. For every R1 that was spent on educating an African child, R17 was spent educating a white child (Motala *et al.*, 2007).

of the school (Fiske and Ladd, 2004). In the education policy framework developed in the post-apartheid period, this decentralisation of public school governance was entrenched in law for all public schools by the passing of the South Africa Schools Act in 1996 (Department of Basic Education, 1996), and a system of fee-payment for schooling was consolidated.

Although the South African Schools Act of 1996 formally outlawed discrimination and legislated the policies and modalities for a new non-racial, non-sexist and equitable education system for all public schools, the gap between policy and implementation has been enormously challenging to bridge (Christie, 2008). As Fiske and Ladd (2005) highlight, although there were positive moves towards racial equity in the sense that the demographics of many formerly white schools changed in the decade of democracy, this has not translated into overall equal educational opportunity nor adequacy. Consequently, the system of public education that is accessible to the majority of South Africa's (predominantly black) population is in a state of crisis, as has been well-researched (see, for example, Fiske and Ladd, 2004; Van Der Berg, 2007; Taylor, Fleisch and Shindler, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Gilmour and Soudien, 2009; Spaull, 2013).

Likewise, the 1990s saw significant changes taking place in the South African independent schooling sector. Although a number of independent schools, including the traditional, predominantly single-sex, independent schools in this study, had opened their doors to students of all races from the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the number of black students in most of these schools remained small, with the relatively high school fees charged by these schools acting as one of the barriers. With the advent of democracy, and the increased economic opportunities available to black South Africans, the country has witnessed the emergence of a new, black South African elite. With this emergence, the demographics within many of the independent schools have somewhat shifted, with these schools vying with privileged public schools to be the school of choice for the children of the fee-paying new black elite.

However, for the most part, elite schools are facing the challenge of shifting the pervasive historical association between 'elite schools' and 'whiteness', and 'white privilege' (Epstein, 2014) by reflecting a more diverse student body that is indicative of the demographics of this country (Chisholm, 2004). In addition, research indicates that the dominant culture within many of these schools remains one that is mostly Eurocentric and middle-class in nature (see,

for example, Dolby, 2001; Soudien, 2007; Fataar, 2015). As such, a scholarship programme that is aimed at bringing historically disadvantaged, financially needy students into the school presents one way for these schools to diversify their student body (Kenway and Fahey, 2015, p. 110). This reality of a reciprocal, albeit somewhat unbalanced, relationship between an elite school on the one hand, and a scholarship student on the other brings this introductory discussion to a closer examination of a scholarship as a form of a gift.

Scholarships as a form of a gift

On the surface, the practice of giving and receiving a scholarship to attend an elite school may present as a relatively straightforward transaction involving three leading 'players': a *candidate* who successfully meets the criteria stipulated by scholarship *donors*, who provide the financial means to attend a partner *school* that has been selected for its offer of "high academic standards and a holistic approach to education" (Foundation 1 website, 2019). In accepting the scholarship, the recipient enters into a contractual agreement with the donor as well as the school whereby they commit to working hard, and behaving in a manner that adheres to the school's disciplinary code. Upon closer examination, however, this practice has complex and more implicit consequences for all involved.

Given this, this study supports Mauss's (1969) notion that gifts are not as simple as they may appear as they are constructed around relationships of reciprocity, where to give is to expect to receive. Derrida (1992) further asserts that gifts involve a complex range of obligations and encompass "reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt" (p. 12). As such, it is possible to talk of a 'gift economy', as gifts involve a form of exchange (Kenway and Fahey, 2015).

This study approaches the practice of gift-giving from a sociological perspective by problematising the awarding of scholarships as a form of a 'gift' through a Bourdieusian lens. This presents an opportunity to analyse and explain the intricate interplay between the recipients of the 'gift' on the one hand, and the elite schooling environment on the other, including the implicit power dynamics at play in this relationship. The gift-giver, or donor, assumes a less visible yet ever-present force as it were, as a number of the participants in this study signalled in their accounts their awareness that their retention of their scholarship depended on their ability to continue to satisfy the donor's conditions.

The donor foundations

The donor foundations can be considered the first 'players', as it were, in this practice of gift-giving. The providers of the gift of a scholarship to the participants in this study were one of two selected donor foundations, which for anonymity, I will refer to as Foundation 1 and Foundation 2. A more specific focus on the sampling considerations of this thesis, and discussion on the two foundations, will be provided in the Research Methodology chapter. Both foundations pay 100% of the costs for a student to be placed at a public partner school and are in a fifty-fifty partnership agreement with the independent partner schools. This places the independent schools in the position of simultaneously being donors as well as the providers of the education received by the scholarship recipients.

Foundation 1 awards scholarships to approximately 40 Grade 7 students each year to attend one of 30+ partner high schools located in four of the nine South African provinces. Foundation 1's scholarship programme was established to provide access to "quality educational opportunities for historically disadvantaged individuals in Southern Africa in preparation for their tertiary studies" (Foundation 1 website, 2019). In addition to "demonstrated financial need" and evidence of the academic potential to "excel", a successful applicant must possess an "entrepreneurial mind-set". The foundation explicitly states to the recipients that the scholarship allows for personal growth, and as such "is an opportunity to change your life so that you can change the lives of others." (Foundation 1 website, 2019) How the foundation views the scholarship programme supporting the personal growth of the recipients is outlined in the programme's intended outcomes, where it states that a scholarship student will, as a result of having an opportunity to attend "a quality school": gain confidence; develop an entrepreneurial mind-set; understand their full potential; unlock a positive future; and develop leadership qualities (Foundation 1 website, 2019). Furthermore, Foundation 1's long-term goal is "to cultivate high-impact responsible entrepreneurship" in order to "make a sustainable, long-term contribution to Southern Africa", by strengthening the country's economy (Foundation 1 website, 2019).

The second foundation included in this study was established and continues to be funded by an international philanthropic couple. In their story that is outlined on the foundation's website, they describe their experiences of working in a relatively poverty-stricken region of South Africa as young interns after completing their studies. During this period of time they

were struck by the lack of available resources in the areas where they were working. In response, they made a promise to each other that if they were successful in their careers, they would one day return to South Africa and assist disadvantaged youth to access quality education (Foundation 2 website, 2019). In fulfilment of this promise, they set up a foundation in 2007, with one of its key initiatives being the establishment of a scholarship programme to provide Western Cape learners, who show academic potential, the opportunity to attend "some of Cape Town's best high schools" (Foundation 2 website, 2019).[6] As with Foundation 1, underlying this opportunity is the expectation that by making the most of the scholarship that has been presented to them, the recipients will be well-placed to be successful at a tertiary level, and will thus create a better life for themselves, as well as for their family and community. In addition, the website states that it is the hope of the founding philanthropists that one day some of the foundation's former students will be in a position to support the foundation financially, and by doing so 'model' the example that the donors set and contribute to the education of future students. As such, as with Foundation 1, there is an implicit expectation of some form of 'return on their investment' placed upon the scholarship recipients, albeit differently framed.

The partner schools

The second 'players' engaged in this practice of gift-giving in this study are the secondary schools selected by Foundations 1 and 2 as partner schools. These schools are a mix of public and independent, single-sex and co-educational, and boarding and day schools. They are all well-established, English-medium schools with long-standing traditions, with a number of these schools being over 100 years old. To only slight varying degrees, all of the schools in this study have: small classes in comparison to the majority of South African schools; skilled teachers who are encouraged to exercise flexibility in their pedagogy and delivery of the curriculum; an extensive sporting and cultural co-curricular programme; excellent facilities which may include a theatre, AstroTurf, and/or an aquatic centre; as well as access to computers, unlimited Wi-Fi and other forms of technology. They are located in largely affluent, former white, suburbs, and have spacious and well-maintained school properties.

[6] The other two initiatives of this foundation focus on child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health, and the construction of a primary school that provides access to quality educational facilities to children from a local township.

In addition, all of these secondary schools focus on creating a school identity which is reinforced by the schools' branding of crests, mottoes, school colours, a formalised house system[7], and frequent reminders of the school's history through events such as Founder's Day. The school uniform, that includes a customised school blazer (as opposed to the more affordable and functional tracksuit top), and two different forms of uniform colloquially referred to as the 'number ones' (formal school uniform worn to school functions) and 'number twos' (day-to-day uniform), also play an important role in establishing a specific culture at these schools. The vast majority of fee-paying students who attend these schools are from middle- and upper-class homes, and many have attended the schools' 'feeder' elite primary schools, usually from the age of three or four years of age. As such, the majority of students who attend these schools have a strong familiarity with the school's culture and ethos that is intended to induce a feeling of comfort and ease within this space of social privilege.

Another distinguishing feature of the schools in this study is the existence of well-established alumni associations. This is especially noticeable within the single-sex public and independent schools. Alumni are often united by external, recognisable symbols such as ties, emblems, signet rings or brooches, as well as by the strong 'networks' that keep the members connected to one another and the schools they attended, both socially and professionally. The relationship between a school's alumni and the school is generally well-supported by the schools, who often nurture connections with the alumni through regular communication in the form of newsletters, social functions and formal reunions, regular updates through the use of social media, as well as invitations to specific school sporting events to which the school alumni are invited to attend as guests of the school.

The involvement of elite schools in scholarship programmes, such as the ones included in this study, is often presented in the school's marketing material as a form of addressing issues of social justice in response to the deep-seated inequalities in South African education. However, as Kenway and Fahey (2015) point out in their article on the "privileged

[7] A house system is a traditional feature of schools originating from England, whereby the school is divided into subunits called 'houses', and each student is allocated to a 'house' at the time of enrollment.

benefaction" of two elite, girls-only schools, one located in South Africa and the other in England, the fact that:

> the schools themselves benefit from scholarships is rarely mentioned. They are usually competitive and provided for academic, sporting or arts-based merit or other talent in areas the school wants to develop. They are usually only directed towards families on low incomes if their child is suitably talented. … Each school, as a whole, benefits from the achievements of the talented students that their scholarships attract. (p. 110)

Thus, from the school's side, in return for engaging in this particular form of scholarship gift-giving the schools gain the perceived benefits of a more racially and socioeconomically diverse student body, as well as the 'potential' that these students displayed in various areas during the rigorous scholarship application and selection process.

The scholarship recipients

The third 'players' within this complex practice of the awarding of scholarships, are the scholarship students themselves, as well as less directly their families and communities. These students, as representatives of the youth of post-apartheid South Africa, face the challenges of the deep-seated inequalities that exist within the education system. Having said this, however, recent research on young South Africans indicate that they are creating new spaces, with cultural borrowings and adaptations across the colour lines (see, for example, Dolby, 2001; Soudien, 2007; Fataar, 2015). What these authors show in their writing is that the youth are not entirely passive victims of the social and economic trappings of the past. As Newman and De Lannoy (2014) state in response to the question, "What has changed, and what has not, in the new South Africa?", there is a generation of youth who have emerged and who are engaging with issues of race and class, as well as gender, language and geographical locations, in new ways. The stories of apartheid may resonate with them, but they do not belong to them: "it is not their experience, only their legacy" (Newman and De Lannoy, 2014, p. xii). As Soudien (2007) points out, the youth do not accept the world in the same way as their parents did as they have not experienced it in the same way:

> Young people are innovating new ways of being South African. Race does not go away, but it is rearticulated, together with gender, class and other less

> visible factors. Out of this emerges hybrid identities. African young people are distinctly of their traditional past, but always more than this. Young white people are different from their parents. While they remain distinctly white in terms of their broad cultural orientations, they have to learn to live with children of colour. (p. 29)

There are two broad themes in the research that engages with the agency of young South Africans that are of particular relevance to this study. The first theme relates to the refusal of many of the youth to be bound by their geographical positioning, especially within the urban landscape, while the second theme pertains to the status of English in South African schools. Aspects of these themes are woven in and through the narratives of the scholarship recipients and discussed in more depth in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

In an effort to access a better standard of education, many school-going youth move across the city to access a better quality of schooling than that which is offered by their local (township) schools (see Fataar, 2015). A study by Sekete, Shilubane and Badiri (2001) showed that as many as 60% of South Africa's youth attend schools that are not located within their living areas in an effort to access what they and their families perceive to be a higher standard of education than what is offered by their local schools. Every day thousands of young school-going students, identifiable by the multitude of school uniforms that can be seen at bus stops, taxi ranks and train stations in the early mornings and late afternoons, travel across the urban city in order to access quality education (Fataar, 2007). These findings are reinforced in Hunter's (2019) book, *Race for Education: Gender, White Tone, and Schooling in South Africa*, that shows that translocating practices remains ubiquitous among the youth in the post-apartheid South African context.

Fataar's (2015) work on this translocal movement shows that these young people are agents, rather than victims, of the material limitations of their spaces. The belief that schools elsewhere offer individualised attention, a wide-ranging programme of cultural and sporting activities, as well as the belief that these schools offer a shield from the social challenges faced in poorer communities such as drug and alcohol abuse and the threat of physical violence, is part of the decision-making process of parents and youth in their choice of schools (Soudien, 2008). Thus, in essence, what parents and students seek by travelling to 'better schools' is the same opportunities that are afforded the middle- and upper-classes, including preparation

for higher education (Geyer and Walton, 2015, p. 339). Or, in Fataar's (2007) words, because "they regard them [schools outside the townships] as crucial for cultivating the necessary aspirant dispositions that will allow entry into formal middle-class employment and lifestyles" (p. 22).

It must, however, be noted that these decisions are not without their challenges. For example, as Soudien (2007) points out, black children who choose to go to schools outside of townships are making a conscious and visible break with the past, and as such, may become separated both culturally and spatially from those with whom they grew up. They have to explain to their friends why they have chosen to do this, and run the risk of being called 'sell-outs'. Often the students who travel to schools outside their communities are seen as betraying the community where they grew up and still live. However, students who choose to travel to schools that they perceive as better than their local school are often able to reap the benefits of the sacrifices they make within this choice. This is illustrated in Fataar's (2015) story of Layla, a teenager who travels from her home in a township on a daily basis to attend a formerly white school located near Cape Town's city centre:

> What was clear in Layla's mediations of her school environment was her ability to figure out what the discourses of acceptability were at the school, and how she had to insert herself into them in order to maximise opportunities for success. Her translocal investments paid off handsomely. Not only did she achieve excellent school results, but she also accessed valuable resources and opportunities that enabled her to acquire the educational and cultural capital necessary for the mobile middle-class lifestyles that she coveted. (Fataar, 2015, pp. 112–3)

Fataar (2015) concludes: "While the hegemonic culture of the city schools positions incoming students like Layla for assimilation, the way they [the students] master the school environment indicates active agency by these mobile youths" (p. 113).

The second theme pertains to the status of English in South African schools. Despite the adoption of a policy of multilingualism that recognises eleven official languages and enshrines the language rights of the individual in the Bill of Rights of its 1996 Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 2), research has highlighted that a particular form of English is favoured

by many young people – what sociolinguists refer to as 'white South African English'. Hunter (2019) explains that English is "by far the most prestigious of the country's now 11 official languages despite it being only the fifth most spoken home language (after IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, and Setswana)" (p. 26).

McKinney (2017) refers to the phenomenon of favouring English as 'Anglonormativity', which she describes as "the dominant language ideology that makes proficiency in particular forms of 'standard' English compulsory", and analyses the ways in which this is racialised and classed (2017, p. 12). In addition, McKinney (2017) argues that within the South African context, Anglonormativity is most closely associated with 'whiteness'. As she explains:

> Anglonormativity as the compulsory command of English is frequently and disturbingly linked to the privileges (i.e. unearned advantages) of whiteness and to being middle-class, particularly in sites where whiteness and middle-class dominate such as in many elite schools and university campuses in post-colonial contexts. Anglonormativity is tied to power, and thus very often to a narrow set of privileged registers of language use (McKinney, 2017, p. 162).

One of the consequences of the dominance of this form of English, as stated by McKinney (2017), is that those who speak in the "ethnolinguistic repertoires of Whiteness" are more likely to be heard or given a voice (p. 82). This voice, along with the advantages (both perceived and real) that accompanies being able to speak 'standard' English well has resulted in many of South Africa's youth (and their parents) actively choosing English as their preferred medium of instruction (see, for example, Kapp, 2000). As Christie (2016) points out:

> English has symbolic capital and hegemonic status for complex historical as well as current reasons, making it the language of choice for many students who have limited exposure to English outside schools. (p. 443)

Furthermore, this attitude and practice of South Africa's youth extends beyond the choice of English as the language of preference, to placing importance on *how* English is spoken. Many young black South Africans work hard to perfect a particular English accent, but in doing so,

they run the risk of being labelled a 'coconut'.[8] McKinney (2017), in discussing this phenomenon, states that African language speakers who lose their competence in their own, local language whilst becoming proficient in English, are compromised in their social relationships with their African-speaking family members and other members of the community.

Studies such as those conducted by Dolby (2001), Soudien (2007) and Fataar (2015) indicate that despite the many, at times almost insurmountable, challenges that face young people, and especially young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the capacity for agency exists. For the participants in this study, their initial sense of agency is evident in their decision to apply for and accept the offer of a scholarship to attend an elite school. What is less clear, however, is how, and to what extent, the recipients' experience of attending an elite school as a scholarship student impacted on their lives, their sense of self, and their relationships with their families and communities. It is within this space that this thesis is located, and from which the study's focus is drawn.

Significance of the study

Within the sociology of education in post-apartheid South Africa, Fataar (2015) asks the following critical questions in his book, *Engaging Schooling Subjectivities across Post-Apartheid Urban Spaces*:

> Who are the … students … in our schools, universities and colleges? What worlds do they come from? How are they positioned to encounter and engage in the process of education? And how do educational institutions engage with the complex subjects that now come through their gates? (p. 4)

This research study responds to some of these questions by researching the narratives of a group of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were recipients of a scholarship to attend an elite South African school. Although a number of studies exist that focus on the experiences of marginalised students within elite institutions, few research studies have focused on students who are awarded scholarships to attend elite high schools within the

[8] 'Coconut' is a colloquial term, usually used in a disparaging manner by black South Africans to describe someone who thinks, acts and speaks like a 'white person' (white on the inside), even though their skin (on the outside) is black (McKinney, 2017).

South African context. Within the current literature, there is only one study, namely Geyer and Walton (2015), that discusses scholarship students in any detail in elite South African schools.

Given the focus of the study, the participants provide an interesting, reflective, and lived account of what it was like to navigate between two very different South African worlds, that of their homes and communities which were mostly situated in low socioeconomic contexts, and the elite school they attended. As such, their narratives discuss what was required of them to fit in and adapt to the elite school context.

Organisation of the chapters

The thesis consists of eight chapters. This, the first chapter of the thesis, has presented a general introduction to the study by providing some contextual background in relation to elite public and independent schools located in post-apartheid South Africa, and the emergence of foundations focused on providing scholarships for disadvantaged students to gain access to these institutions.

Chapter Two is the literature review which provides an overview of the international and South African literature on elite schools, issues of gender within girls- and boys-only schools, and marginalised and scholarship students within elite institutions.

The theoretical framework is presented in Chapter Three. This chapter provides a discussion on the notion of the 'gift' (Mauss, 1969; Derrida, 1992) as well as Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capital, along with bodily hexis, symbolic violence and 'playing the game'. Included in the chapter is a discussion on McKinney's (2017) notion of Anglonormativity as it relates to the thesis.

Chapter Four focuses on the methodology used to guide the data handling procedures and processes. The chapter situates this research in the qualitative research paradigm and explains why the inquiry-centred narrative approach was chosen for the study. Included in this chapter is a discussion on the sample selection and data collection processes followed, and issues of reliability, validity and ethical considerations.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present and analyse the data of this study. Chapter Five focuses on the scholarship students' background, scholarship application and selection process, and

their initial entry into an elite secondary school. Chapter Six discusses the shifts and adaptations that the participants felt that they had to make to fit into their new environment. Chapter Seven highlights what the participants' accounts reveal about what they felt the costs and benefits of accepting a scholarship to attend an elite school.

Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter. Presented in summative form, the final chapter reflects on the main research question of the thesis and provides some key insights into the phenomenon of the awarding of scholarships to students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds to attend elite secondary schools. Included in this section is a consideration for further research in relation to the awarding of scholarships as well as other research possibilities that arise from the focus of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: ELITE SCHOOLS AND THEIR STUDENTS

Chapter One of this thesis provided an outline of the contextual landscape of the study, in addition to introducing the notion of a scholarship to attend an elite school as a form of a gift. Viewed from this perspective, it is apparent that the gift of a scholarship awarded to a talented student from a historically disadvantaged background, with demonstrated financial need, to attend an elite South African secondary school is perhaps more complex than it might initially appear.

This chapter builds upon this discussion by drawing on relevant national and international literature that engages with how elite schools, and the students within these schools, are portrayed. This is intended further to lay the foundation for a deeper understanding of what accepting the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite South African school might possibly entail for the recipients of this gift. Rather than attempting to cover all of the literature on elite schools consulted for this study, this chapter presents a critical engagement with specific insights from the literature that have shaped this study.

While there exists a growing body of general literature on international elite schools and higher education institutions, there is only limited research available on what is distinctive about elite schools in South Africa, as well as on marginalised students who enter these institutions, such as the scholarship students in this study. These students are referred to as 'marginalised' students for the purposes of this chapter, in that they are from a different racial, socioeconomic, cultural and/or religious background to that which is the accepted dominant culture within an institution (Mills and Gale, 2010). Within the context of this study, these are scholarship students who need to traverse both race and class on a daily basis to access the South African elite schools that are dominated by white, middle-class values and ethos. Furthermore, the limited research on these topics that does exist, either within the global or the South African context, has a tendency to highlight the schools' perspectives rather than the voices and experiences of the students themselves, as this study endeavours to do.

Two final points need to be included in the introduction to this chapter, due to their relevance throughout the ensuing discussion. The first point is that a significant number of the

contemporary studies included in this review are drawn from an international, multi-sited ethnographic project, 'Elite Independent Schools in Globalising Circumstances', conducted over a five-year period from 2010 to 2014. The project's core research team consisted of Jane Kenway, Johannah Fahey, Fazal Rizvi, Aaron Koh, Cameron McCarthy and Debbie Epstein, with the research conducted in seven 'elite' schools located in Australia, Barbados, England, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, and of particular importance to this study, South Africa.[9] These schools are recognised for producing what Mills (1956) refers to as the 'power elites' and Bourdieu (1996) the 'state nobility' in their respective societies, and the project's findings show that they continue to fulfil this function (Kenway *et al.*, 2017). But at the same time these schools need to keep up with, and stay ahead of, the shifting landscape of education affected by the complex forces of globalisation. As such, the project aimed to examine how these schools are meeting the challenges of social, economic and cultural change, how they are taking up the opportunities that change offers, and how they are navigating change in ways consistent with their traditions (Kenway *et al.*, 2017).

Using a new methodology of 'multi-sited global ethnography' the project's findings indicate that globalisation is serving to create a new global elite, or in some instances, a global middle-class (Koh, 2019). In particular, the study shows how the elite schools in the study are "becoming involved in such transnational class-making and the ways in which other relationships of power are implicated" (Kenway *et al.*, 2017, p. 8). Although there are significant differences in the methodological approaches of this study and my own,[10] the research project generated multiple articles that provide a useful base for understanding contemporary global elite schooling in relation to elite schools within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Of particular value is the project's findings that in response to shifting landscapes, the "socially dominant" within elite schools are increasingly "having to

[9] The selection criteria for the schools included in the project were: schools that are based on a post-Arnoldian British public school model and that are over 100 years old; have excellent reputations; have produced many influential people and have powerful connections; and their records illustrate considerable success in end-of-school examinations and prestigious university entrance. In addition, the charging of high school fees, as well their extensive access to physical facilities and resources, tend to be distinguishing 'markers' of these elite schools (Kenway *et al.*, 2017).

[10] In contrast to a multi-sited, ethnographic approach that focuses predominantly upon the schools and their responses, the focus of this study is on student experiences in schools located in a single country, using an interview-based, narrative research methodology approach.

accommodate the socially emergent" (Kenway *et al.*, 2017, p. 233), and the related power dynamics at play with this emergence of a 'new elite'.

The second point to note is that crucially there is no one clear, distinct definition in the literature for elite schools. Returning to the multi-sited ethnographic project referenced above by way of example, elite schools are referred to in very broad terms as being "primary and secondary schools of very high rank" (Kenway *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). An explanation for this lack of precision is provided by Kenway and Koh (2015), drawing on a study by Rizvi (2014), who states that the category of 'elite school' is not "an un-subjective, universal or timeless category. Elite schools rise and fall, new types emerge and make status claims, older types stand firm or falter" (Kenway and Koh, 2015, p. 1). Additionally, what may be considered 'elite' in one place, might not be considered 'elite' in another. Given this, Kenway and Koh (2015) argue that the "notion of an 'elite school' must be historicised and spatialized" (p. 1). In other words, both the contextual period of time as well as the socio-geographical location needs to be taken into account when considering what should, or should not, be regarded as an 'elite' school.

By applying this 'time-space framework' to the traditional, English-speaking South African elite schools included in this study, it is evident that they share many features with global elite schools located in countries with a common colonial past. At the same time, however, these South African schools reflect characteristics that are related to the country's past and present, and more specifically to the dynamic intersectionality of race and class, as well as gender, within a uniquely South African context. Given this, underlying the discussions within the four themes that follow, is an engagement with what the literature shows to be the 'thisness' and 'sameness'[11] of elite schools, with a particular focus on the more subtle nuances, or

[11] The terms 'thisness' and 'sameness' are borrowed from Lingard, Mills, Hayes and Christie (2003), who refer to Thomson (2000). Lingard et al. (2003) refer to the fact whilst all schools share the overall task of teaching and learning and "tend to have a 'sameness' in terms of designated places of work and play, structured activities, and specific boundaries with the world outside", they are "simultaneously highly particular, and they are places of powerful individual experiences. Each school has its own 'feel', its own particular ways of doing things, its own 'thisness'" (pp. 8-9). For the purposes of this study, these terms are used to denote the broad commonalities and more nuanced differences between traditional, English-speaking global elite schools, and similarly placed elite schools located in post-apartheid South Africa.

inflections, that distinguish South African elite schools from other global elite schools, while at the same time recognising that no two schools, even in one country, are ever the same.

The rest of this chapter addresses four key themes in the literature on elite schools that have particular relevance to this study: elite schools as purveyors of 'social success'; the 'gift economy' of elite schools; elite schools as 'assimilationist endeavours'; and the gendering practices of elite schools. The approach taken in entering a 'conversation' with existing literature is to identify specific areas of strength, as well as possible limitations, *for the purposes of this study*, rather than merely providing a description of each study mentioned and its findings.

Elite schools as purveyors of 'social success'

An initial question underlying the focus of the research for this thesis was what is it that elite schools offer their students that sets them apart from other schools, and therefore makes them attractive to donors and scholarship applicants, apart for the vague promise of "An opportunity to change your life …" (Foundation 1 website, 2019)? In response, a review of the existing literature on elite schools, both globally as well as within the South African context, reveals a strong, conscious effort on the part of these schools to instil in their students the skills and mind-set deemed relevant for success at tertiary studies and beyond, along with access to valuable social networks.

Kenway and Fahey (2014) examine the strategies employed by the elite schools in their study, that includes a South African school, to ensure that their students 'stay ahead of the game'. The authors refer to these strategies as the schools' "grooming curricula" that involves "hyper-competitiveness and intensive cultivation" in order to ensure their students' gain entrance to elite universities (both nationally and globally) and by implication, to the economic and other benefits in the labour market as leaders of business and industry (p. 182). The underlying premise of this curricula is that students who attend these schools are provided with the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and networks to be 'successful' and "to see themselves as the 'best of the best' globally" (Kenway and Fahey, 2014, p. 190).

In addition, the students within the schools studied by Kenway and Fahey (2014) are encouraged to join activities that are provided by the school's global and regional networks and partnerships in order to "build their own global and regional networks consisting of

people who are like them in social class terms even if they differ according to nation, culture and religion" (Kenway and Fahey, 2014, p. 190). This can be seen as a global extension of the social networks acquired through membership of the schools' alumni associations, whereby students are provided with the means to develop a "travelling imagination" that encourages international mobility and the related knowledge that is gained through an engagement with a broader perspective of the world (Kenway and Fahey, 2014, p. 192). As such, the authors argue, students "of a certain calibre and social standing", will be able to "move freely and are free to imagine a world in which they are always on the move" (Kenway and Fahey, 2014, p. 192).

What is not clear from the Kenway and Fahey (2014) study, however, is the extent to which it is possible for all students, specifically scholarship students, to acquire these skills and utilise their access to social networks to the same extent as their privileged peers. Koh (2018) argues that "attending an elite school is no guarantee to an elite destination"; however, it is of significance that students who possess "family capital" and a "privilege[d] class background" (p. 194) are better able to mobilise the resources required to overcome obstacles in life presented post-school, and "route and re-route themselves back to a secure future" (p. 186).

Having said this, some possible insights into the experiences of bursary and scholarship students are presented in a South African study by Hobden and Hobden (2015). This study tracks the progress of former South African bursary and scholarship students as recipients of school-level educational interventions, for two to three years post-school.[12] The aim of this research was to investigate the students' trajectories into their higher education studies and the world of work. The authors' findings show that despite some of their participants facing financial barriers post-school, there were significant "legacy benefits" of the school-level intervention (Hobden and Hobden, 2015, p. 8). These benefits included "sound preparation for life and academic studies" (Hobden and Hobden, 2015, p. 1). The authors conclude that the students in their study "had obtained the resources necessary for affiliation into university and the grit and resilience needed to persevere in the face of obstacles such as the lack of financial support" (Hobden and Hobden, 2015, p. 8). In addition, in terms of their personal development, the authors assert that it was clear from the participants' responses that the

[12] By 'school-level educational intervention' the authors refer to scholarships that enable historically disadvantaged black learners to access historically well-resourced schools, such as those included in this study.

students had “developed confidence and self-esteem to cope in more privileged environments” (Hobden and Hobden, 2015, p. 8).

Beyond the skills and social networks offered by elite schools, a review of the relevant literature shows that what appears to accompany an elite school education is a far deeper, and distinctive disposition of privilege that significantly contributes to elite schools’ image of purveyors of ‘social success’. Koh and Kenway (2012) assert that a feature of elite schools is that the students display a certain “eloquence and poise” (Koh and Kenway, 2012, p. 333), and Forbes and Lingard (2013), in their study on the (re)production of privilege in an elite school for girls in Scotland, highlight a distinctive demeanour that they observed in the of students of their study that they describe as “an affect, or capacity to act of ‘assured optimism’” (p. 51). As such, Forbes and Lingard (2013) argue that schooling privilege leads to the (re)production of “physical-corporeal, social and intellectual surety, accomplishment and agency for students” (p. 50).

Similarly, Khan (2011) in his book, *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*, refers to a phenomenon he describes as an “ease of privilege” that is seemingly embodied within the school’s most successful students (p. 77). According to Khan (2011), it is this “embodied ease” (p. 121) that allows students from elite schools to feel comfortable in diverse social situations. A significant part of the inculcation of this ease involved everyday processes of socialisation that Khan (2011) identified as preparing these students for leadership in future positions of power. These activities included learning how to dress in a manner that is not only about knowing what to wear but “also disciplining one’s body into how to wear it” (Khan, 2011, p. 121), sitting in the formal dining room twice a week and engaging in polite dinner-time conversations, and never admitting how hard you are actually working.

At the same time, however, Khan’s (2011) study indicates that not all students were able to embody this ease to the same extent. Khan noticed that the minority groups within the school (whom he identified largely as women, students who were not white, and scholarship students from disadvantaged backgrounds) appeared to work the hardest within the student body, viewing their presence at the school as a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ opportunity; however, this hard work in and of itself did not necessarily guarantee these students ‘success’ according to the school’s measures (Khan, 2011). The question this raises for this study, therefore, is

whether or not it is possible for a representative of a 'minority group' within an elite school environment, embody a dispositional aura or "ease of privilege" that extends beyond the acquisition of skills and social networks (Khan, 2011, p. 77).

The 'gift economy' of elite schools

The second theme of relevance to this study that emerged from a review of the literature is that of the 'gift economy' of elite schools. The term 'gift economy' is used by Kenway and Fahey (2015) in their article, 'The gift economy of elite schooling: the changing contours and contradictions of privileged benefaction', based on research located within two schools, one in England and the other in South Africa. These authors draw upon the works of Mauss (1969), Derrida (1992) and Hyde (2012) to develop the notion that gifts "involve a form of exchange and thus have an economy to them" (p. 97). As such, as Kenway and Fahey (2015) elaborate, the key to understanding a gift is to recognise that gifts "are constructed around relationships of reciprocity, where to give is to expect to receive from the recipient of the gift" (p. 97).

This article was pivotal in informing my thinking on scholarships to attend an elite schools as a form of a gift, as well as giving consideration to what is involved "when elite schools … give money, time, things and ideas" (Kenway and Fahey, 2015, p. 97). Through the authors' examination of the complexities and intricacies involved in the gift-giving practices of elite schools through scholarships, they highlight the paradoxical contradiction that "when giving involves highly asymmetrical relationships of privilege and power, wittingly or not, it may actually reinforce and sustain these power relations" (Kenway and Fahey, 2015, p. 110). Although the emphasis of their study is from the schools' perspective rather than that of the receivers of the gift, giving consideration to the notion of these asymmetrical relationships is significant in the analysis of the students in this study's accounts of their experiences.

A further aspect of relevance to this study is the extent to which meritocratic discourses might play a role in relations of power and privilege. Thomson (2017) provides a valuable overview of Bourdieu's assertion that each field has its own set of beliefs, what Bourdieu refers to as doxa. Doxa refers to the practice of accepting specific beliefs or practices as inherently true and necessary and as such justifies and legitimates what takes place within a specific field (Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002). Thomson (2017) asserts that "in the field of education the doxa is that of meritocracy" (p. 19), whereby the belief exists that students advance in

and through education based on their merit, or ability, coupled with hard work. This is a notion that Bourdieu (1977a) strongly argues is a myth, as the schooling 'game' is rigged at the outset in favour of people with particular dispositions and capitals. However, as Koh's (2014) study in Singapore indicates, the notion of meritocracy persists within elite schools. This is supported by Thomson (2017), who states that "the doxa of merit has become so much part and parcel of the habituated and taken for granted ways of doing things in the field of education" (p. 21).

Returning to Kenway and Fahey's (2015) study, their article sheds some light on why it is that elite schools engage in scholarship practices, and more importantly, what it is that these schools are hoping to gain in return – the benefits that the authors make a point of stressing that the schools themselves rarely mention. As Kenway and Fahey (2015) point out, scholarships,

> are usually competitive and provided for academic, sporting or arts-based merit or other talent in areas the school wants to develop. They are usually only directed towards families on low incomes if their child is suitably talented …. Each school, as a whole, benefits from the achievements of the talented students that their scholarships attract. (p. 110)

At the same time, "privileged benefaction enables the schools to represent themselves as socially responsible institutions and to downplay, even disavow, their well-documented role in reproducing privilege" (Kenway and Fahey, 2015, p. 112).

In a similar vein, Geyer and Walton's (2015) study located in South Africa and entitled 'Schooling in the Shadow of Benevolence: The Experience of Scholarship Recipients in Affluent Schools' proved to be invaluable to the genesis of this thesis. The article is based upon Geyer's research for her Masters in Educational Psychology, for which she used the methodology of 'voice research' to interview 16 scholarship students currently located within four South African independent schools. In the study, Geyer and Walton (2015) explore Slee's (1996) notion of 'clauses of conditionality' to explore the expectations placed upon scholarship students within the selected schools. They describe these clauses as follows:

> Although historically disadvantaged learners are given scholarships to attend affluent independent schools, there are often explicit or hidden conditions of

> the awards. These academic, behavioural, sporting or other expectations make for a tenuous stay at the school, as scholarship recipients must meet conditions for continued enrolment that their fee-paying peers can avoid. (Geyer and Walton, 2015, p. 339)

Thus, like Kenway and Fahey's (2015) notion of a the 'gift economy', 'clauses of conditionality' provide a useful way of viewing the power relations between elite schools and scholarship recipients, and the expectations, either explicitly or implicitly, placed upon these recipients in their acceptance of 'the gift'.

Geyer and Walton (2015) further make reference to the "extent to which scholarship programmes are essentially assimilationist endeavours." (p. 339) This brings the discussion to the third characteristic of elite schools.

Elite schools as 'assimilationist endeavours'

Geyer and Walton (2015) are in agreement with works such as Dolby (2001), Johnson (2007) and Soudien (2007) that assert that although the demographics have shifted in most elite post-apartheid South African schools, many still bear the residues of Randall's (1982) descriptions of independent, English-speaking schools in his book, *Little England on the veld: the English private school system in South Africa*. Randall (1982) provides a discussion on the extent to which English-speaking, independent schools in South Africa closely resemble, often in conscious imitation, public (i.e. independent) schools in Britain. According to Randall, this resemblance is in relation to the schools' organisational cultures, religious traditions, the language of instruction, uniform, and hierarchical systems and structures. Thus, as Geyer and Walton (2015) assert, part of the 'fitting in' that is required by the scholarship recipients involves them learning to 'adjust' or assimilate into the new school space, as opposed to the space shifting to accommodate them. This includes the students having to make plans to navigate the socioeconomic differences that they encounter, whilst at the same time conforming to the norms and expectations of the elite school context. Initially, the authors argue that this involves assuming an "invisible presence" by being reserved and quiet, and assimilating into the dominant culture of the school (Geyer and Walton, 2015, p. 107).

Given this, an assimilationist approach refers to an assumption "that all students should fit the existing curriculum and its power relations" (Christie, 2008, p. 189). Soudien (2012) further expands upon this by stating that this position is one,

> whereby the values, traditions and customs of the dominant group frame the social and cultural context of the school. Everything in the school (and the wider society) is measured in relation to the dominant. Integration in this context is blending into the dominant framework. It is assumed that subordinate groups and individuals, in order to integrate, have to learn and become competent in the languages, the values and the cultural repertoires of the dominant group. (p. 136)

Soudien (2012) further notes that an assimilationist approach position allows the dominant group to remain intact while the subordinate group "give up their own identities and cultures" (p. 137). Thus under these circumstances, as Lemon and Battersby-Lennard (2011) describe, "the institutional culture, or 'the way we do things around here', tend[s] to remain the same" (p. 104). When applied to this study, an assimilationist approach refers to the expectations placed on scholarship students to fit into white, middle-class values and cultural norms of the elite school contexts.

Two significant studies located within elite institutions of higher education remind one that assimilating endeavours, in relation to the focus of this study, traverse the boundaries of race and class. In the first study, the working-class law students in Granfield's (1991) study, 'Making it by Faking it: Working-class Students in an Elite Academic Environment', regarded themselves as "cultural outsiders" within the law school environment (p. 127). As a consequence, many of these students reported experiencing significantly higher levels of anxiety about their academic and social adequacy than their middle-class counterparts. In response, Granfield (1991) reports that these working-class students employed the strategy of what he refers to as "appearance management", whereby these students successfully "mimicked their more privileged counterparts" (p. 129). By 'looking the part', they felt that they were better equipped to fulfil the expectations of their status as elite lawyers and found themselves more likely to be welcomed into the profession. This notion of 'fake it until you make it' presents an interesting means of viewing scholarship student's possible strategies to fit and feel more at ease upon entering the elite school environment.

Likewise, a second study, by Reay, Crozier and Clayton (2009), 'Strangers in Paradise? Working-class Students in Elite Universities', describes the accepted institutional norms, standards and practices within universities that have been established over time and are generally middle-class in nature, and which students entering this environment feel the need to adjust to. These are mostly taken for granted by insiders (i.e. the dominant class for whom the university is a familiar space), but are often invisible or less evident to students from marginalised, or under-represented groups, such as the study's participants who are from British working-class backgrounds. The study thus highlights the complex interplay between the students' backgrounds, their personal dispositions, and the educational environment that impacted on the degree to which the students adopted 'appropriate' higher education learning identities. The authors argue that the students' ability to adjust to the academic and social demands of tertiary education depended on their ability to adjust to the culture of the elite university, and thus stands not only as another example of an assimilationist approach, but also emphasises the durability of the field.

Horvat and Antonio's (1999) article, entitled "'Hey, Those Shoes Are Out of Uniform': African American Girls in an Elite High School and the Importance of Habitus", presents a significant international study. Documenting the impact of an assimilationist approach on the experiences of six African American senior students at a predominantly white elite independent school in California, the study pays special attention to the interaction between African American students and the school's organisational and cultural context. The authors, referencing hook's (1990) notion of the 'Other', assert that this interaction resulted in "these young women learn[ing] or relearn[ing] their status as different, lesser, and 'Other' as African Americans in a white world" (Horvat and Antonio, 1999, p. 319). All the participants in the study described feeling that they had "to leave a part of their identity behind" (Horvat and Antonio, 1999, p. 334) when they entered their elite school environment. This included, amongst other things: changing the way they spoke; listening to different forms of popular (white) music, and surrendering their sense of racial pride and belonging. At the same time, however, the authors found that the subjects of their study willingly struggled with the organisational culture of the school in order to receive the benefits of an elite education – the price of mobility that was recognised and accepted by both the marginalised girls as well as their parents (Horvat and Antonio, 1999). One of these benefits was that "they learned to

navigate the often tricky terrain of life in the white world around them." (Horvat and Antonio, 1999, p. 336) Another benefit was access to a "superior academic education and a virtual entrance ticket into a selective four-year college" (Horvat and Antonio, 1999, p. 337). Thus, Horvat and Antonio's (1999) findings are that the African American girls adopted an assimilationist approach, as they "saw that they had something to gain by being more white", realising that they needed to fit into the "white and wealthy environment [as it] promised very good odds of advancing up the educational and social ladder" (p. 339). In other words, the students realised that assimilating into the elite school environment was necessary to "attain the promise of opportunity" (Horvat and Antonio, 1999, p. 339).

Likewise, a second American study, 'Boys of Class, Boys of Color: Negotiating the Academic and Social Geography of an Elite Independent School' by Kuriloff and Reichert (2003), presents a similar finding. This study involved low-income students of all racial backgrounds attending an elite, boys-only school in Philadelphia, United States of America. The study finds that all the participants faced similar social difficulties to one another in the elite school environment. Many of the boys expressed feelings of anger and frustration, and blamed themselves for their social and academic shortcomings, describing themselves as inadequate. The strategies that they employed to cope involved "mastering 'a drill' that included hard work, unwavering commitment, a will to win, a cool style, and self-knowledge as learners" (Kuriloff and Reichert, 2003, p. 751). However, as with the girls in Horvat and Antonio's (1999) study, the accompanying personal sacrifices were deemed by these boys to be necessary and worthwhile, as the participants recognised that ultimately, "all boys at Haverford have a bright future" (Kuriloff and Reichert, 2003, p. 767).

Both of these studies provide an insight into the experiences of marginalised students within an elite school environment, as well as present evidence of the extent to which individuals are willing to make sacrifices in order to realise the promise of upward social mobility. Having said this, however, as noted earlier, it is necessary to bear the 'thisness' of schools in mind, and particularly schools located in a very different socio-historical context.

Returning to the South African context, Epstein (2014), in discussing the experiences of marginalised students in a South African elite girls-only secondary school, states that as a consequence of assimilation, the "few black South African students at the school have to bear the burden of … their own experience of changing their demeanour and clothing to fit in with

white norms [that] results in their being seen as 'coconuts' by their peers in the townships from which they are drawn" (p. 259). Thus, this study shows that students assimilating into elite school environments does not only impact on the individual but also on the students' home and their wider communities.

Over and above the challenges faced by black students within the school she studied as part of her research, Epstein (2014) briefly mentions a scholarship student whom she interviewed during her time spent at the school. In describing the challenges this student felt she faced specifically as a scholarship student, she referred to additional pressure (not experienced by her fee-paying peers) that she felt to perform at a certain level, both academically as well as in terms of her behaviour:

> It's been very interesting [having a scholarship] … but I just find it so difficult sometimes to live up to their standards … We're expected to get an average of 65%. We obviously have to carry ourselves in a respectable way, not to embarrass … Sometimes I feel it's just a bit too much for me. (Ilina, interview August 2012) (Epstein, 2014, p. 258)

Given this, Epstein (2014) asserts that:

> Scholarship girls, such as Ilina, felt pressured to succeed all the time, never break the rules and get into trouble, or behave in any way that would draw negative attention as she had to show that being a scholarship girl was a route to success in the school's terms. (p. 258)

Epstein (2014) further references Fataar (2007) to note that even though the journey of the black girls in general within the school was not without its problems, they are not 'victims' but active agents, "making choices and negotiating, with considerable cultural skill, the different worlds they live in" (Epstein, 2014, p. 258). In support of this, Epstein (2014) notes that despite the challenges they experienced, these girls recognised and acknowledged that their elite education was providing them with the academic skills, work ethic, and general life skills to enable them to thrive at university and to achieve 'success' in life.

What Epstein's (2014) study highlights, albeit briefly, are some of the implicit and explicit expectations attached to the acceptance of a scholarship and the impact that these

expectations have had on the scholarship student included in her study. Having said this, like the students in Horvat and Antonio's (1999) as well as Kuriloff and Reichert's (2003) studies, ultimately Ilina is prepared to navigate these challenges in order to access the benefits of elite school education. Thus, this appears to be somewhat of a recurring theme in the research conducted in this field.

The gendering practices of elite schools

As is evident from many of the studies researched for the literature review, that the dominant culture prevalent within elite educational institutions has a direct impact on the experiences of people within these schools. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) there is ambiguity in gender processes and as such, gendering practices in schools may be used as a "mechanism of hegemony" (p. 838). This is pertinent to the study as all but two of the 14 schools included in the research are single-sex schools, and many of the participants in the study raised issues of gender in their discussion on their experiences at the elite school.

With specific reference to masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) point out:

> Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. (p. 836)

The existing literature on aspects of masculinity within boys-only elite schools tends to focus on the pressure that boys experience to conform to a particular notion of what it means to be a boy and a man (Keddie, 2005). This concept, referred to within the literature as 'hegemonic masculinity', was first formulated by Connell (1987). The over-riding image that emerges in the existing research is the promotion of an idealised version of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities, with some of the accompanying features of this notion being strength, adherence to a form of hierarchical leadership, and loyalty to the school and to one another.

In an article entitled, 'Marked men: Whiteness and Masculinity', Epstein (1998) discusses how the formation of masculine identity within South African elite boarding schools "is extensively modelled on the British example" (p. 55). Epstein (1998) argues that as a result, "British

versions of upper class whiteness" (p. 55) remain a point of reference for English-speaking white South Africans and this, in addition to the particular processes of racial politics in South Africa, has ensured that "subordinated masculinities are, in part, formed in relation to those of the dominant white group(s)" (p. 55). Epstein (1998) references Robert Morrell's (1994) work on white secondary boarding schools for boys in Natal that traces the production of South African English-speaking upper-class masculinities through processes of schooling. Morrell (1994) points out that the schools in his study "offer[ed] little possibility for alternative masculinities to emerge" (p. 62). He outlines the value placed upon so-called 'manly sports' such as rugby, as well as strongly hierarchical orderings which serve to 'toughen' the boys. This hierarchy, according to Morrell (1994), is instituted through the combination of age, academic achievement and sporting success. In addition, these schools encourage a strong competitive spirit, 'loyalty' to the school and the team, and "a degree of homosociality (although too close friendships were to be discouraged) combined with a performance of homophobia" (Epstein, 1998, p. 56). Violence in the form of corporal punishment was also a feature of these schools, with an emphasis placed upon suffering in silence being the mark of a 'real' man.

Similarly, Gottschall, Wardman, Edgeworth, Hutchesson and Saltmarsh (2010) present an image whereby boys are portrayed as successful winners, "signifying a 'hard' hyper-masculinity that exudes physicality and strength" (p. 20), who participate in sports like rugby in their Australian study. In another Australian study, Proctor (2011) highlights the extent to which schoolboy rugby within Australian elite schools is not seen as just a game, but rather "a set of practices aimed at making particular kinds of men and building particular kinds of male solidarity" (p. 847). Proctor's (2011) findings show that the notions of 'heroism', 'team-work' and 'self-sacrifice' are all associated metaphorically with the game of rugby. Those who do not play rugby can be regarded as "effeminate" (Proctor, 2011, p. 848). These insights into the importance placed on rugby are of particular significance for the purposes of this study, given the high, almost reverential status accorded to rugby within traditional, elite South African boys-only schools.

There are, however, particular nuances that emerge within the South African setting that must be taken into account. As Epstein (1998), drawing on Morrell (1994) and Heward (1996), argues,

> the dominant group, those who exhibit hegemonic masculinities need the presence of the 'Other', those who can be labelled as 'queer', 'fags' or whatever the current derogatory words are. And the absent presence of the 'Other' in the form of the black man [in the South African context] plays its part too, in the formation of white, elite, heterosexual masculinities. (p. 57)

In other words, in order for the form of hegemonic masculinity outlined above to exist, what is required is the presence of boys to dominate, i.e. boys who don't 'fit' the notion of the 'ideal', of what constitutes a 'real man' within an all-boys elite school context.

Similar to masculinity within elite boys-only schools, a particular notion of femininity is presented within privileged girls-only schools. The focus of the international literature, on what has become known as 'girlhood studies', presents a predominately class-based image of girls. In these studies girls present as being acutely conscious of defining aspects of certain types of behaviour or social markers such as the type of schools their peers had previously attended, how much money their families have, and whether their parents had to work for this wealth.

Furthermore, the image of femininity presented within girls-only schools is one of 'concerted cultivation' whereby elite schools intentionally foster a particular variety of practices that support young women to have a high degree of self-surety (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2013). For example, the prospectuses of eight Australian girls' schools "promote an 'elite' and 'well-rounded' educational experience and idealised hetero-normative subjectivities" within these schools in order to create the impression that these schools produce girls "who are both empowered and feminine" (Wardman *et al.*, 2010, p. 258).

However, at the same time, Kenway, Langmead and Epstein (2015), in their article 'Globalizing Femininity in Elite Schools for Girls: Some Paradoxical Failures of Success', discuss how, while elite schools present a particular image of girls within single-sex elite schools, the image portrayed by the school is not always a reflection of reality. The Kenway *et al.* (2015) study was located in two schools, one in England and the other in South Africa. The opening lines of their article state:

> Girls from elite schools appear to have everything – wealthy and well-connected families, regular international travel to study, play and shop, and

> seemingly limitless ability, confidence and poise. They are high achievers in all school activities – academics, sports and the arts. They are school leaders running executives, clubs and societies. They serve good causes too …. Their futures are predictably top rung – top universities, prestigious and influential careers, partners in the upper tiers of society and expensive lifestyles. It seems that their propensities for success are endless; that they have infinite agency and worthiness. (Kenway, Langmead and Epstein, 2015, p. 153)

However, Kenway *et al.* (2015) challenge the assertion that elite girls' schools are in the "position to claim that they lead the way in the education of girls" (p. 164). The authors state that the expectations and pressure that is placed upon girls within an elite school environment, in addition to their fear of failure, are neither "sustainable or defensible as 'success'" (p. 154). In addition, the authors argue that the "grooming for success in the cocoon of the elite school" (p. 164) does not prepare girls for the realities of the challenges, misogyny and sexism that they are sure to encounter in the world beyond school.

In Epstein's (2014) study, she discusses how notions of gender and class are inextricably intertwined with race within the context of post-apartheid South African education to produce a particular notion of femininity amongst the privileged girls within the school. Epstein's (2014) article, 'Race-ing class ladies: lineages of privilege in an elite South African school' explores how the "legacy of coloniser and colonised", and the racialised politics of the country's past and present, have combined with notions of femininity to continue to produce "white young ladies" (p. 244). What the article finds, is that these racialised practices in an elite South African school, have continued despite the influx of black students, post-apartheid. Epstein (2014) asserts that the production of young ladies at the South African elite girls school in her study, "most of whom are white and not politically engaged", can be said "to leave whiteness almost – but not quite – unchallenged" (p. 259).

Conclusion

Drawing on prior research, this chapter has presented international and national literature on issues pertaining to what sets elite schools apart from other schools in terms of what they offer, the gifting practices of elite schools, assimilationist studies linked to elite educational institutions, and notions of gender within elite, single-sex schools. What has been highlighted

in the current research, in relation to this study, are the practices, both explicit and implicit of elite schools.

The following chapter provides the theoretical framework of this study and presents the analytical lens that enables the exploration of the data in relation to the complexities of the gift that give rise to the core research question of this thesis, namely: *What do the accounts of scholarships students reveal about accepting the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite South African secondary school?*

CHAPTER THREE: A BOURDIEUSIAN FRAMEWORK OF THE GIFT OF A SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction

The first two chapters of this thesis presented the aims and the core research question of the study, in addition to outlining the study's contextual landscape. In addition, the notion of a scholarship to attend an elite school is introduced. The literature review provides an overview of the relevant international and national literature of elite schools and their students. This chapter provides the theoretical framework of this study by drawing on the work of the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu.

A Bourdieusian framework, with its concepts of habitus, field and capital, allows for a rich analysis of the accounts narrated by the scholarship students of their experiences of moving from their historically disadvantaged communities into a context of social privilege, in addition to an exploration of the power relations implicit in the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite secondary school.

Bourdieu: a means of viewing the gift of a scholarship

The Bourdieusian concepts used in this study include habitus, field and capital, as well as their interaction in the notion of the logic of practice. These conceptual tools provide the means of analysing the relationship between people's practices (what people do, and why they do it), the context in which these practices occur (the objective social structures of institutions, discourses, fields, and ideologies), and the knowledge and skills required by this context. According to Bourdieu, an individual's practices and decisions shape, and are shaped by, a set of dispositions (habitus) that include attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and practices - all formed through the embodiment of one's life history (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Habitus is a whole-body experience in that it operates at various levels, "in one's thoughts, actions, use of language, and in how one embodies experiences of structures and relations" (Nolan, 2012, p. 204). Habitus, while manifesting at individual level, is not simply an individual attribute since dispositions are created and recreated through social interactions and traditions within a particular social setting, or field. Bourdieu (1992) asserts that the concepts of habitus and field are central to understanding social practice, as they are produced and reproduced in

relation to each other. The third of Bourdieu's key concepts, capital, plays a critical role in this relationship between field and habitus. Capital is that which has value within a field – essentially the resources an individual possesses within a field that, in turn, determine their position and power. Capital assists individuals to position themselves strategically within a field, and at the same time, it is their existing position and status in the field that in turn assists their access to capital (Bourdieu, 1985).

As is evident, all three concepts are intricately involved in a dynamic relationship with one another – what Bourdieu refers to as 'the logic of practice' (Bourdieu, 1990b). Bourdieu (1984) maps these interconnections as follows: (Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice. Thus, although each of these three concepts will be discussed separately to some extent in this chapter, frequent reference will be made to their interconnectedness and the extent to which they operate in relation to each other.

Habitus

The concept of habitus is one of Bourdieu's most significant analytical contributions to the study of sociology (Robbins, 1993). In this thesis, the notion of habitus is fundamental to understanding and analysing what accepting the gift of a scholarship entails for the recipients of this gift. In particular, it assists one to understand the complexities and nuances involved in the scholarship students entering into, and 'fitting in' to the elite school field.

Bourdieu (1977a) introduces the notion of habitus to explain the way in which an individual is part of the social world, and also the ways in which the social world is part of an individual. Habitus is primarily structured during early childhood through immersion within the context of family life. It is conditioned by past and present circumstances, such as an individual's family upbringing and educational experiences (Maton, 2008). Bourdieu (1992) explains this:

> The habitus, which is the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of an individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class. (p. 91)

Habitus operates as a system of "durable transposable dispositions", or patterns of socio-cultural practices, gained from the past and remaining across various contexts (Bourdieu,

1990b, p. 53). Bourdieu suggests that in its simplest form, habitus can be described as "history turned into nature" (1977a, p. 78). Thus, as a complex mix of past and present, habitus is "a socialized subjectivity" and "the social embodied" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 127–8). In other words, as Maton (2008) explains, habitus describes our ways of thinking, feeling, acting and being, and captures how we carry our history within us and how that history plays out in our present circumstances.

For Bourdieu, habitus is fundamentally an embodied phenomenon that denotes not only how people think about the world but also a bodily system of dispositions that are enacted in a field (Webb *et al.,* 2002, p. 37). These dispositions, which include "capacities, tendencies, propensities or inclinations" (Mills and Gale, 2010, p. 90), provide a sense of how to act and respond "without consciously obeying rules posed explicitly as such" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 76). Thus, habitus, "as a system of acquired dispositions", is at least partly unconscious because of the common sense, natural or inevitable nature of the possibilities chosen by individuals to follow or to which they adhere (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As Bourdieu elaborates: "It is because this world has produced me, because it has produced the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 128).

As an embodied phenomenon, habitus is not composed solely of mental attitudes and perceptions; rather, it is a whole-body experience (Reay, 2004; Maton, 2008; Nolan, 2012). Habitus thus operates at various levels - in thoughts, use of language and physical actions, and the embodiment of a variety of experiences relative to different structures and relations (Nolan, 2012). As Bourdieu states, habitus is expressed through durable ways "of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 70) as well as "a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech" (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 87). Bourdieu describes these bodily functions, or bodily systems enacted in a field, as 'bodily hexis'. Bodily hexis is structured by the past and is inscribed onto the body as a form of a bodily disposition. Bodily hexis incorporates a relationship between social structures (or social fields) and habitus, and, in Bourdieu's (1990a) words "is a political mythology realized, *embodied*, turned into a permanent disposition" (pp. 69-70, italics in original). For Bourdieu (2000), these dispositions are "as durable as the indelible inscriptions of tattooing" (p. 141).

However, despite Bourdieu describing one's habitus 'durable', he also emphasises that "in rapidly changing societies, habitus changes constantly, continuously, but within the limits inherent in its originary structure, that is within certain bounds of continuity" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 47). Thus, habitus continues to be shaped by the practices of new or different social fields as actors interact with one another and their environment (Bourdieu, 2000). Bourdieu (1990a) therefore notes that habitus is always constituted in moments of practice. As Webb *et al.* (2002, p. 37) explain, while the habitus disposes actors to do certain things, "orienting their actions and inclinations, without strictly determining them", an individual's dispositions, knowledge and values are always potentially subject to modifications, or even transformation:

> Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal! (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 133)

An individual's habitus is able to generate a repertoire of new, transformative actions allowing individuals to respond to cultural contexts and rules in different ways, providing a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 18).

Bourdieu (2005) emphasises that habitus is,

> a set of *acquired* characteristics which are the product of social conditions and which, for that reason, may be totally or partially common to people who have been the product of similar social conditions … [and thus] being a product of history, that is of social experience and education, it may be *changed by history*, that is by new experiences, education or training (which implies that aspects of what remains unconscious in habitus may be made at least partially conscious and explicit). (p. 45, italics in original)

Therefore, implicit in the concept of habitus "is the possibility of a social trajectory that enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones" (Reay, 2004, p. 435). As individuals move through and across different contexts, or socially structured fields, changes

may be incremental as individuals "incorporate into their habitus the values and imperatives of these fields" (Webb *et al.*, p. 37). Bourdieu (2000) explains this mutual influence and shaping as follows:

> [T]his body which indisputably functions as the principle of individuation … ratified and reinforced by the legal definition of the individual as an abstract, interchangeable being … [is] open to the world, and therefore exposed to the world, and so capable of being conditioned by the world, shaped by the material and cultural conditions of existence in which it is placed from the beginning. (p. 133)

Thus, aspects of habitus may shift over time and through exposure to different social fields. Although dispositions are long-lasting, "they are not eternal" and "may be changed by historical action oriented by intention and consciousness and using pedagogic devices" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 45).

That said, Bourdieu (2005) cautions that these adaptations take place within defined limits. Shifts in habitus may require considerable effort. To illustrate this point, he refers to difficulties of correcting an accent in pronunciation, stating that, "[a] linguistic habitus, for example, is a product of primary education and cannot be corrected completely despite all one's efforts" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 45). Furthermore, and linked to this 'effort', Bourdieu (2000) explains that dispositions are:

> subject to a sort of permanent revision, but one that is never radical, given that it operates on the basis of premises instituted in the previous state. They are characterized by a combination of constancy and variation that fluctuates according to the individual and her degree of rigidity or flexibility. (2000, p. 161)

In other words, the extent to which shifts take place can vary from person to person, and significant (radical) changes are rare. As such, although habitus is capable of being transformed, or added to, by a social field it has encountered, "wholesale conversions are very exceptional and, in most cases, provisional". (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 47)

By outlining these cautions that shifting habitus is difficult, requires considerable effort, differs from person to person, and is seldom radical or permanent, Bourdieu is asserting that the primary habitus formed during early childhood remains core and largely intact, with changes taking the form of additional secondary layers that are added to the existing primary habitus through an individual's encounters with different social fields. Wacquant (2014) refers to this as the "malleability of habitus" and explains that the secondary habitus is "any system of transposable schemata that becomes grafted subsequently, through specialized pedagogical labor that is typically shortened in duration, accelerated in pace, and explicit in organization" (p. 7).

For Bourdieu (1992), school plays a critical role in adding 'secondary layers', as it were, to an individual's primary formation of habitus. As he explains:

> [T]he habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences … and the habitus transformed by the actions of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences … and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (p. 134).

This study explores the notion of 'restructuring to restructuring' in relation to the scholarship students' narrated accounts of their experiences of, and views on, elite schooling, and what accepting the gift of a scholarship entailed for them.

Habitus, while of crucial importance, is only one of Bourdieu's thinking tools by which to understand a scholarship as a form of a gift. Habitus cannot be considered in isolation: "It is relational in that it designates a mediation between objective structures and practices." (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989, p. 43) This brings the discussion to the second of Bourdieu's primary notions, namely that of field, a structured system of social relations.

Habitus and fields

Bourdieu's notion of 'field' provides the setting in which agents and their social practices are located. While habitus brings into focus the subjective aspect of practice, field brings the objective aspects into focus. Bourdieu (1996) offers the following definition of a field:

> A field is a structural social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent

> relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is that power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies. (p. 40-41)

A field can thus be defined as a structured space with its own set of rules, knowledge and forms of capital. It contains social positions and relations within which interactions, transactions and events occur at a specific time and location (Thomson, 2008).

Bourdieu (1992) views the social world as divided into different fields of practice, often overlapping, such as the field of education, law, religion, art, and so forth. Each field is relatively autonomous from other fields and operates according to its own internal structures or 'rules of the game'. At the same time, however, no field "ever exists in isolation, and there is the sense of fields within fields within fields" (Grenfell and James, 1998). Thus, within the field of education, for example, one can refer to elite schooling as a part of a field, or a subfield, that connects with and shares the principles of the broader field of education. Each part of the field, or subfield, has "its own orthodoxy, its own way of doing things, rules, assumptions and beliefs; in sum, its own legitimate means" (Grenfell and James, 1998). For this reason, individuals who move from one part of a field to another (such as from a predominantly working-class primary school to an elite secondary school) may find themselves in a deeply unfamiliar social space that incorporates rules and regularities that are foreign to them. In contrast, an individual whose habitus matches the orthodoxy of a social field, will feel a sense of ease, or comfort, within the social environment.

Habitus and field are closely related. Bourdieu (1989), explains that habitus and fields interact with each other in two ways:

> On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a hierarchically intersecting set of fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. (p. 44)

The close dynamic between habitus and field is further explained as follows by Bourdieu (1992):

> Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water," it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted. (p. 127)

Looking at the relationship between habitus and field, Reay (2004) formulates this interrelatedness as follows: "habitus and field must be understood as highly charged matrices involving a dynamic philosophy of human praxis" (p. 435).[13] As Bourdieu (1991) asserts:

> Every field is the site of a more or less openly declared struggle for the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field. (p. 242)

As such, fields are as much about conflict as they are about agreement, and what is at stake is capital.

Capital

Capital is a central concept related to habitus and field in Bourdieu's analytical schema. Bourdieu identifies three main forms of capital, namely economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Common to the forms of capital is the notion that each is representative of some type of investment, and each form of capital is capable of securing a return on that investment (Moore, 2004). Thus, capital is a social resource which has value within a social space.

While economic capital relates to material wealth, social capital refers to networks of social connection and influence. Bourdieu (1986) provides the following definition of social capital:

> Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to

[13] See McLeod (2005) for an interesting overview of the range of responses by contemporary feminist authors to Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field, and some of the influential trends and tendencies in feminist work that seek to adapt the concepts of habitus and field for theorising gender.

> membership of a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (p. 245)

Alumni associations are an example of social capital within the field of elite schooling. Alumni of these schools have automatic access to a network that, as Bourdieu (1986) points out, is neither a natural nor a social given, but is constituted by an initial act of an institution, and then perpetuated by its members:

> It is the product of an endless effort at institution, of which institution rites – often wrongly described as rites of passage – mark the essential moments and which is necessary in order to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits. (p. 246)

Social capital enables individuals associated with an institution to produce and reproduce significant relationships that may, over time, be to their advantage (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural capital refers to internalised dispositions and tastes as well as cultural goods. It exists in three forms: in the embodied state it refers to the long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body such as style and taste, aptitude and familiarity with highbrow culture, and use of formal language; in the objectified state it refers to material possessions such as books, musical instruments, and the choice of artwork displayed on a wall; and in its institutionalised state it refers to credentials, qualifications, education and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu (1985) maintains that power within a field depends on position, and this is in part determined by the amount and type of capital that an individual possesses:

> The social field can be described as a multi-dimensional space of positions such that every actual position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the values of the different pertinent variables. Thus, agents are distributed within it, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital, i.e., according to the relative weight of the different kinds of assets within their total assets. (p. 724)

Additionally, Bourdieu (2004) reminds us that the field is a site of struggles, "a socially constructed field of action in which agents endowed with different resources confront one another to conserve or transform the existing power relations" (pp. 34-5). Those who are best placed to succeed in this struggle are those already endowed with a large amount of capital valued by, or regarded as legitimate and authentic, within the field.

It is important to note that cultural and symbolic capital are 'arbitrary' in nature in that there is nothing inherent within them that makes them intrinsically better or worse – rather it is a matter of who has the power to determine what is of value (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). What is regarded as valuable or legitimate capital is determined by those who are in a dominant position within the field, thus creating a self-perpetuating cycle of social reproduction that favours those already in a position of power.

An understanding of the link between habitus and capital is of crucial importance in order to productively use Bourdieu's thinking tools. As stated by Moore (2004),

> habitus mediates structures and practices (positions and position-takings) through the medium of dispositions, which on the one hand, are shaped by the intuitive perception of objective probabilities, and on the other predispose individuals to practices that realize those probabilities as the consequence of those perceptions and on the basis of the capital in its various forms, that they possess. (p. 450)

This interconnectedness indicates that the many links between habitus, capital and field are capable of generating a myriad manifestations which shape how "the rules of the game" are interpreted, implemented and modified.

Cultural capital and the field of education

In his writings on French schooling, Bourdieu (1977a) argues that schools are based on the cultural and linguistic capital of the middle-class. In the words of Henry, Knight, Lingard, and Taylor (1990):

> [T]he expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic

> culture required for success in school are all competencies which one class brings with them to school. (p. 233)

As such, students from middle-class backgrounds have 'crude' privileges in the schooling environment, in the form of cultural and social capital from their homes and communities: "a good word put in, the right contacts, help with studies, extra teaching, information on the educational system and job outlets" (Bourdieu, 1976, p. 110).

Webb *et al.* (2002) summarise these advantages as:

> A child from a background similar to that of that of her teachers will not have to make a big adjustment to school; she will tend to find the attitudes of teachers (their emphasis on 'good' manners, their tendency to encourage quiet reading) almost exactly the same as her parents at home. So when a child feels at home at school, this is likely to be because the school bears sufficient resemblance to home to provide that sense of security. (pp. 113-4)

The result of this continuity between a middle-class home and school is that, "these students are able to turn their social advantage into educational advantage, as their social heritage becomes scholastic achievement" (Christie, 2008, p. 173). Bourdieu (1976) describes this as the "social gift" of cultural heritage appearing to be the "natural gift" of ability or intelligence (p. 100).

As a consequence, middle-class students are able to draw on their habitus and cultural capital to more easily navigate the requirements of formal schooling, especially within the formal structures of elite schools. In contrast, students from a working-class background might find to their disadvantage that their cultural capital does not align with the requirements of the school. Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995, p. 40) refer to this as possessing cultural capital "in the wrong currency". This is especially pertinent in the elite school subfield, where the ethos, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions of the middle- and upper-classes are particularly dominant. Furthermore, Bourdieu's (1973, 1976) writings on cultural capital indicate that the forms of capital valued in one field, or part of a field, might not always be transferable in the same measure to another part of the field. That said, in using Bourdieu's concepts in the South African context, it is important to recognise that he developed his analysis in relation to social

class. While class and race may overlap in significant ways in South Africa, it is nonetheless important not to conflate them as analytical concepts or lived experiences.

Cultural capital and symbolic violence within the field of education

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital assists one "to understand how schooling is part of a symbolic process of cultural and social reproduction" (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 11). Christie (2008) points out that,

> all social groups possess cultural capital in terms of internalised values, attitudes and dispositions. But the cultural capital of dominant social groups is associated with power and regarded as the most valuable. It is their symbolic systems and cultural practices that are imposed through schooling. (p. 174)

It is this cultural imposition that Bourdieu terms symbolic violence.

Symbolic violence "results when we misrecognize, as natural, those systems of classification that are actually culturally arbitrary and historical" (Grenfell, 2008, p. 184). Thus, a form of 'violence' is imposed on people by forcing them to adhere to the common rules and regularities of a field as universal concepts. Such violence is achieved indirectly (symbolically), rather than being explicit or overt (Mills, 2008). As such, symbolic violence is often not recognised as such and "is an effective and efficient form of domination in that members of the dominant classes need exert little energy to maintain their dominance" (Schubert, 2008, p. 184). As Bourdieu (1977a) states, they need only "*let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination" (p. 190, italics in original). The result, as Schubert (2008) explains, is that:

> Hierarchies and systems of domination are then reproduced to the extent that the dominant and the dominated perceive these systems to be legitimate, and thus think and act in their own best interests within the context of the system itself. (p. 184)

Symbolic violence may be seen as a more 'gentler' form of violence than physical violence, but it is no less real as suffering results from both forms. However, as Schubert (2008) asserts, "[t]he social origins of this suffering are often misrecognized and internalized by members of

society, a fact that only serves to exacerbate suffering and perpetuate symbolic systems of domination" (p. 184). Bourdieu (1992) defines symbolic violence as the "violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (p. 167). Thus it may be that those who suffer from symbolic violence are willing and "invested" or "interested" participants in the very systems that harm them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 167).

Discussing how symbolic violence is enacted within the context of schooling, Sadovnik (2007) comments:

> Although schools appear to be neutral, they actually advantage the upper and middle-classes through their symbolic representations. These classes possess cultural capital, or symbolic representations of cultural domination, such as language, ideas, and knowledge of music, art, and literature, all of which have important exchange value in the educational and cultural marketplace. (p. 11)

Bourdieu emphasises that the school teaches students "particular things and socializes them in particular ways" (Schubert, 2008, p. 188), and in general, the manner in which schools are structured tends to advantage the children who come from a middle- or upper-class background.

Linguistic capital and symbolic violence within the field of education

The result of symbolic violence is that it enables certain groups occupying privileged positions to maintain dominance over others, thereby playing a fundamental role in the reproduction and naturalising of the social hierarchy (Webb *et al.,* 2002). One of the areas within schools where this is most evident is the form of language considered 'acceptable'. Bourdieu (1977b, 1991) uses the metaphor of a 'linguistic marketplace' and the symbolic power carried by language to outline the ways in which languages and language practices are selectively valued, as he argues that "[d]iscourse is a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered" (p. 659). He further points out that "the dominant usage is the usage of the dominant class" (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 659).

Drawing in part on Bourdieu, McKinney (2017) points out that the establishment of a dominant discourse "provides an explanation for how the language practices of the elite come to constitute the mainstream or standard language in a society" (p. 9). For Bourdieu, schooling

is one of the key sites "which imposes the legitimate forms of discourse and the idea that discourse should be recognised if and only if it conforms to the legitimate norms" (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 650). Problematising the issue of a dominant discourse in the schooling system, McKinney (2017) argues that within many South African schools there exists an expectation of proficiency in certain forms of 'standard' English to the extent where this is regarded as almost 'compulsory'. McKinney terms this 'Anglonormativity', and links this notion to the privileges associated with whiteness and being middle-class in places such as elite schools in South Africa, arguing that many of these schools still largely operate as if there is one standard language, "a single best way to read and write" (p. 3). Drawing on Blommaert (2005), McKinney asserts that this dominance is a consequence of the belief that, within the schooling system, those who speak in the "ethnolinguistic repertoires of Whiteness" are more likely to be heard or given a voice (p. 82). Given this, students may feel pressure to adjust or change their ways of speaking to more closely match that which is regarded as the 'proper English' of the school field.

McKinney (2017) also points out that the linguistic market is not necessarily unified, as "[d]ifferent markets within a society may value different language resources" (p. 130). Thus for example, in the context of this thesis, whilst a scholarship student may learn to speak a "prestige variety of English that draws its features from an ethnolinguistic repertoire of whiteness" while attending the elite school, "it can also lead to exclusionary labels such as 'coconut' and can inhibit social interaction with peers who are not proficient in this variety" (McKinney, 2017, p. 130). Given this, scholarship students from a working-class background within an elite school context may be required, when they return home, to "deploy different linguistic resources depending on the centre they are orienting to" (McKinney, 2017, p. 134).

The logic of practice: playing the game

Bourdieu's concept of the 'logic of practice' brings the notion of habitus, field and capital into a dynamic engagement, and it is this relationship that is central to understanding an individual's social practices. This pertains to the way in which a social agents are able to act, with greater or lesser skill, in relation to a field. As noted previously, those whose habitus and capital are well matched to a field may act spontaneously and innovatively, drawing on the internalisation of their external environment. Bourdieu uses the analogy of 'playing the game' to provide insight into this complex interaction between habitus, field and (access to, and

possession of) capital as it plays out within the social world (Nolan, 2012). Like a game, social fields are occupied by players (agents or institutions) and what happens in the field is boundaried in that there are limits to what can be done (the rules and regularities of the game), and these limits are shaped by the conditions of the field (Thomson, 2008).

Bourdieu (1990a) asserts that adjustment to the demands of a field requires a certain 'feel for the game':

> Having the feel for the game is having the game under the skin; it is to master in a practical way the future of the game, it is to have a sense of the history of the game. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 81)

In other words, as an individual engages in a social field, over time the rules of that field appear increasingly natural, almost instinctive, as well as unquestionable. Bourdieu (1990a) writes:

> Action guided by a "feel for the game" has all the appearances of the rational action that an impartial observer, endowed with all the necessary information and capable of mastering it rationally, would deduce. And yet it is not based on reason. You need only to think of the impulsive decision made by the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that it has nothing in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. (p. 11)

As referenced earlier, Bourdieu (1976) argues that the field of education is dominated by middle-class values, attitudes and dispositions. Applied to the game of elite schooling, one can argue that students who have been engaged in the field of elite education from a young age are more likely to feel at ease and be able to determine the limits of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour – the (largely) unwritten rules of the game. These students, possessing an innate 'feel for the game' will not need to think carefully and deliberately about each and every move before acting (Nolan, 2012). In Bourdieu's (1990a) words:

> The good player, who is so to speak, the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires. That presupposes a permanent capacity for invention, indispensable if one is to be able to adapt to indefinitely varied and

> never completely identical situations. This is not ensured by mechanical obedience to the explicit, codified rule (when it exists). (p. 63)

Thus viewed through a Bourdieusian framework, it is possible to argue that there is no such thing as an equal or level playing field in the 'game' of education. Social fields, like games, are competitive spaces with players continually vying for better positions and more refined skills in the game. As Bourdieu (2000) points out, social games are not necessarily fair:

> Those who talk of equal opportunity forget that social games … are not 'fair games'. Without being, strictly speaking, rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations. (pp. 214-5)

Having said this, it is important to remember that social fields, like games, are competitive spaces with players continuingly vying for better positions and more refined skills in the game.

Conclusion

Bourdieu's thinking tools of habitus, capital and field, as discussed in this chapter, provide a way of understanding the different and complex experiences of an agent in the social world. Applied to this thesis work, these thinking tools will be used to present and analyse the scholarship recipients' experiences of elite schooling. Thus the strength of Bourdieu's analytical schema, for the purposes of this research study, is that it brings to the fore the dynamic interaction between the scholarship student on the one hand, and the elite school environment on the other, as constructed through the narrative accounts of former scholarship students. In addition, the gift of a scholarship, with its implicit reciprocal expectations, as suggested by Mauss (1969) and Derrida (1992), will be considered within the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

Building on this, the next chapter outlines the methodological framework within which this study is located. As suggested by Freebody (2004), this chapter is a discussion of the "technologies of reason" (p. 68) that form the 'bridge' between the research question and the research findings presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

CHAPTER FOUR: BRIDGING THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP OF RESEARCH

Introduction

The central focus of this thesis is an exploration of the experiences of students who attended elite schools as scholarship recipients. The practice of scholarships involves a nexus of players - namely the foundations who provide the scholarships, the schools attended by the recipients, and the students who receive the scholarship to attend an elite secondary school – and the focus of this thesis is on scholarship students' perspectives within this nexus. This chapter presents the methodology and research design employed in this thesis.

Creswell (2007) notes that good research, as in research that can be held accountable, uses established research procedures that are open to inspection and which presents findings that others can trust. As such, research should be *reliable* (others should be able to replicate the findings, or at least understand why the research says what it says), *valid* (research should be addressing what it says it is, and not misinterpreting events or distorting them to fit a theory), and it should be clear whether the findings can be *generalised*, or whether they apply only to the specific circumstances of that particular research study. Also embedded in research are ethical considerations (Maxwell, 1992).

Freebody (2004) provides the following valuable explanation of what constitutes research:

> … [I]t is the clarity, comprehensibility and comprehensiveness of the researcher's description of methods – as they fit into the larger methodological framework of the project – that constitutes the report as 'research'. It is the defensibility of these methods as technologies for reasoning our way from the research questions to the conduct undertaken by the researcher and on to the production of findings that can count as answers to the original questions that define the reliability, significance and value of the project. Method can act as the bridge from questions to reasonable answers that distinguishes research from other ways, perhaps perfectly reasonable in other terms or settings, of asserting knowledge and opinion about education. (p. 68)

Freebody (2004) continues by stating that,

> the doing of research is fundamentally the willing adoption of certain responsibilities, made evident as guiding disciplines or principles of method, which, in turn, accord the products of research a particular status as ways of knowing about cultural practice. (p. 69)

In other words, it is the research methods of a study, as the 'technologies of reason', that provide the link, or 'bridge', between the research question(s) and findings that count as acceptable answers, all within a coherent conceptual framework. And, it is a commitment to this 'larger methodological framework' through adherence to 'guiding disciplines or principles of method' on the part of a researcher that defines the reliability, validity and generalisability of the research project.

Bourdieu (1999) asserts that while it is:

> the objective of pure knowledge [that] distinguishes the research relationship from most of the exchanges in everyday life [this relationship] remains, whatever one does, a *social relationship*. As such, it can have an effect on the results obtained (the effects varying according to the different parameters that can influence the relationship.) (p. 608, italics in original)

Bourdieu (1999) continues that as a result of this social feature of research, "all kinds of distortions are embedded in the very structure of the research relationship [and] it is these distortions that have to be understood and mastered as part of a practice which can be reflective and methodical" (p. 608). Given this, the purpose of this chapter is to "make explicit the intentions and procedural principles" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 607) of this thesis to address the gap between asking the research questions and the analysis and interpretation of the participant responses.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section draws extensively upon Bourdieu's (1999) chapter 'Understanding', in his book *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, and outlines the research design of this thesis. The second section describes the research process of this study. Included in this section is a description of the data analysis and interpretation processes followed, as well as issues of reliability and validity, generalisability, and ethical considerations of this research.

Research Design

Given Freebody's (2004) position that the central research questions of a study must guide its methodological approach, in this thesis a qualitative methodology was deemed to be the best method to do justice to the scholarship students' experiences and unpack the complexities of the nature of the gift of a scholarship, with its explicit and implicit conditions. The significance and relevance of qualitative research is associated with the way in which it attempts to provide an epistemological window into the world of the respondents that otherwise would not have been obtained. The power that such a window provides for the creation of deep understanding on a given issue cannot be underestimated. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Golafshani, 2003).

Further, Bourdieu (1999) argues that it is critical for a researcher to engage in a reflexive manner in the process of questioning the inevitable effects of that process. As Bourdieu (1999) states:

> The positivist dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that affects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of the work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce. (p. 608)

What Bourdieu is saying here is that research findings are a work of both construction and understanding that take place within a social interaction within the structures of the research design method.

My positionality as a researcher

Given this social nature of research that takes place within a particular context, there is a need to conduct this relationship in a reflexive manner, attuned in particular to the possible power relations at play. As Patton (2002) observes, while the credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, in qualitative research, "the researcher is the

instrument" (p. 14). This means that the positionality of the researcher in relation to the research plays a critical role in qualitative research. As such, Bourdieu (1999) asks researchers to adopt a reflexive attitude towards their practices, reflecting upon how forces such as their social and cultural background, their position within particular fields, and their intellectual bias may shape the way they view the world. As Thomson (2017) emphasises, given that Bourdieu regards knowledge as symbolic capital that has a use and an exchange value, and that "some knowledge is more valued than others and all knowledge and knowhow works to particular ends and in particular interests", conducting research means that, "no knowledge, no know-how and no 'truth' – however 'scientifically' produced – can be taken for granted, including the researcher's own knowledge" (p. 47). As such, reflexivity is critical.

As a white, middle-class, English-speaking South African whose teaching and now management career has been located within the elite school field, my positionality as a researcher is of importance. As the researcher of this study it is, therefore, essential that I reflect critically and in a self-reflexive manner throughout the research process. What this required of me, and the steps that I took in the research as a result of these reflections, are addressed in the course of this chapter.

Rationale for a narrative inquiry approach

Narrative inquiry as a method of qualitative research has gained an increasingly high profile in social research in the last few decades, with some of the more prominent works including that of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) and Kim (2016). By framing research in terms of a narrative, it allows for the possibility of seeing "… different, and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change" (Andrews *et al.,* 2008, p. 1). Thus, narrative inquiry allows a researcher not only to investigate how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them, by what means and for what purpose, the mechanisms by which they are consumed, and how narratives are accepted, contested or silenced. All of these areas of inquiry can help a researcher to describe, understand and explain important aspects of the world (Andrews *et al.,* 2008).

Although the terms 'narrative' and 'story' can at times be interchangeable, Kim (2016) points to an important difference between them by stating that, "a narrative is a recounting of

events that are organized in a temporal sequence, and this linear organization of events make up a story" (pp. 8-9). As such, a story "has a connotation of a 'full' description of lived experience, whereas a narrative has a connotation of a 'partial' description of lived experience" (Kim, 2016, p. 9). Importantly, narratives "privilege the reality" of what is experienced by story-tellers (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000, p. 12). In other words, the reality of a narrative refers to what is real to the story-teller, and as such narratives do not copy the reality of the world outside themselves. Instead, they propose particular representations and interpretations of the world. What this means is that narratives cannot be judged as true or false, as they "express the truth of a point of view, of a specific location in space and time" (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000, p. 12).

Narratives are always embedded within a socio-historical context or structure. The particular voice in a narrative can only be understood in relation to a larger context. The narrative research approach thus allows me to explore, beyond the personal, the experiences of scholarship recipients within the specific socio-cultural framing of the students moving from disadvantaged schools and communities into a context of social privilege. It allows me, as a researcher, to raise questions in a particular way in the form of semi-structured interview, investigate their responses using particular methods, and make sense of this in ways that are credible, thereby providing the 'technologies of reason' of Freebody's (2004) 'bridge' between research questions and acceptable answers.

An experience-centred narrative inquiry approach

Two of the most common forms of narrative inquiries are the event-centred inquiry approach and the experience-centred inquiry approach. The experience-centred narrative inquiry was selected as the more appropriate of the two for this thesis as it allows for the study of stories as experiences rather than as events (Andrews *et al.,* 2008). Squire (2008) points out that when we consider narratives as experiences rather than as events, the following factors are less likely to be overlooked: talk that is not about events but is nonetheless of significance to the narrator's story of 'who they are'; the representation of the story itself, in the sense that stories are never the same when told twice; and interaction between listener and story-teller (researcher and research participant) in the co-construction of the narrative.

Squire (2008) continues by outlining four key characteristics of experience-centred narratives, all of which are well-matched to the purposes of this research study. Firstly, experience-centred narratives are both sequential *and* meaningful (Squire, 2008). By this, she means that although a story may well be a narrative of an event, an experience-centred approach is more flexible about time and personal experience, and is more defined by theme rather than structure in the retelling of this event. Thus, for example, an experience-centred narrative might concern a specific turning point in a person's life, include present and future stories about others or oneself, address a more general experience such as living through a trauma, or take the form of a thematic biography about a person's life or a period of time in a person's life. In order to understand 'meaning', experience-centred narrative researchers often expand the contexts, as well as the materials, that they study. This expansion might include the "paralanguage of tone, laughter, and pauses during an interview" as well as possible gaps and contradictions within narratives (Squire, 2008, p. 42). In other words, what the interviewee has *not* said may be of significance, as is whether or not the words that they have used to describe an experience matches their external emotions or other narratives of self?

Secondly, the experience-centred narrative approach views narratives as a means of human sense-making. As such, narratives are not just a characteristic of humans, but they are what *make* us human, as they are imbricated within us. In addition to being deeply human, stories are also inherently social – not just because they always involve speakers and listeners (either real or imagined), but because storytelling "constitutes and maintains sociality" (Squire, 2008, p. 44).

Thirdly, it is recognised that experience-centred narratives are representations of an individual's 'truth', as narratives involve some form of reconstruction of stories over time and space. As such, they are never repeated exactly as words never 'mean' the same thing twice, and stories are performed differently in different social contexts (Squire, 2008). Andrews *et al.* (2008) point out that the notion of audience is also of significance in the retelling of a story, as who the story is being told to may influence its telling. As such, what is told is a particular *account* of the truth, rather than the truth itself.

And finally, as experience-centred narratives are more concerned with *how* a story is retold and which aspects of 'the truth' are included or excluded by the narrator rather than 'the truth' itself, these forms of narratives allow for the display of transformations that may have

taken place within the story-teller. In other words, time and distance may result in a more reflective approach to a particular experience, thereby resulting in a 'reframing' of the narrative in its retelling (Squire, 2008).

This notion of narrative research being not just about succession in time, but also changes over time, is supported by Bruner (1990). We may, for example, indicate through our narratives that we are now 'different people', and parts of the narrative and our own present reading of the situation is different. In light of this, a far more complex, multi-layered picture can emerge – richer than a mere spatialised or historical description – as unconscious realities and material causalities are allowed to emerge more so than if the focus was on chronological or experienced 'time' *per se* (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

A final point to be made is the extent to which experience-centred narrative research is concerned about the agency of narratives and narrators. Proponents of experienced-centred narratives are interested in individualised accounts of experiences as a means of building identity and agency (Bruner, 1990; Squire, 2008). Thus the assumption of a necessary link between narrative and agency is found most strongly in approaches to narrative that focus on personal experience.

As this research is concerned with the accounts of former scholarship recipients reflecting on their experiences within an elite school context, the use of an experience-centred narrative inquiry approach allows for a rich, detailed and nuanced analysis of their stories and the notion of a 'gift'. In addition, it affords the participants a sense of agency within the retelling of their stories.

However, as with any approach, there are some criticisms as well as cautions that a researcher needs to be aware of when using a narrative approach. What follows is a brief discussion of some of these, and the attempts made to obviate them in the research methods of this study.

Criticisms of a narrative inquiry approach

One of the criticisms is that narrative researchers often re-present narratives as if they were 'authentic' when:

> Autobiographical accounts are no more 'authentic' than other modes of representation: a narrative of a personal experience is not a clear route into

> 'the truth', either about the reported events, or of the teller's private experience ... 'experience' is constructed through the various forms of narrative. (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006, p. 166)

While this is a legitimate concern, Bourdieu (1999) points out, that re-presentation will always be dependent on how the researcher received the narrative, with the various possible power relations at play. It is, therefore, important that in narrative inquiry work that the researcher constantly presents "supporting evidence and argument" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 476) for the claims that are made.

A further criticism levelled at narrative inquirers is that, in their concern to re-present the meanings that individuals ascribe to their lived experience, they resist what Fox (2008) defines as "a globalised, homogenised, impoverished system of meaning" (p. 341). While recognising that each individual is unique, those such as Josselson (2006) call for the need to "build a knowledge base out of these proliferating studies", challenging that "what we seek in narrative research is some understanding of the patterns that cohere among individuals and the aspects of lived experience that differentiate" (p. 5). In response to this, Andrews (2007) poses the following question and response:

> How does this individual with whom I am speaking reflect wider social and historical changes that form the context of his or her life? I am convinced that if I can listen carefully enough, there is much to learn from every story that one might gather. For society really is comprised of human lives, and if we can begin to understand the framework that lends meaning to these lives, then we have taken the important first step to being able to access the wider framework of meaning that is the binding agent of a culture. (p. 491)

This demonstrates how narrative inquirers can build a knowledge base without relinquishing the respect for the individual voice. In the context of this study, therefore, in listening to the scholarship recipients' accounts of their elite school experiences, it was important to be sensitive to what they were prepared to divulge, in order to elicit authentic responses to the questions posed.

Cautions of using a narrative inquiry approach

Partly in light of these criticisms, and partly in response to Bourdieu's (1999) call for reflexivity on the part of the researcher, there are three cautionaries in relation to this research and its use of the narrative inquiry approach.

The first of these refers to what Maxwell (1992) refers to as interpretive validity and relates to the transformative nature of experience-centred narratives. There is a risk that researchers become overly focused on what constitutes a 'good' human story, and thereby begin to make value judgements about stories, which in turn can skew the validity of the research (Squire, 2008). As Maxwell (1992) cautions,

> Accounts of participants' meanings are never a matter of direct access, but are always constructed by the researcher(s) on the basis of participants' accounts and other evidence. (p. 290)

A second caution concerns the sequencing nature of narratives. Narrative research remains defined by an 'ordering of particularities'. But, as Andrew *et al.* (2008) point out:

> Narrative research is a multilevel, interdisciplinary field and any attempt to simplify its complexity would not do justice to the richness of approaches, theoretical and understandings and unexpected findings that it has offered. (p. 28)

A final caution is linked to both the focus on a 'good story' as well as that of the sequencing of the narrative. If researchers neglect the inquiry aspect of narrative inquiry, they run the risk of romanticising the individual (Kim, 2016). Given these cautions, it is important that throughout the research process the researcher makes every effort to suspend any possible forms of judgement.

Having outlined the rationale for an experience-centred narrative inquiry approach, the discussion now moves to the semi-structured interview as the tool used for the gathering of the narratives in the research process.

The interview as a social relationship

The most appropriate tool for the gathering of data for this thesis was deemed to be the semi-structured interview because of its ability to elicit dialogue, explanations and musings around a series of questions. As Seidman (2006) observes:

> The purpose of interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses … [but rather at] the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (p. 9)

Freebody (2004) explains that interviews can provide insights into individual's "constructed social worlds and into the ways in which they convey those constructions in the particular interactional setting of the interview" (p. 137).

Bourdieu (1999) cautions that the interview process as a relationship that is always a, "slightly arbitrary *intrusion*", explaining that this social exchange, "implies understanding [of] what can and cannot be said, the forms of censorship that prevent the saying of certain things and the promptings that encourage the stressing of others" (pp. 608-9, italics in original). Furthermore, Bourdieu (1999) points out that there exists an asymmetrical relationship between an investigator and the respondent in an interview relationship, and that this asymmetry is "reinforced by a social symmetry every time the investigator occupies a higher place in the social hierarchy of different types of capital, cultural capital in particular" (p. 609).

In response to these two concerns inherent in an interview relationship, Bourdieu proposes that everything within the interviewer's power must be done to control their effects, or reduce them. One means of doing this is to ensure that an interviewer engages in "*active and methodical listening* … [that] combines a total availability to the person being questioned, [and] submission to the singularity of a particular life history" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 609, italics in original). This includes the use of feedback responses during the course of an interview "such as 'yes,' 'right,' 'of course,' "oh!', as well as the approving nods, looks, smiles and all the information receipts" that signal attention, interest, approval, encouragement and recognition (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 611). Bourdieu (1999) stresses that: "*Placed at the right moment*, [these body or verbal receipts] signal the interviewer's intellectual and emotional participation" (p. 611, italics in original).

Bourdieu (1999) further suggests that:

> Sociologists may be able to impart to interviewees at the greatest social remove a feeling that they may legitimately be themselves, if they know how to show these individuals both by the tone adopted and, most especially, the questions asked, that, without pretending to cancel the social distance separating them … they are capable of *mentally putting themselves in their* place. (p. 613, italics in original)

Bourdieu (1999) is quick to point out that this does not involve the "projection of oneself into the other." (p. 613) Rather, it is:

> [T]o give oneself a *generic and genetic comprehension* of who these individuals are, based on a (theoretical or practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are the product: this means a grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that affect the entire category to which any individual belongs (secondary school students, skilled workers, magistrates, whatever) and a grasp of the conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position and trajectory in social space. (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 613, italics in original)

Bourdieu (1999) thus posits that the interview "can be considered a sort of *spiritual exercise* that, through *forgetfulness of self*, aims at a true *conversion of the way we look at* other people in the ordinary circumstances of life" (p. 614, italics in original). Bourdieu (1999) continues that by offering the respondent,

> an absolutely exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints (particularly of time) that weigh on most everyday interchanges, and opening up alternatives which prompt or authorize the articulation of worries, needs or wishes discovered through this very articulation, the researcher helps create the conditions for an extra-ordinary discourse, which might never have been spoken, but which was already there, merely awaiting the conditions for its actualization. (p. 614-5)

As a final point, Bourdieu (1999) reminds that research involves what he refers to as a "realist construction … True submission to the data requires an act of construction based on practical mastery of the social logic by which these data are constructed" (pp. 617-8). It is these 'acts of construction' - that is, the research processes followed for the gathering, recording, analysis and interpretation of the data for this thesis - that are outlined in the second section of this chapter.

Research Process

This section of the chapter describes the research process of this study, the practical application of the research design and overview of the 'what, where, when, how and with whom' of the data collection. Also included in this section is a description of the data analysis and interpretation processes followed, as well as issues of reliability and validity, generalisability, and ethical considerations pertaining to this research.

Participant selection considerations

The empirical focus of this study is former scholarship students from disadvantaged backgrounds, between the ages of 19 and 24 years, who attended elite South African secondary schools as the recipient of a full scholarship awarded in their Grade 7 year, based upon a pre-determined set of criteria. The original criteria for the awarding of a scholarship are determined donor foundations, and almost exclusively include the conditions of 'historically disadvantaged' and 'demonstrated financial need' as their starting points for the application and selection process. All the research participants had completed their schooling at least one full year prior to the interview in order to allow for the reflective hindsight and perspectives that may come with some time and distance.

Two foundations were chosen from which to draw the sample of participants for this study. Both foundations are situated in the Cape Town area and were thus chosen as a matter of convenience. As McDonnell, Lloyd-Jones and Read (2000), "the design of any research study is influenced not just by theoretical but by pragmatic considerations" (p. 384). Foundation 1 operates on a national scale, with partner schools in four of South Africa's nine provinces. And Foundation 2 operates exclusively with schools based in Cape Town.

Purposive sampling was deemed to be the most appropriate means of selecting the participants for this study. Purposive sampling strategy is "a strategy in which particular

settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 236). A possible limitation of gathering participants in this manner is that this sample could be regarded as 'a sample of success' only, in that not only did all of the participants included in this study successfully complete their schooling as scholarship students, but each one subsequently enrolled in a tertiary institution, with only one having 'dropped out' of tertiary studies at the time of the interviews.

In terms of the sample size, experience-centred narrative researchers interested in life narratives, tend to use small numbers of interviewees, whilst those interested less in biography and more in narrative themes' commonalities and differences across groups of individuals, tend to use larger interviewee numbers (Squire, 2008). Given that this research falls somewhere in between these two interests, between 15 to 20 interviewees were chosen. This number was sufficiently large enough to provide a balance between male and female respondents, as well as between public and independent schools. The purpose of the interviews was to achieve an intimate understanding of the participants' accounts of their experiences as scholarship students in elite school contexts.

A final pragmatic consideration for sampling was the time that the participants would have available to be interviewed. Following my two pilot interviews a once-off interview session was deemed sufficient.

Participant selection processes

After receiving my Ethical Clearance for the research from the School of Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Cape Town in July 2017, a letter was emailed to the Western Cape Education Department and the two selected foundations, outlining the purpose and nature of my intended research. These letters were a matter of professional courtesy as I did not require permission from these institutions, given that I intended to interview my participants as adults.

Following this, an online questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed which was used to gain access to potential participants. Google Forms were used because of its ease of access, as the URL link of a Google Form can easily be copied and pasted into an email or WhatsApp message. The questionnaire was designed to introduce the purpose of the research, made

reference to the confidentiality of the process, elicited responses about family background, scholarship details, schooling, post-school activities, provided a brief overview of the types of questions that may be asked during the interview, and asked the participants' willingness to participate in the research. It was at the final stage of the questionnaire, and only if the response was positive to the request for an interview, that their personal contact details were requested. However, inadvertently, this method of sample selection contributes to a limitation of my research, in that the sample was partly self-selected. In other words, this research does not include people who were not willing to talk about their elite school experiences, for whatever possible reason.

The preparation of the core and sub-questions used in the interview was guided by a Bourdieusian theoretical framework and the central focus of the study. The questions were framed in a manner that would both invite elaboration and conversation, but at the same time ensure that the responses would not veer too far off-topic. Sub-questions were included if additional prompting of responses was required, or should a participant provide only basic responses to the questions.

The final step in the process was the conducting of pilot interviews. Pilot interviews are a credible means of identifying possible problems with proposed research using a small selection of respondents before the main study is conducted (Struwig and Stead, 2001). The primary intention behind the pilot interviews was to refine and further develop the online questionnaire and research questions through the participants' candid feedback after the interview process. In addition, the pilot interviews provided valuable interview practice.

The technique of purposive snowball sampling was adopted in order to find the participants for the study. A snowball sample is one in which the researcher collects data on a few members of the target population and then asks those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of that population whom they know fulfil the criteria of the study (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). In order to initiate the selection process, the initial two scholarship students identified were asked to forward the online questionnaire to any of their peers who had been scholarship students at other schools. In addition, the director of Foundation 2 agreed to publish the link to the online questionnaire on the social media platform that they use to communicate with their former students. These contacts proved sufficient to, with relative ease, access sufficient participants who fulfilled the study's criteria.

The final size of the selection was twenty participants, with an even split (10 each) between the two foundations, and almost an even split between females (11) and males (9). The racial profile, according to their self-classification as a part of the online questionnaire, was 14 African, 1 Indian and 5 coloured participants. In accordance with the selection criteria for both of the foundations, all the scholarship students came from a background of "demonstrated financial need" (Foundations 1 and 2). In addition, all of the participants were between the ages of 19 to 24 years old at the time of the interview (with the youngest being 19 years 11 months, and the oldest, 23 years 7 months), having successfully completed secondary school between the years 2012-2015. Although not one of the selection criteria, since leaving school, all of the participants had enrolled in tertiary studies - 18 at a university and 2 at a college. At the time of the interviews, all but one of the participants were still currently enrolled at a tertiary institution and in the process of completing their studies. The one exception had left university midway through his first year in order to work full-time. A more extensive participant profile is provided at the beginning of Chapter Five.

The interview process

Interviews were set up with each of the participants either via email or WhatsApp. The majority of the interviews took place face-to-face; however, as five of the participants did not live in Cape Town, their interviews took place over the phone, with one via FaceTime so that we could see each other during the interview. Although it was a little bit more challenging to establish a rapport with these participants than what could have possibly been established face-to-face, the telephonic interviewees seemed to 'relax' into the interview and speak increasingly candidly after the first few minutes. Given this, as the researcher, I was satisfied that the physical distance did not have a significant, negative impact on the interview process.

In order to try to ensure that the interviews were convenient and comfortable for the interviewees, a coffee shop or the restaurant was chosen for the interview. Most participants chose a venue either close to their home or where they were studying. Given Bourdieu's (1999) emphasis on the social relationship of interviews, it is important that the interviewer is mindful of the need to be an active, open-minded and attentive listener by providing encouraging body and verbal responses at the appropriate times, as well as by allowing a measure of flexibility and fluidity in the discussion in line with the principles of gathering inquiry-centred narratives.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded and permission was granted by each participant for the recording as a part of the consent form signed prior to the interview starting (Appendix C). The five telephonic interviewees either emailed this form to me or took a photo of the signed form and sent this to me via WhatsApp.

Immediately after each interview was completed, relatively extensive notes on the interview and reflections on the participants were recorded. These field notes proved to be an invaluable additional source of information for locating each of the participants during the data presentation and analysis phase of the process.

Transcription and storage of data

Although the transcription of interviews is a necessary part of the design process, Bourdieu (1999) notes that there are two constraints present that are often difficult to reconcile. The first is "the constraint of being faithful to everything that came up in the interview", and the second is "the constraints of readability" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 622). Within an interview, there are:

> [H]esitations, repetitions, sentences interrupted and prolonged by gestures, looks, sighs, or exclamations: there are laborious digressions, ambiguities that transcription inevitably resolves, references to concrete situations, events linked to the particular history of a town, a factory, a family, etc. (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 622)

Mindful of this, within the transcription process, care was taken not to replace a word with another without the use of square brackets, and only then if it didn't change the intentional meaning of what was being said, all of the cuts have been indicated with ellipses, and the appropriate use of punctuation (such as an exclamation mark or a question mark denoting the asking of a rhetorical question) and italics have been carefully chosen to capture the expression of the voice at the time.

All recordings and transcriptions were stored using password-protected software. In addition, the recordings were backed up to iCloud, and the transcription notes were saved on OneDrive, both of which are password protected.

Analysis and interpretation of the narratives

The process of data analysis and interpretation converts field texts into research texts. Bourdieu (1999) refers to this process as the "intrusion of the analyst", stating that it is "as difficult as it is necessary" (pp. 623-4). Kim (2016), in writing about the analysis and interpretation specifically of narratives, points out that, "[d]efining, categorizing and assessing the human meanings of experience-centred narratives is a difficult and potentially controversial project", as meaning-making poses many challenges and dilemmas (p. 50). Factors to be kept in mind in this process include: the fact that meaning may not easily be grasped as it is not tangible, or static; narrative researchers are 'at the mercy' of the narrator's recollection or introspection; narratives are context-sensitive and can not to be treated in isolation; and the analysis of narrative data makes use of hermeneutic (interpretative) reasoning (Kim, 2016).

Keeping these challenges in mind, the starting point for the data analysis process was to follow the advice to researchers advanced by Agar (1980) to "read the transcripts in their entirety several times. Immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts" (p. 103). Once this was completed, the text documents were cut and pasted into their respective question categories. This process allowed for the identification of similarities and differences emanating from the interview responses. Squire (2008) emphasises that in experience-centred narrative inquiry, a hermeneutic approach that is aimed at full understanding is important (as opposed to event-centred narratives that focuses on structural analysis). With this in mind, Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral was applied, whereby the four elements typically used in qualitative data analysis, namely codes, categories, patterns and themes, feed into a loop of description, classification and interpretation. The first step in this process - that of coding - attempts to find words or short phrases that can serve as an attribute for a portion of the data. The next step is to find relations between similar codes, and combine these to form a category. Following this is to identify an emerging pattern in each category which can then be built as a theme (Creswell, 2007). By looping through this data analysis process several times, emergent themes were identified that could ultimately provide an interpretation of the findings in light of the literature and the study's research questions. At the same time, however, it was important to bear in mind that there cannot exist an expectation for a single

interpretation to emerge. In narrative analysis and interpretation there can be multiple valid interpretations, multiple narrative 'truths', and impacted upon by the specific contextual landscape, and as such it is necessary to bear in mind that "the hermeneutic circle never closes" (Squire, 2008, p. 50).

In all of these research processes discussed, questions of reliability and validity, generalisability, and ethical considerations need to be brought to the fore in order to ensure the credibility of the research project. It is to these that the discussion now turns.

Reliability, validity, generalisability and ethical considerations

Issues of reliability, validity, generalisability and ethical considerations are evident throughout the previous discussion on this study's research design and processes. What follows is a more specific highlighting of some of the more pertinent points, given their importance.

While the concept of validity is much debated in relation to qualitative research, the approach taken in this study is that validity relates to the trustworthiness of the research findings. Maxwell (1992) identifies five broad categories of validity, namely: descriptive validity, interpretative validity, theoretical validity, generalisability and evaluative validity, with the first three being of particular significance. Descriptive validity pertains to the factual accuracy of the gathering of the research data. To this end, care was taken to record and transcribe the interviews, and include additional descriptive notes written by the interviewer during the process.

Interpretative validity is closely linked to descriptive validity as it refers specifically to the researcher's interpretative analysis of the perspectives of the interviewees, including that of their attitudes and values (Maxwell, 1992). With this in mind, care was taken in this area, with a focus on ensuring that the 'meanings' that the interviewees were conveying was correctly understood. As Maxwell (1992) emphasises, in order to achieve interpretive validity a researcher must consciously, and successfully, suspend their own preconceived characteristics, perspectives and assumptions in order to allow the meanings and interpretations that the interviewees attach to events, behaviours and objects, as well as their beliefs and evaluations thereof, to shine through. Thus, care was taken to listen to the interviewees as they articulated their experiences.

Further effort was made to limit the threat of potential inaccuracy by recording the interviews. The transcripts of the recordings underwent numerous cross-checks to ensure that inflections of speech such as tone, stress, laughter, the pitch of the voices, and pauses during an interview, were accurately included so as to infer accurate meaning.

The third form of validity, theoretical validity explicitly addresses the importance of the theoretical understandings the researcher applies to a given set of interview data. To this end, Maxwell (1992) asserts that theoretical understanding refers to:

> [A]n account's function as an explanation, as well as a description or interpretation, of the phenomena. Theoretical validity is concerned with problems that do not disappear with agreements on the 'facts' of the situation; the issue is the legitimacy of the application of a given concept or theory to established facts, or indeed whether any agreement can be reached about what the facts are. (pp. 291-2)

Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital, and the relationships between these concepts allow for an exploration of the unequal positioning of schools within the field, and the experiences of students moving from one part of the field to another. As such, a Bourdieusian framework provided the means of linking the context of the field with its inequalities to what the recipients experienced in terms of adjustments required to succeed, and what the perceived 'costs' and 'benefits' were for the scholarship recipients, thereby ensuring theoretical validity through the generation of valuable insights for the analysis of the research.

A further challenge of qualitative research is generalisability. The critical point here is that a researcher needs to stay within the research warrant and not to over-claim from findings in a limited study (Maxwell, 1992). With this in mind, it is the theory that helps the process of generalisation from specific instances to broader application.

It became evident when analysing and interpreting the data that these considerations of validity and generalizability formed the ethical basis for a review of the interview data. If the researcher is not aware of this issue, then the results or inferences drawn from the qualitative data could lack validity. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out, an ethical relationship between the researcher and the participant is central to narrative inquiry, as narrative inquiry

by its very nature is relational. Kim (2016) emphasises that good narrative practice requires "ethical practice that involves the need to respect the dignity and welfare of our participants" (p. 103). In other words, ethics is about respectful relationships, and about measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

In terms of consent and access to information, the initial online questionnaire was voluntary. In addition, a summary of the interview questions was included as part of the introduction to the questionnaire so that the type of questions that would be asked were presented up front. Participants were also invited to view the interview questions before the interview. Finally, consent forms were presented, explained and signed at the start of each interview. These forms included providing consent for the interview to be recorded. The forms also stated that a participant could withdraw from this process at any point, with no repercussions.

Care was also taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Each participant has been assigned a pseudonym, and the storage of all recordings of interviews as well as transcription notes are password protected. In addition, care has been taken to ensure the anonymity of the schools and foundations included in this study. The schools attended by the participants have been given alphabetic descriptors (see Appendix D). Likewise, the two foundations in this study are referred to as Foundation 1 and Foundation 2.

Limitations of the study

This study has a number of limitations that need to be highlighted in order to remain faithful to the research warrant. One limitation of the study is that a balance could not be achieved between single-sex and co-educational schools. Whilst the explanation for this lies in the fact that the majority of the foundations' partner schools are single-sex schools, care needed to be taken when analysing the interview data not to treat the sample as representative of all secondary schools. Another limitation to the research is that scholarship graduates were sampled from only two foundations, one of which operates solely in the Western Cape. While the study includes six students who attended schools in other provinces, there still exists some geographical bias in the sample. A further limitation is the interview sample did not include students who had failed or dropped out of school or the scholarship programme. As such, this sample may be regarded as a 'sample of success', a factor that must be kept in mind throughout the study.

Conclusion

As with the participants' in Bourdieu's *Weight of the World* (1999), the intention of the narrative research approach of this study is "to bring to light these things buried deep within the people who experience them - people who are both unaware of these things and, in another sense, know them better than anyone" (p. 621). But in doing so, and in order to reach credible findings that fulfil the requirements of what may be considered 'good research', the following concluding paragraph from Bourdieu's (1999) chapter 'Understanding' is of relevance:

> Sociologists cannot be unaware that the specific characteristic of their point of view is to be a point of view on a point of view. They can re-produce the point of view of their object and constitute it as such by resituating it within social space, but can do so only by taking up that very singular (and, in a sense, very privileged) viewpoint, being obliged to place themselves there in order to be able to take (in thought) all the points of view possible. And it is solely to the extent that they can objectify themselves that they are able, even as they remain in the place inexorably assigned to each of us in the social world, to imagine themselves in the place occupied by their objects (who are, at least to a certain degree, an alter ego) and thus to take their point of view, that is, to understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like them. (pp. 625-6)

In attempting to heed this call, this chapter has described the research design by elaborating its purpose and the data collection strategies used.

The following three chapters of the thesis are the data presentation, analysis and interpretation chapters. These three chapters are presented in three themes that emerged from the data analysis, starting with the scholarship students' accounts of their application and selection process, and their initial entry into an elite secondary school.

CHAPTER FIVE: ENTERING THE FIELD

Introduction

As the first of the three chapters that present and analyse the findings from interview narratives, this chapter introduces the participants and provides an overview of their family and primary school background. In Bourdieusian terms, it provides an understanding of the participants' primary habitus and positioning within the field of education. The chapter includes an overview of the participant's accounts of the rigorous scholarship application and selection process, and some of their initial expectations of what they thought that accepting the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite secondary school would entail.

As will be evident from these reflections, despite most of the participants describing themselves as coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and attending predominantly working-class primary schools, their accounts show that they felt that by being chosen by a foundation to receive the gift of a scholarship, they had not only earned a rightful place at the elite school as a form of a 'reward' for past achievements, but for the most part they believed that they were well-prepared and equipped for what lay ahead. They assumed their selection for a scholarship was a meritocratic recognition of their 'natural gifts', and did not anticipate the power of the 'social gifts' that they came to realise were part of the valued currency in elite schooling. Approaching their new school from their previous schools' position within the field, they were aware of the obvious inequalities in South African schooling, but this awareness did not prepare them for the institutional differences between schools that operate from unequal positions within the field of education as a whole.

The chapter concludes with the participants' descriptions of their initial experiences of entering their respective secondary schools as scholarship students, and their memories of what it was like to be confronted by significant, largely unanticipated, differences between where they had come from and where they now found themselves to be. For the most part, what the participants' accounts show is that they began to compare themselves to their fee-paying peers who appeared comfortable and at ease within the elite school context. In Bourdieusian terms, the participants recall the reality and power of a habitus-field match, and the challenges of engaging in a social game without initially knowing or understanding the

rules and strategies of the field. Many of the participants describe the shocking realisation that they felt at a distinct, and largely unexpected, disadvantage in varied areas of school life, which left them feeling uncomfortable and initially mostly ill at ease within the elite school environment. For the majority of the participants, this discomfort resulted in their initial euphoria at being chosen to receive the gift of a scholarship being replaced, for the most part, by feelings of inadequacy and a lack of competency, for which some blamed themselves as well as their parent(s).

This chapter draws on Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and capital to understand why the participants initially believed that they were equal players entering a level playing field, as well as their deep sense of shock upon entering the field. In effect, what the scholarship recipients discovered was that they possessed "cultural capital … in the wrong currency" (Gewirtz *et al.,* 1995, p. 40). Furthermore, McKinney's (2017) notion of Anglonormativity is used to explain the discomfort that a number of the participants recalled feeling upon realising that their level, as well as their way of speaking, the English language did not match the 'acceptable', albeit arbitrary, standards within the elite school environment.

Earning their place

By way of a brief introduction, a list of interviewees[14] is provided in the tables below. Information about their background is presented in the sections that follow.

Female Participants

Pseudonym	Racial classification	School	Single-sex/co-educational	Attendance	Donor
Amirah	Indian	School A	Girls-only	Day	Foundation 2
Kelly	African	School B	Girls-only	Termly	Foundation 1
Jordyn	Coloured	School C	Girls-only	Day	Foundation 1
Shannon	Coloured	School D	Girls-only	Day	Foundation 2
Yolande	African	School D	Girls-only	Weekly	Foundation 2
Khanyiswa	African	School E	Girls-only	Day	Foundation 2
Natasha	Coloured	School E	Girls-only	Day	Foundation 2
Amanda	African	School F	Girls-only	Weekly	Foundation 1
Lebo	African	School F	Girls-only	Weekly	Foundation 1
Charity	African	School N	Co-educational	Day	Foundation 2
Cebisa	African	School N	Co-educational	Day	Foundation 2

[14] As stated in Chapter Four, pseudonyms have been used for the interviewees in this study in the interests of confidentiality.

Male Participants

Pseudonym	Racial classification	School	Single-sex/co-educational	Attendance	Donor
Mandla	African	School G	Boys-only	Termly	Foundation 1
Vuyo	African	School G	Boys-only	Termly	Foundation 1
John	African	School H	Boys-only	Weekly	Foundation 1
Yusef	Coloured	School I	Boys-only	Day	Foundation 2
Koketso	African	School J	Boys-only	Termly	Foundation 1
Bongani	African	School J	Boys-only	Termly	Foundation 1
Jamal	Coloured	School K	Boys-only	Day	Foundation 2
Siyabonga	African	School L	Boys-only	Termly	Foundation 1
Thabo	African	School M	Co-educational	Day	Foundation 2

The majority of participants in this study grew up in areas that were designated as 'non-white' by the apartheid government under the Group Areas Act of 1950. Just over half of the participants were raised in black townships, three of the participants in what one of them, Jordyn, referred to as a "typical coloured community", while three of the participants were raised in areas that they highlighted as being "predominantly Muslim" (Yusef). A further three of the participants grew up in areas that had been classified as 'whites-only' during apartheid. Two of these, Yolande and John, lived with their respective families in rooms or houses at the back of their parents' employers' properties, and the third, Charity, lived with her mother in a small flat in the southern suburbs of Cape Town because, being of Zambian origin, they felt "safer there" (Charity) than in a township.

A number of the participants referred to their family's low socioeconomic status in their recollections of their upbringing. Yolande and Charity recalled times from their childhood when there was no food in the house, and Siyabonga described the area where he grew up as a place where "public services [are] not working, and trash [is] dumped all over the place." Thabo's family lived with his aunt and uncle as they were "the breadwinners in the family", respectively a domestic worker and a construction worker. Some of the participants described growing up with a parent (or parents) who were employed variously as a refrigeration mechanic, in the security field, and as a teacher or working for the education department. Vuyo, for example, described his family as "middle-income", although he was raised "in a community where there were low-income types of earners."

With the exception of three students, the participants attended a range of primary schools that the participants described as far from wealthy or well-resourced. Charity described her primary school as “disadvantaged” as it consisted of “predominantly blacks and coloured. We had one white boy, yeah, just one!” Thabo attended his local primary school where the language of instruction was almost exclusively isiXhosa. Shannon went to what she described as “a very poor school” that was “predominantly Afrikaans-speaking even though the language of instruction is English.” She further commented, “In my primary school everyone was coloured, and that’s how I perceived the world to be.” Jordyn used the words, “a very basic, normal public primary school” as her description of her former school.

Among the participants, there were three exceptions who did not attend primary schools that could be considered ‘disadvantaged’. Khanyiswa, Amanda and Siyabonga attended schools that had formerly been designated as ‘whites-only’. Khanyiswa attended a public primary school located in a formerly white suburb of Cape Town. She described how, from a young age, she “became used to being one of only two or three black kids in a class” (Khanyiswa). Amanda went to a school in an “upmarket [former white] suburb”, where her mother worked as a cleaner at a local sports club. She recalled that her mother “always said that she would rather let me travel and I’d go to good schools than just go to schools that are in my area.” (Amanda). Siyabonga was the only participant who attended an independent primary school as “a bursary student”.

Regardless of their home and schooling circumstances, all the participants felt that they were exceptional in some way or another in their primary schools. A number of participants spoke about their reputation for being a high academic achiever. Thabo and Jordyn described themselves as the “smartest kid” in their respective schools, Natasha stated that she “excel[led] at school” and was “just used to being awarded for everything”. John recalled that he was “one of the top achievers”, and Kelly was in the “top five” in her grade. Shannon received “eleven awards at the end of my [Grade 7] year!” She described her extended family as “valuing success”, and at gatherings, her aunts and uncles “would put my report on a massive card - A3 presentation” as they were so proud of her. Jordyn described herself as possessing a very positive attitude toward her academic work:

> I was very involved [at school], and I knew at the time I wanted to be a plastic surgeon or something like that. I always wanted to be something different …

> I think my ideas kind of stood out. It wasn't *how much* I had to say; it was more of *what* I said.

Likewise, Bongani recalled that he always had an "achiever mind-set", a fact that he attributes to his "love [of] reading" when he was in primary school, and growing up in a home where there were "books and books and books on my bookshelf."

Some of the participants also referred to their leadership and sporting skills beyond the classroom. Bongani was the deputy head boy, Shannon was both head girl and captain of the tennis team, Vuyo "played rugby at the highest level" in his primary school, and Jordyn and Koketso mentioned that they were known for being a good tennis and cricket player respectively. Lebo referred to herself as "an all-rounder, you know: academics were good, sports was good, leadership was good!"

In addition, a few of the participants made specific reference to their language competencies, and more specifically their proficiency in English, as a skill that they felt helped them to stand out in their family and school. Kelly made a point of saying that she thinks that she could always speak English well, stating "luckily, languages come easily to me". Both John and Amanda recalled that their proficiency in English was something that they were proud of as children, as they felt that it distinguished them within their respective families. John declared that his home language was English as he grew up living next to an American family, although at a later stage in the interview he commented that his "home language - at least the language that my mom and dad speak - is Tswana and Sepedi." It is clear from this comment that he chose to identify with English rather than the languages spoken in his home. Likewise, Amanda recalled that she also always regarded herself as being different:

> Most of the time my family always thought I was a coconut because I speak … I had a very fluent English tone in comparison to the rest of them [her family]. … And that is probably because I went to a 'white nursery school', as they put it.

A number of the participants also referred to the support that they had received from their families and communities and which they felt had helped them to develop confidence within themselves, thereby playing a role in positioning them strongly as potential scholarship candidates. Mandla described his family as "supportive", and both Amirah and Jordyn referred

to their families as “close-knit”. Siyabonga grew up “surrounded by the love” of his mother, aunts and grandmother, all of whom he described as being “strong matriarchal figures”. Lebo described growing up in “a loving home”, and recalled that when she was in primary school her father “was regarded as *that* black parent that supported all the black kids because he was always there. So, he was the father to all the black kids.”

For some of the participants, the support they received included that of their wider community. Lebo had a “spiritual mother” in addition to her own parents who acted as her trusted mentor, Yusef and Amirah both made a point of emphasising that they grew up within strong Muslim communities, and Kelly’s memories of her favourite Sunday pastimes growing up were when they had a large Sunday lunch to which a number of people were invited, and then “everyone goes to Church” (Kelly) together. Shannon described her support as coming from her school friends as she was “quite popular at school and … was the ‘go-to’ person.”

What the participants have described through these reflections, is what they felt made them ‘stand out’ amongst their peers. In Bourdieusian terms, the participants are describing forms of cultural capital that they felt they possessed prior to entering the elite school field. These included various skills and attributes, academic, sporting, leadership and linguistic abilities, as well as a particular attitude to their school work, having access to books, and the support and encouragement of their family and community. This accumulation of recognised symbolic capital largely explains why their parents, or themselves, had the confidence to apply for a scholarship to attend a secondary school that was regarded, in Amirah’s words, as “better than the one that my [primary school] friends were going to”. As such, it is evident that they saw themselves as being well-placed in terms of what they thought was required for school success. For the most part, the scholarship students therefore approached the scholarship application and selection process confident in their own abilities, especially when compared to that of their peers, and ready to prove that they had earned their place as a scholarship student in an elite secondary school.

Ready, set, go

This section discusses the rigorous scholarship application and selection process that the participants went through in order to be awarded a scholarship. Included is a discussion on how the participants and their families and communities responded to the news of the

students being awarded a scholarship to attend an elite school. As outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, both the foundations included in the study, annually receive as many as 8 000 to 10 000 applications from which they select approximately 36 to 50 candidates to receive a full scholarship to attend an elite secondary school. The selection process for both foundations takes place in stages and includes the completion of an application form, the writing of an entrance assessment, an interview, and a weekend camp. From start to finish the process can take up to 11 months, and candidates are informed whether their scholarship application has been successful by midway through their Grade 7 year (the last year of primary school in the South African school system and the year prior to students entering secondary school).

Almost all of the interviewees referred to just how challenging and competitive they recalled the application and selection process to be. Most of the participants felt that the process had a negative effect on their confidence at the outset. Mandla stressed that it took him "days … days" to fill out the application forms, and Charity remembered that the hall in which they wrote the entrance exam was "jam-packed" with Grade 7s who were "probably more clever than me". Kelly recalled that the assessments were "just horrible", and stated afterwards to her older sister that "I don't know why they do that to kids!" Similarly, Shannon described her experience as follows:

> There was one section that I didn't know how to do. It was about percentages and … I didn't know how percentages work at school. And I was freaking out because it was the worst thing I had ever written. In primary school, you don't write longer than an hour, and we had three hours of writing!

In the interview stage of the process, Mandla related that he felt "overwhelmed … by how foreign everything was … [as] I had never done this – an interview. I didn't even know what an interview was!" Jordyn described a similar response in relation to the camp they had to attend as part of the application procedure:

> It was just so new to me. … I'd never experienced anything like that at that age. There were just so many kids that were so enthusiastic and so smart and confident and driven, and I was … like, 'Wow! Where am I?'

In Bourdieusian terms, the participants are describing the realisation that the new education field required and valued different forms of capital and that "the overall volume of the capital they possess and … the composition of their capital" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724), which had positioned them as strong players in their primary schools, was in effect insufficient or in the "wrong currency" (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995, p. 40) within the elite school context. For many of them, for example, this was the first time that they were expected to know how to work with percentages, or write a long exam, or respond in an interview situation. In addition, over the course of the process, they encountered peers who appeared to be just as academically strong, and as confident, as they were, resulting in a feeling of inadequacy for some.

Having said this, however, once they were informed that they had been successfully chosen as scholarship recipients, they described once more feeling affirmed that they were, indeed, exceptional. As Koketso declared: "Apparently there were thousands that applied, and only 8 of us were selected!" And after Amirah described the hall in which she wrote the entrance assessment as containing "loads of people … I think it was probably a thousand people!", she jubilantly recalled: "I think the total [final] intake was only 27!"

This self-affirmation was further strengthened by their respective family and community responses to their success. Shannon remembered that her teachers made "a big deal of it" at her primary school by announcing her achievement "from the stage" in assembly. Mandla stressed that at his primary school it was "a massive, massive, massive thing ... I was the first one from my school ever to get it [the scholarship]!" As a result, he recalled being "on a high" for the last half of his Grade 7 year as he was "just riding this wave" of his newfound "fame" within his school and community. Although Bongani admitted that at first, he didn't quite grasp the significance of what it all meant, the positive reaction from his friends proved to be a turning point:

> I knew of [School J], but I wasn't … like, wild about it. … [But] when my *friends* heard I was going to [School J], they went crazy and such! I didn't know that they [School J] was as good as they were. … Only *then* did I start to get excited.

In addition to this elevated status described by some of the participants, many recalled feeling increasingly excited when they started to realise the extent of the financial support that was included in the scholarship. Koketso recalled:

> They were going to pay for everything! They were going to pay for tuition, they were going to pay for your boarding fees, and they were going to pay for stationery and books, [and] sports equipment. *And* we were given an allowance every month as well, so definitely you were sorted in terms of financial resources. They even gave us bedding, I think. So basically, we really didn't need much.

This feeling of being "sorted" was echoed by Jamal, who remembered what it was like to unpack his new uniform in the week before he started secondary school:

> I came home with this big, big bag and I looked at it - a suitcase size - and this is all the clothing and things you need to be at [School K]. And I'm like, "What! I just know grey pants and a white shirt!" But now I had full summer uniform, full winter uniform, the official [School K] towel, the official [School K] tracksuit, the official [School K] swimming gear, training gear. I felt like a prince! It was surreal … I had a *suitcase* of school clothes!

This feeling of excitement as they prepared to start secondary school was shared by the majority of the participants. Amanda, for example, looked forward to spending time in the school's theatre which she described as "really cool … really wonderful, especially the lights." Kelly loved the idea of greater freedom and independence: "I was excited, 'cos you're thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to get to go away from home! I'm gonna be a big girl! I'm going to live on my own!'" Lebo was excited by the wide range of sporting opportunities offered by her new school: "Oh goodness, I'm going to get to play more sports! There's going to be more options!" Likewise, Koketso's attention was firmly focused on the well-kept cricket field: "Suddenly I had an interest to [be] there!" Khanyiswa anticipated easily being able to get along with people in secondary school as she was going to an all-girls' school, where she thought she would find a "sense of sisterhood". Others, like Cebisa, made friends with fellow scholarship candidates in the second half of her Grade 7 year and were delighted when they heard that a few of them were going to be attending the same school together. As Cebisa recalled: "It was a … 'I have my friends with me so let's go and do this!' … thing. 'Let's go and do this high school thing and see where it goes!' … It was exciting!"

What these accounts reveal is that despite experiencing some doubts about their abilities during the rigorous application and selection process, ultimately all of the participants felt well-prepared and equipped for their new secondary school and the promise of possibilities and opportunities that lay ahead of them. None of them expressed a clear sense of what accepting the gift of a scholarship would entail, apart from the vague promises of increased independence, access to facilities such as sports fields and a theatre, and an opportunity to make new friends. As Mandla declared, "I was so ready to go and be a part of this new magical, massive place that I'd never seen!"

Shock of the elite

Jordyn recalled feeling quite "overwhelmed" when she first arrived at her new school. This was because she felt like she was "in a movie, 'cos it's such a beautiful school. It's honestly so stunning." Likewise, Yolande recalled:

> Oh, I remember going into the school, and they had all these white walls. All the girls were in neat dresses and sitting on the lawn, and I was like, 'Oh my God! This is like another world. Wow!' … it was almost something from a movie scene. … Honestly, my eyes were wide open! It looked … perfect. … The whole thing is a complete culture shock. It was a complete culture shock for me, and I struggled at the beginning, adjusting to that.

The culture shock that many of the participants recalled experiencing went far beyond their reaction to the physical environment that they had entered. The most shocking aspect of this experience for Cebisa was the significantly higher academic standards that she encountered, in comparison to that which she was accustomed: "Most definitely I was not used to the idea of getting less than 80s! … It's a different playground, and *everyone* [else] is on a different level of understanding and learning." Similarly, after noting that he enjoyed a high level of status in his primary school for being a "top student", Mandla described his first two terms of secondary school as "an absolute disaster", as academically he "struggled … struggled!" Jamal also experienced a significant drop in his results: "I went from 80s, 90s in Grade 7, to 40s and 50s in Grade 8. Whereas the [School K] Junior [the feeder primary school] kids were doing well." Likewise, Charity found the difference she experienced between herself and the other students, especially challenging:

> The other kids were smarter and were ready, coming from good primary schools. So in terms of being intimidated … I think I took a step back because I felt that maybe … not that I didn't think that I deserved being there … but I could tell there was a difference.

What Charity articulated here is her realisation that what she had come to accept as a "basic, normal education" up to that point in her life, was inadequate in comparison to the standard to which most of her fee-paying peers who had attended an elite primary school were accustomed. As she further stated:

> I remember my friends [in secondary school] and I were always discussing … how they have been treated since they were in Grade 1 and Grade 2. They were used to the system - the study patterns, discipline, and how to study. And I know that I didn't have that quite a lot. It wasn't a routine for me, and I didn't grow up in that routine. That was a disadvantage on my part.

The disadvantage narrated by Yusef related to his discovery that there was a far higher sporting standard in his new school to that which he was accustomed to. He found this both unexpected and challenging:

> I played club rugby and club cricket [as a child], but the level of that … it was *completely* different [at his elite secondary school]. [The level is] much higher … like ten times higher! You come in, and you go to sports trials, and the people just wipe the floor with you. It's crazy!

Likewise, Shannon played tennis at primary school and received numerous awards for her ability, but she quickly realised that the level of her skills "meant nothing at [School D]". This is largely because at her new school, "… every girl had a family that did tonnes of different things, and everyone had played tennis socially." Realising that she was "baseline from everyone else" in this sport, she recalled that she chose to play squash instead of tennis. This was a sport at which she excelled, to the extent that she, "… played for Western Province and I became the captain of the Western Province team." However, she remembered downplaying this achievement at school, saying in a dismissive manner to anyone who mentioned her provincial status: "But, who would play squash!"

Another difference highlighted by the interviewees relates to language. Thabo described the following experience in one of his first classes:

> The first day we had to say something, and I said something, but they couldn't understand what I was saying because my English at that time was not very good. So the teacher asked me where I went to school, and [then] she was like, 'Oh, where is that?' Then I told them that I was from [a township on the outskirts of Cape Town] and I remember the room was silent, and then they laughed.

Jordyn reported feeling self-conscious about her accent, "as people just spoke so differently, so eloquently" in her new school. And Natasha recalled feeling "deeply uncomfortable" when she discovered that "… even the coloured [School E] girls [who came from the preparatory school] would speak properly … speak similar to the white [School E] girls." For Koketso, it wasn't as much his accent as his choice of words that assumed a level of significance in his elite school: "Vocabulary was very important, even for just minor things … [and if you] made mistakes and things like that, you will stand out … they will always pick you out."

Yusef identified one of the most surprising differences he experienced was the way he was expected to behave within the elite school space:

> I went to a Muslim [primary] school, and so the whole system was different … so the way you greet teachers in the morning was different. Where you say 'morning ma'am', and 'morning, sir'.

Mandla found the different cultural expectations relating to behaviour hard to accept, as they ran counter to how he had been taught by his parents to treat people senior to himself. He described an example of this:

> Even from my own culture … black people … if you look at an adult straight in the eyes that is something that is rude, you know. But when I got there [to the school on his first day] and I wasn't looking at them [a senior boy] in the eye, I got whiplashed because I was being cheeky. 'Look at me in the eye, boy! What do you think this is?'

Similarly, Lebo recalled finding "cultural differences" difficult to get used to, such as calling her (white) friends' mothers by their first name: "No, I can't call you that. … I have to call you 'mom-something', [and] not just call you by your name!"

Khanyiswa encountered a difference with regards to food:

> This one time she [her friend] brought samp [crushed maize] to school. And they [the other girls] were like, 'Oh my word. What is that?' I was like, 'It's samp.' But at the same time I just felt like, 'What's wrong with [samp] … I mean, you bring pesto! The first time I heard about pesto was in high school. I was … what is this? This green thing in pasta?' Why would you …? And then on top of it, you put it in bread! But then … me bringing samp was a weird thing? So then [I] had to bring sandwiches … I had to.

Another difference described by some of the participants was their school uniform policy. Yusef had to adjust to wearing a blazer and shorts, both of which were not customarily worn by the boys who attended secondary schools in the area where he lived. He described this experience as "kinda challenging" because,

> you're coming from a school that wears blazers and wears shorts, and you go into an area where that's foreign to these people. … [A]s you come home, and you just step out of the car and you see someone that you know, and they just give you a weird look, and they're like, 'Oh, that's shorts, and that's a blazer, and I'm in my school pants, my long pants and my tracksuit top.' And then, you just feel weirded out, and you're like, 'I'm still your friend. Like, nothing's changed.' Ja, ja, ja [yes, yes, yes] … so that was a challenge, definitely. One hundred percent.

Amirah discussed her choice to adhere to the uniform code even though it ran contrary to what was considered culturally 'acceptable' within her community:

> At the time, I wore hijab … I wore it like a scarf. Our [primary] school allowed it. … [and] when I walked in [to the interview at her new school], I was wearing it, and they said … they were nice about it, but they were just like, 'You wouldn't be allowed to wear it here.' So then I was … I don't really have a

> problem not wearing it because it is an all-girls school … I wouldn't kind of *have* to wear it.

As is evident from the above descriptions, the participants encountered a range of surprising, and at times shocking, differences upon entering their elite school. Not only was the physical environment of the school very different to that which many of them were used to, but for the most part, they were also faced with significantly higher academic and sporting standards to those which existed in their respective primary schools. In addition, many of the participants recalled differences in how they spoke, how they were expected to behave, and what was considered acceptable to eat and to wear within this new environment. For many of the participants, the challenges that they faced by encountering these differences were heightened by the fact that their fee-paying peers seemed to know, almost instinctively, what was required of them:

> The foreignness hit me hard because, obviously, it was an experience that I've never had. A lot of it comes with assumptions - assumptions you know that you can do this, you can do that. And having come from … as I did, from my background, I didn't know half of what was going on. I was confused half the time. And so on the very first day, I thought, "No, I want to go home!" (Mandla)

> I can't really put my fingers on something specific, but it's just the fact that [I was now with] a group of people that all acted in the same way. Like, I came from a primary school that everyone acted in the same way, and I was the same as that. And I could relate to everyone on some level. … But then going into high school where there was a group of people that had so much in common, but superficially they were nothing like me, you know. (Shannon)

> Everyone seems to know everything, and they seem to know how to go around things. Or they think about things differently - they have different views … you could see some people are privileged. And you could see the advantages that they have over you. … What else do they know that I don't? (Charity)

Charity's question reveals that in addition to feeling overwhelmed by the experience, she also felt a sense of inadequacy. On the whole, participants' response to their feelings of inadequacy, or discomfort and not quite belonging, was to blame themselves or their parents.

Yolande's feelings of recrimination were specifically directed against her mother, who worked as a domestic worker:

> I remember having this conversation with a friend of mine saying, 'Why didn't my mom work harder? Why didn't she become something like all these parents?'

Likewise, Mandla recalled blaming his parents for the fact that he could never fit into the image of a "typical [School G] boy", as his mother didn't volunteer "in the tuckshop … [and] wasn't there at all the derbies and … the galas."

Natasha and Khanyiswa verbalised their feelings of inadequacy through their descriptions of a "typical student" at their respective schools:

> A stereotypical [School E] girl? So that would be your tall, blonde, athletic, and privileged. You know, the kid who got 90s, and she's a coach and into sport. (Natasha)

> She had literally blond hair, blue eyes … she had to be this all-achiever girl. But essentially she was tall, with long hair, skinny. … She had to do everything. She had to be an overachiever in everything. (Khanyiswa)

In addition, the participants pointed to material differences that they experienced, and the impact of these differences on their schooling experience that their privileged peers did not have to consider or experience because of their families' socioeconomic status. Khanyiswa stated, for example, when describing the 'perfect' [School E] girl, that "the earliest she woke up was half-past six, or seven o'clock." This is significant as Khanyiswa had to leave her home that was situated in a township on the outskirts of the city very early in the morning in order to reach the suburb in which her school is located; whereas, clearly in Khanyiswa's mind 'this girl' lives close to the school. Likewise, Thabo had to catch four buses and travel a distance of

over 30 kilometres to get to school. He had to wake up at 04:30 for this daily commute as he was determined to get there on time as his school "did not tolerate lateness".

The overwhelming theme that emerged during the interviews, in response to the shock of the differences they encountered, was a sense of not belonging in this elite space. Yolande, for example, recalled asking herself, "Am I going to fit in here? This is too perfect for me!", and Natasha felt that "I don't belong. I felt so uncomfortable." Shannon also sensed that she "didn't fit any of their requirements [because she] sounded different [and] looked nothing like them because of my hair and darker complexion." And after seeing a famous media personality dropping off her daughter on Thabo's first day of school, he remembers thinking:

> Her kid would sit next to me in class! … And I was like, 'Okay, rich people come here. The famous people come here. Celebrities come here. And then there's me.' What can I say? It was quite intimidating because I felt like I didn't fit.

It took Jamal a bit longer to realise what he came to regard as his "place in the school":

> But sometime in the first two months, I'd say, it sort of hits you … my lunch looks a bit different to these okes [blokes]. The money we're getting for tuck-shop. If I want to play sports, my equipment is looking a bit different to these …. You know what I mean? And then it starts to hit you – hey, I don't actually belong here!

These statements reveal a recognition on the scholarship students' behalf that they felt ill-equipped in terms of how to behave and think within the elite school field. Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital is helpful in explaining the disjuncture experienced by the scholarship recipients as described above. As a brief reminder, for Bourdieu cultural capital refers to a way of thinking and approach to life,

> where the expected behaviours, expected language competencies, the explicit and implicit values, knowledge, attitudes to and relationship with academic culture required for success in school are all competencies which one class brings with them to school. (Henry *et al.*, 1990, p. 233)

Bourdieu (1985) further states that social fields such as the field of elite schooling "can be described as a multi-dimensional space of positions" where individuals within the field are positioned "in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital (p. 724). Mills and Gale (2010), referencing Vincent and Martin (2002), state: "Everyone possesses cultural capital, but in itself, it is arbitrary, with value being ascribed to particular forms (and not others) within particular fields" (p. 67). In other words, the volume and capital that is valued by social fields may significantly differ.

Thus, what this chapter highlights is that despite the scholarship students being afforded the gift of a full scholarship - what Bourdieu (1986) would refer to as a form of economic capital the cultural capital they possessed, and which had positioned them as strong candidates in the scholarship selection process, was in fact "cultural capital … in the wrong currency" (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995, p. 40). The accolades that positioned the scholarship recipients strongly in their working-class communities and schools, as stated by Bourdieu (1973, 1976) were not necessarily transferable in the same measure to another part of the field as "high-status cultural capital" (Henry *et al.*, 1990, p. 233).

Another significant aspect discussed in this chapter is issues of language and what the participants' account shows that they felt was the 'appropriate' form of English to use within the elite school field. Bourdieu (1977b) asserts that schooling, as one of the most important sites for social reproduction, is also one of the key spaces "which imposes the legitimate forms of discourse and the idea that discourse should be recognised if and only if it conforms to the legitimate norms" (p. 650). As referenced in Chapter 1 of this thesis, McKinney's (2017) research has shown that English, and more particularly 'standard' English, is the dominant language ideology in many South African schools – a notion she refers to as Anglonormativity. McKinney (2017) asserts that this dominance is a consequence of the belief that within the schooling system (and beyond), those who speak in the "ethnolinguistic repertoires of Whiteness" are more likely to be heard or given a voice (p. 82).

Bourdieu (1990b, 1992) reminds us that judgements about what is considered either 'right' or what is 'wrong' within a social field context, is in fact arbitrary in nature, as there is no 'proper' way to speak or to 'be' in the world. It is the dominant classes of the field who get to determine what is considered to be an acceptable accent, or choice of words, for example. However, as

is evident from the scholarship students' narratives, their feelings about what was 'acceptable' language or types of behaviour, placed significant pressure on the scholarship students to try to change how they behaved, spoke, dressed, what they ate, and their approach to academic studies and their level of sporting skills. In short, many of the very attributes, or forms of cultural capital, that had positioned them as strong players in their primary schools.

Conclusion

What this chapter has discussed is the initial entry of the participants into the elite school field. As stated by the interviewees in the first section, *Earning their place*, they were considered to be exceptional students during their primary school years. Thus, they felt equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities or, in Bourdieusian terms, the requisite cultural capital, to be successful in the elite school field.

Similarly, in the second section, *Ready, set, go,* as the participants prepared to enter the new school, after their initial experience of how difficult the application and selection process was, they described feeling affirmed as they were chosen out of thousands of students who applied. In addition, they felt supported by the economic capital endowed on them in the form of the fairly extensive scholarship that they had been awarded. In this section the scholarship students' entry into secondary school is largely presented as an exciting new adventure as the participants felt ready for the requirements of the elite school field.

Moving to the section, *Shock of the elite*, the discussion highlights how the participants' account reveal their realisation that the elite school field operated on different forms of capital, and that they, in effect, possessed cultural capital 'in the wrong currency' (Gewirtz *et al.,* 1995). This notion explains their feelings of inadequacy, resulting in some of the participants blaming both themselves and their families. Thus, after their initial elation of being accepted as scholarship students, the participants' narratives reveal that they quickly came to question whether they belonged, or would ever belong, in an elite school environment.

CHAPTER SIX: FITTING INTO THE 'NEW NORMAL'

Chapter Five provided a discussion on the students' entry into the new school field and describes how the scholarship students felt that they were initially well-equipped and positioned to be successful in their new school. What they quickly came to realise was that their particular forms of cultural capital were not necessarily valued within the elite school field. In this chapter, the focus of the discussion moves to how the scholarship students, following this realisation, found strategic ways to navigate the new space, in order firstly to feel a sense of belonging, and secondly to improve their position within the field.

As referenced in Chapter Three, it is Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital that are central in understanding an individual's social practices, or as Bourdieu states, the 'logic of practice'. Bourdieu uses the analogy of 'playing the game' to provide insight into the complex interactions that take place in a social field. This analogy is of particular relevance in this chapter as it enables one to account for the participants' experiences of the new school field and the adaptations that they made to try to fit in. In addition, this chapter discusses the strategic actions that the participants adopted to begin to improve their position within the elite school field.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section, *Making the 'required' adjustments*, provides a discussion on what the participants' narratives show about how they, albeit to varying degrees and levels of success, employed 'practical sense' in order to develop a 'feel for the game'. Bourdieu refers to this as developing a "practical mastery of the logic or of the immanent necessity of a game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 61). This involved the participants finding ways to assimilate into what they perceived to be the acceptable 'norms' of the elite school field.

The second section in this chapter, *Finding their place*, outlines the participants' emerging, more conscious focus, on becoming strategic players. Here the discussion highlights how the participants, through exposure over time to the elite school field, were able to develop an emerging "mastery acquired by experience of the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 61). Combined, these two sections show how the scholarship students began to develop a feel for the game of elite schooling.

Making the 'required' adjustments

The accounts of the participants revealed that on entering the elite school field, for the most part, the scholarship students quickly came to realise that what was considered acceptable in terms of behaviour, ways of speaking, dressing, and even what food to eat, was significantly different to what they were used to. Without exception, all of the participants described how, in response to this realisation, they consciously tried to change aspects of themselves in order to feel a sense of belonging within the new school environment.

For many of the girls in the study, changing to fit in largely involved trying to conform physically to what they perceived to be the expectations of an elite school environment. For Khanyiswa, this meant trying to change aspects of herself:

> As you go into … Grade 8, Grade 9 … you're just saying: 'Hey, I just want to fit in! I know I'm black, but I'm just going to try to conform in a sense, or try to lessen my blackness, or not become too black to other people … like, to *them*.'

> Having a bum is a problem! You had to look *this* way. You had to change yourself. If you can't change the colour of your skin, you have to change something of your features to look white. And … a lot of us [black girls] were doing that. [And] as much as now you're thinking, 'Ah, I just want to lose weight for me.' You weren't losing weight for yourself! You're surrounded by these skinny girls, and you're told that 'Okay, you're not good enough. You don't look a certain way.' … I needed to look skinny!

As is evident, Khanyiswa felt immense pressure, either real or perceived, to change her appearance. Her narrative also shows that she felt pressure from her peers to wear her hair in a particular way:

> [Using a false, high voice] 'You don't have long silky hair. So, therefore, you need to do this to your hair.' Or, 'You need to have long hair. You have to have braids.' If you have your natural hair, it's just … like, 'Wow! Like, why are you doing this now?' It was a violent thing!

Likewise, Shannon also described how she tried to conform to what she perceived the 'norms' to be, by changing the way that she wore her hair:

> My hair is naturally curly, you know, and I used to straighten it … it was okay at primary school; sometimes people knew that I have curly hair and sometimes I had straight hair, and that was fine. But then when I got to high school, I felt within myself pressure … to straighten it more often.

However, not all of the participants' narratives made reference to physical changes that they felt they needed to make in order to fit in. For Yolande, conforming to what she perceived to be the accepted 'norms of the field' meant shifting her attitude and her behaviour to win favour with those whom she described as "the cool kids":

> I kind of changed my personality. Like, the way I behaved to kind of like fit in with them. … Before Grade 9, I [had] never had alcohol [before]. [But now] we would drink ... And I had this persona where I was, like, 'I don't care.' Suddenly I had this 'I don't care attitude' because *they* had this 'I don't care' attitude.

Yolande recalled that these shifts included not doing her school work, being rude to a particular teacher, and bunking a school chapel service, "even though I loved going to church".

Some of the boys of the study talked about feeling a need "to become one of them … in order to survive" (Vuyo). What this meant to Koketso was that "you definitely needed to be strong and confident", while Siyabonga described feeling the need to reflect the culture of his new school, which he regarded as being characterised by the "constant beefing up of internalised masculinity". Discussing how he tried to fit in, Siyabonga described his response to the following incident that took place in a class in his first year of secondary school:

> A lot of things [words] were being thrown around. Lots of common things like, 'You live in a shack!' And lots of things asked in [a black] accent. … So I realised they weren't going to stop. So to my deepest regret, I turned around [to the boy behind me] and started making fun of his Asian heritage. So you get into that - you begin this repartee of 'hit and hit back', and it's just this constant level of violence that permeates all interactions.

Another aspect that two of boys discussed in terms of what they felt they needed to change about themselves related to the sport they chose to play. Both Mandla and Bongani described

why they made a decision to switch from playing hockey to rugby, because "hockey is not for real, real men" (Mandla), and "hockey players … [are] looked down upon" (Bongani). Mandla continued by explaining the direct link, as he saw it, between trying to fit in and this decision:

> So … I went and I joined rugby. Because … you're reminded so much of how 'not-the-average' [School G] boy you are, and you are always assimilating [so as] to fit in, to get closer and closer to looking like, '*That* boy … *that's* a good [School G] boy!'

Likewise, Bongani explained his choice to play rugby as follows:

> I was like, 'Cool, I'm going to play rugby. I need to fit into the idea of what a [School J] student is.' … And so in that sense, I let go a bit of who I was to fit in, to assimilate in a [School J] culture.

Reflecting back now as young men, both Mandla and Bongani view their decision as an act of assimilation; however, they both played rugby at school for over three years, even though Mandla "hated it", and Bongani would far rather "go and read a book" than go to rugby practice.

A further significant aspect that the scholarship participants discussed as a practice that they felt they needed to change about themselves in order to fit in related to language and accent. For example, Thabo described his "poor grasp of English" as the biggest challenge that he had to overcome: "At first it was how I speak differently. I didn't feel comfortable with how I spoke English, and I felt I had to change in a certain way."

Khanyiswa recalled that it was not just feeling the need to improve her English that she found challenging, but also being told by her teachers that she shouldn't talk in isiXhosa (her home language) to her Xhosa-speaking friends at school when she was in the presence of English speakers:

> There was a lot of things you had to change to fit in. … It was just very weird for me to not speak [isiXhosa] to a black person. … but I just had to be 'normal'.

However, it was not only her choice of spoken language that Khanyiswa felt that she had to change about herself. She also recalled accepting English-speakers' mispronunciation of her name:

> My name is Khanyiswa, so everyone [at her school] just pronounced it 'Khanyisa', which was just really weird. … Then I started pronouncing my name that way because I was just being, 'Okay, if you're white, I'm just going to accommodate you.'

Likewise, John made the decision to change from using his Sotho name to that of an English name when he started secondary school, as he "became tired of people mispronouncing [his] name." Similarly, Amirah related how, on her first day of secondary school, she walked up to a "big group of white girls sitting down", and she asked if she could sit with them. They agreed and asked what her name was. She described how, after answering them, they responded:

> They were, like, 'Amy!' And from that day, half of the school didn't know my name. They've known me by Amy [ever since]. … It wasn't that they *couldn't* say my name, [but] they found it *difficult* to say my name. So from that day, they called me that.

Other participants described trying to change their accent in order for it to more closely resemble that which they regarded as being more acceptable in their school. Yusef referred to the way that he felt he was expected to speak by his teachers and peers in his elite school as "having to speak more professionally", while Natasha described how she made an effort to adjust her accent,

> … because people were … like, if they ask me to repeat myself I was … put down; it's who I am. But obviously, they are not used to stronger 'R's or … I don't know what it is, but I got to a stage where I … like, I dialled it down a bit.

Shannon also stated that she felt she had to change her accent to fit in:

> One thing is definitely my accent. I changed that a lot. … It was really a conscious thing. There were a few of us that had come from [a] coloured environment, and going to [School D] … I started seeing that in my friends. And then I was like, 'Am I doing that as well?' Yeah, and then people starting

> pointing out that I was doing that as well. Like when we have an oral in class … you'll be like, 'Should you do it normally, or the new way?'

For Shannon, the 'new way' meant consciously making an effort to speak like her white peers in order to more closely match what she perceived to be the acceptable 'standards' of her school.

In addition to changing how they spoke, a number of the participants made reference to the fact that they felt it was necessary at times to choose *not* to speak out, or voice their opinions. Jordyn recalled:

> Going into this new big environment was such a big culture shock for me, and I did excuse a lot of things that I thought were wrong as being part of the culture, you know. So then, I didn't speak out a lot when I saw that things were wrong because I thought that this is how things are here, and I must accept it, and I must get used to how things work around here before I say anything.

Mandla noted that his decision to stay silent was linked for him directly to the fact that he was at the school on a scholarship:

> It's very, very difficult as a scholarship child anywhere at school to criticise anything, to even say anything. Because I always felt that I had really no say, because I was here [on a scholarship] … I needed to be grateful. ... And I can't complain because where would I be, you know? I wouldn't be at this school if it weren't for a scholarship and everything.

Likewise, Siyabonga recalled being very conscious about not gaining a reputation as "an angry black boy", and Khanyiswa recognised that because she was there on a scholarship, she could not afford to be the one,

> who's always sassy or fighting … you have to just be in a politically correct way. You have to control yourself. … You couldn't be just like a normal girl in a school because you're worried that you got a scholarship, you know your parents are not gonna afford this, and so you have to essentially conform.

Likewise, Cebisa described staying silent even when she felt personally challenged by comments that she felt were wrong:

> It was mostly when it came to issues of teachers' sort of having racialised comments that were unnecessary in class. But also now you're thinking, 'I can't say much' … okay, I want to raise something about what you're saying, but also I'm constantly reminded that I'm lucky to be here ... So you hold things that you want to say because you say, 'I don't want to get into trouble otherwise I'll lose my scholarship.'

Yolande also expressed feeling in a "very scary" position: "Oh my God, what if something happens and it [the scholarship] gets taken away from me? Or [School D] says, 'No, we don't want *her* anymore.'" All of these comments are a reference to the vulnerable position within their schools that these scholarship students felt that they occupied.

A related theme to that of staying silent, or not complaining, was a conscious decision to conceal aspects of their backgrounds. Jordyn recalled that she was "… very conscious at first of who I was and how much do I actually expose of myself to new friends, 'cos it felt just so different here." As a result, she:

> … [K]ind of put back who I really was, where I came from. Like, nobody really knew where I was from, which school I was from. So I think in Grade 8, Grade 9, I was really trying to fit in and I just wanted to be a part of all of that, you know? I think I just wasn't really staying true to who I really was 'cos I wanted to fit in so badly.

Koketso made a conscious decision not to discuss his home life with anyone other than his two closest friends at school:

> Sometimes it was hard because during my time at [School J] when I went home at times we had to visit our homeland, [and my family] made me partake in some household rituals. … However, I think I handled it pretty well. No one actually needed to know. No one would actually be able to tell that I was going through such a thing in my life. I think I was able to put on a face

> that was very convincing. I only shared my story with two people that I trusted at that time.

Similarly, Yusef, Natasha and Amirah all recalled that even though they were day scholars at their respective schools, they didn't invite their secondary school friends to their home. Yusef stated:

> Literally, I can count on one hand how many people came to my house during my entire school career. … I don't think I was ashamed … Oh, wait! Maybe I was … [but] now I'm not! Back then, I was! … I would go to their houses, and they were these massive houses in [an affluent Cape Town suburb], and I would just be like, 'Sjoe, this was nothing like I could imagine.' And then you think about inviting them over to your house, and you're like, 'Ooh, but they stay over there, and I stay over here. My house is so much smaller than theirs, and what are they going to think about me?'

Amirah recognised that she was "embarrassed about it [her home]", and Natasha "never invited anyone home" in secondary school, despite having "lots of parties and sleepover and movie nights and those kinds of things in primary school."

As a termly boarder, Bongani initially found it easy to conceal the specifics of his home town by stating that he "lived on the outskirts" of the city where his school is located. He recalled that he did this because he was concerned that:

> If they don't know about [his home town], they will probably think of it as a poor place, which it actually isn't. … Yes, there is a bit of poverty, but it's not really poor. So I think that in that sense I had to let go a bit of who I was.

Yolande also struggled to be upfront about her background to her peers; however, in her case, this was less about where she lived than about what her mother did for a living:

> I never wanted people to know [that her mother was a domestic worker] because I thought that people were going to make fun of me. … At least in primary school, it was kind of level, and there were no extremely rich kids … and I really didn't care about it. But at [School D] it was … I always felt that I couldn't reveal that. I didn't want to be below anyone, so I kept that hidden

> for a long time and I never spoke about it. People would be like, 'What does your mom do?' And I would say she's a housewife. She doesn't work. That's how I would have to lie about it.

Thus in order to try to fit in, Yolande felt that she could not be honest about her family and her upbringing when amongst her fee-paying peers in the environment of an elite school.

Discussion

In the above section, the participants in the study discuss a number of strategic moves that they made in order to fit in. In Bourdieusian terms, the participants were learning to 'play the game' of elite schooling. Within a social field such as the field of schooling, a good player takes part in the game "'naturally and on the basis of a principle which tends to appear innate, instinctive, as a 'natural gift'" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 109). Thus, the fee-paying students who attended similar elite primary schools were able to enjoy a "feel for the game socially constituted by early immersion in the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 109). This is because within this 'game', what determines the extent to which an individual is able to master the regularities of a particular field is their habitus. A good player is someone who understands the unwritten and implicit rules by which the game is played.

Bourdieu reminds us that not all games are equal (Bourdieu, 1990a). While one's habitus provides one with a practical mastery or 'feel for the game', an individual's past and ongoing material conditions of existence give some more of a 'feel' for certain games than others. Maton (2008) points out:

> Our aspirations and expectations, our sense of what is reasonable or unreasonable, likely or unlikely, our beliefs about what are the obvious actions to take and the natural ways of doing them, are all for Bourdieu neither essential nor natural but rather conditioned by our habituses and are thereby a mediated form of arbitrary social structure. (p. 58)

Thus, individuals, such as the fee-paying students at elite schools, tend to occupy particular positions in a social field and therefore they understand how to act in this field – or, using Bourdieu's analogy, play the game well - and this understanding and knowledge of how the field operates feels 'natural' and commonplace and enables them to play the game with relative ease.

However, in contrast, the scholarship students in this study found themselves at a disadvantage as they did not enter the field with an understanding of the rules and regularities of the game, nor with the requisite capital required to initially play the game with ease. Bourdieu (1990a), in referring to how one engages in a social 'game', states that social games are regulated, but this does not mean that social 'games' explicitly follow a set of rules:

> In a game you can't just do anything and get away with it. … [You] must have a feel for the game, that is, a feel for the necessity and the logic of the game. Should one talk of a rule? Yes and no. You can do so on condition that you distinguish clearly between *rule* and *regularity.* The social game is regulated, it is the locus of certain regularities. Things happen in regular fashion in it. (pp. 64-5)

The rules of the elite game of schooling, therefore, as perceived by the scholarship participants, were founded on specific 'rules' or practices. Therefore, in order for the scholarship students to develop a sense of belonging or 'fit' into the regularities and norms of the elite school field, they felt that they had to adapt or change aspects of themselves to associate themselves more closely with the dominant players within the field. As Bourdieu (1990b) notes, developing a feel for the game involves a practical sense which in turn orients choices. While developing a practical sense for Bourdieu, involves a "quasi-bodily involvement in the world" (1990b, p. 66), it can be argued that, for the scholarship students, knowing intuitively what they needed to change, adapt or conceal, showed an emerging sense of the imminent demands of the game, and therefore, a practical sense. Thus, developing a practical sense for the scholarship students involved them strategically trying to fit into the "*modes of existence"* (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 65, italics in original) of the elite school.

Finding their place

For the scholarship students, in order to begin to feel that they 'fitted in' they realised the need to strategise and adapt to the varied requirements of the field of elite schooling. For a few, like Amirah and Lebo, this strategising appears to have started from the moment they entered into the new elite school environment.

As mentioned earlier, Amirah made a conscious decision to find new friends on her very first day of secondary school, and Lebo declared that right from the beginning, she felt that her

new school was “home”. However, for the majority of the study participants, developing a sense of belonging or finding their place in the elite school environment required a conscious and strategic decision to make the most of the opportunities afforded to them in the new school context. John, for example, explained how he consciously worked towards developing a practical sense and feel for the game of elite schooling:

> I think it’s about learning how to master those survival techniques. At a later stage, you get to learn … how to manoeuvre and learn what the school wants and … when you’re in Grade 8, you don’t realise all these politics were happening, and you just swing, and as you grow through the years and ranks, you start to get an idea of a few skills and how to deal with politics.

Siyabonga recalled the moment when he first began to figure out that he was the one who needed to change in order to fit in, as the environment was not going to change to accommodate him:

> I realised … that there’s no point in constantly pointing these things out [what he regarded as being wrong with the school] because they are not going to change. So you might as well … completely shift as a person. Give them what they want. As literally, that’s the best process ... Give them what they want.

Amanda discussed how a significant shift took place with regards to her sense of belonging at the school when she became a boarder at the beginning of her Grade 10 year:

> Now no one was going to judge me – like, ‘Oh, she’s the girl who catches the bus.’ That wasn’t normal at [School F]. … So when I got into boarding, it just gave me a certain form of confidence that I just needed and I could stop thinking about that.

Like the confidence that Jamal described feeling when he realised that he was going to “look like everyone else” in his new school uniform, as described in Chapter 5 of this thesis, for Amanda becoming a boarder meant that she immediately felt less like an ‘outsider’ as she would no longer be seen as having to rely on public transport to get to and from school on a daily basis.

While the discussions of these three students involved some form of strategy about how to fit in, other students related how they worked towards establishing and then improving their positions from within their school. Mandla described how his decision to join the school choir in Grade 9 had a significant impact on his involvement in school life. In his Grade 10 year he accompanied the choir on tour to England:

> Going on that tour changed my sense of self … a great big sort of turning point in my life, and how the school started to perceive me. So I found … people are greeting me, teachers are taking an interest in me, and I was really starting to sort of excel. I was thriving in this environment that I once really did hate, and I made great friends along the way. I was in so many leadership positions. I was in public speaking, so I really put myself out there.

Likewise, Amirah chose to join the Public Speaking Society, "because I was really bad at it [speaking in public]":

> So then I started doing public speaking, and I think … that was a good thing, and I've gotten better at it. And I think I needed that because I need it in Medicine. You need to speak in a public way. So I feel like that was one of the benefits [of going to an elite school]. Like, all the societies that you join. You don't get those societies at other schools.

Amirah also decided to learn to play the violin and the piano as these lessons were both offered by the school. Although she said that she wasn't very good at either instrument, she described this as "a really good experience … I was grateful that I could say I tried them."

Another example of how some of the participants showed that they learned to be more strategic in their decisions to adapt and change to fit in relates to their descriptions of how they managed their finances. Recognising that they were amongst peers who had no, or very few, financial constraints, some of the scholarship students made decisions about how to socialise with their peer group:

> So even simple things … like going out with your friends. You know you won't have as much money as them. So you sort of plan … like, 'Hey guys, let's try to go [here] …', according to the place you want [to go] because of money. So

> that was the biggest barrier for students who were on scholarship. Because you don't have the money to just go out, even if it's just for lunch. You have to plan for a time that you can go *after* lunch. (Charity)

John recalled that there were times when he was invited to do things with his friends, and he had to decline, knowing that he couldn't afford it.

Some participants described experiencing financial challenges in a more positive light, seeing these challenges as an opportunity for personal growth:

> I learned to live in my financial lane. … There are some [of his peers] who come from families where … after school they will probably run their family business, or say, 'I'm going to inherit a farm.' And coming from the background I came from, I actually didn't have the luxury to say that I'm going to work for my family business or something like that. But I have always developed this hunger to work for whatever it is that I want in life. So I wouldn't actually see it as a negative. To me, I actually see it as positive. (Koketso)

Whereas others, like Siyabonga, viewed the financial challenges a little more cynically, describing that he had to "be very frugal" with his money and learn how to live "on a very minimal budget".

A further significant aspect that the scholarship students discussed in the interviews were the high academic standards that they experienced when moving to the elite school. Thabo related making a conscious decision to "work really hard". Despite initially feeling hugely disadvantaged by his primary schooling, by the second term of his Grade 8 year he was "already on top of the class". Part of his motivation came from being surrounded by other "intelligent people … [as] I was like, 'How can I achieve that?'" Although Yolande took longer to settle into her studies after what she described as a "challenging Grade 9 year", from Grade 10 onwards she also made a conscious decision to focus on her academics, and "by the end of Matric I got really good marks!"

Bongani set his sights on becoming his school's first black dux scholar, which he achieved in his Grade 10 year, and then maintained in both Grades 11 and 12. Through this achievement

he hoped that "my being the top student was sort of proof to them [the other members of his school community] that black people could also excel." As he explained:

> When I got to the point where I was top in the grade … I'm not going to lie, my prize-giving was the best ever as a lot of things went on. I mean, I was dux scholar, I was Head Prefect, I got an Honours blazer, and … I thought that me having achieved this would have … changed their idea that, 'Not all black students are like that.'

Similarly, Mandla recalled:

> I was motivated by the black boys who are in grades higher than me achieving academically … I thought - you know what, they can do it, and these are people like me so … why not? And so I worked really hard. I got back from home, and I put my head down in and amongst all of the school life and everything, and I worked, and I worked. And I was doing extra lessons on my own; I was going to the library. I was working to sort of take responsibility.

Mandla stated that the easy access to the resources and facilities provided by his school aided his studying:

> I was in a space where, for once, wanting to read books was encouraged. I was in a space where I had the resources … the library was there, and the library was big, you know. … There were resources … there was internet, YouTube … you know, it was there! And for me, that was what really kept me going.

Amanda also described making the most of the opportunities that were presented to her by ensuring that she worked hard. In describing a "typical day at [School F]", she stated:

> We used to be at school by half-past seven, school ends at like three, and then after three it's sport, and that would end at like five or half-past five and then the girls who did drama it's like seven. We might have a play to go watch, go shower and go watch a play, and then that would end at eleven, and then you'd still have to do your homework.

She emphasised, however, that she loved being so involved and busy, and that she was able to cope as she was "a very motivated, hardworking and strong woman".

Kelly adopted a different strategy to that of the other participants in terms of her academic work. She described how she figured out what were the minimum academic requirements she needed to attain in order not to lose her scholarship, but still get into the university course of her choice. Armed with this information, she then made a strategic decision to work only as hard as was required:

> So you get to that point where you're like, 'Okay, the foundation wants 65%. I can give you guys 65%. But I'm not gonna give you guys 80% 'cos I don't want 80%. I don't need 80% [to get into university].

She explained her reasoning by saying that she wanted "to be a kid" and have the time to make the most of all of the other opportunities that were on offer in her school, including "going out, having fun, boys and all things like that! I wanna have that and not constantly worry about work!"

Kelly's strategy of only working to the minimum standard, however, was the exception amongst the interviewees. The overwhelming majority of the participants described being incredibly conscious when it came to their academics to the point that some, upon reflection, recognised that they perhaps pushed themselves too much. As Amirah, for example, stated:

> I studied way too much. I burned myself out [as] I studied way too much. Because I think I was trying to … like, I needed to make the best of this opportunity … it's like I was there and I couldn't be average.

Discussion

Bourdieu (1990a, p. 64), discussing how one engages in the social world as a 'game', states that when someone invents a physical game, someone has usually "laid down the rules" that dictate how the game is to be played. However, in social games, the rules are not explicit, albeit not necessarily consciously so. Rather, the rules, or 'the regularities' of a social game, are usually implicit, and it is an individual's habitus, "as a system of dispositions to a certain practice" that responds in particular ways "to generate regulated and regular behaviour outside any reference to rules" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 65).

In writing about habitus, Bourdieu reminds us that habitus is dynamic. In other words, habitus continues to be shaped by the practices of a particular environment, or field, as the actors interact with one another and with their environment (Bourdieu, 2000). Thus, while habitus operates largely below the level of consciousness and calculation and orientates an individual's practices by providing them with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives, habitus is also always constituted, or added to, in moments of practice (Webb *et al.*, 2002). In other words, habitus is able to generate a repertoire of new, transformative actions when it encounters new or different social field conditions. This allows individuals to respond to cultural contexts in different ways, providing a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). Relating this to the analogy of a game, Bourdieu suggests that to "win this game", an individual must develop "a feel for the necessity and logic of the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 64). Thus, an individual must figure out the rules and regularities of the social field, and develop strategies to orientate their practices to align with the requirements of the social context in which they find themselves.

For the participants in this study, the strategies that they employed to 'play the game' in the new elite school field was focused on them developing a sense of belonging within the field. This required them to begin to develop a practical sense or a 'feel for the game'. Part of this was a recognition, (as verbalised by Siyabonga, to "give them what they want"), that they as individuals needed to shift and adapt aspects of themselves as well as what they did, in order to begin to fit in to the new elite school environment. The strategies described by the participants required effort on their behalf, from joining the choir and the public speaking society to learning to manage their finances, working incredibly hard, and ensuring that they made the most of all of the opportunities that were presented to them.

One of the consequences of the employment of strategies of this nature is that over time, and through exposure to the field, the participants' accounts show that, for the most part, they increasingly accumulated the forms and volume of capital valued by the field. As Bourdieu (2007) reminds us, the accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state (such as ways of learning, knowledge, skills and work ethic), "presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" (p. 432). One example of this in

practice is shown by means of Bongani's experiences, whereby after years of hard work he was 'rewarded' by not only becoming the dux scholar but also being made a prefect and being presented with an Honour's blazer. (It is particularly ironic, then, that Bongani faced the experience of having his name changed by the teacher in charge of prefects, as described in the opening quotation of this thesis.) Reay (2000) describes the field of education as a kind of "contemporary educational marketplace" (p. 582) operating through the accumulation of capital. In the context of this study, this is a manifestation of the promise of an opportunity "to change your life" (Foundation 1 website), by means of the development of a 'feel for the game' of elite schooling.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the participants' accounts of their realisation of the significant changes or adaptations that they needed to make in order to feel that they fitted into the new elite school field. Drawing on Bourdieu, the discussion has centred on how the scholarship students employed a 'practical sense' to begin 'playing the game' of elite schooling. This required the participants initially to figure out the mostly implicit rules and regularities of the elite school field – regularities which, the interviewees realised, their peers who largely came from middle- to upper-class homes and communities, appeared instinctively to know and understand. Thus, the scholarship students realised that they needed to figure out the 'hidden' assumptions and expectations of the elite school field, and then employ appropriate strategies in order to fit in.

Aspects of language, accent, silencing their voice and concealing their backgrounds are all discussed as ways in which the scholarship participants acknowledged that the rules and regularities of the elite school field were different to their previous backgrounds and experiences. Acknowledging the need to adapt to the implicit rules and regularities of the new field, and the manner in which they felt they accomplished this in order to fit in or find their place, is discussed by each of participants.

It can be argued, therefore, that as Bourdieu (1990a) states, a "sense of the game acquired through prolonged immersion in the game, a sense of positioning (*placement*), which Goffman calls the 'sense of one's place', the sense of the position occupied in social space" (p. 113) is what the scholarship students actively worked towards by changing aspects of themselves in

order to fit into the new school field. However, given that the rules and regularities of a social field are very seldom explicit, "the real principle behind strategies, namely the practical sense, or, … feel for the game, as the practical mastery of the logic or of the immanent necessity of the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 61), it was through conscious effort and a focus on understanding the new rules and regularities, that the students came, over time, to feel a sense of belonging within the elite school field.

Thus, accepting a gift of a scholarship to attend an elite school, framed from a Bourdieusian perspective, highlights the intractable nature of a social field. In the context of this study, the participants' recognition that in order to develop a 'sense of belonging' or feelings of 'fitting in', they needed to change or adapt themselves. As the data reveals, for the participants, these changes required unanticipated and far deeper, and at times painful shifts to their 'ways of being'. However, at the same time, the scholarship recipients recognised that by making these changes they were able to accumulate the forms and volume of the cultural capital valued by the field, and in so doing, strengthen their overall position within the field.

The following and final chapter of the data presentation and analysis section of this thesis explores in greater depth the impact that exposure to the elite school environment had on the scholarship students. This section presents the students' accounts of their perceived costs and benefits of accepting the gift of a scholarship.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CHANGING HABITUS?

Chapter Six provided a discussion on the scholarship participants' developing practical sense and a feel for game of elite schooling. Drawing on Bourdieu's analogy of playing the game, the chapter discussed how the students went about figuring out the rules and regularities of the new school field, and implementing various strategies in order to fit in.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on what aspects of their lives the scholarship recipients, reflecting back, feel have changed over time as a result of their experiences in the elite school field. It does so by drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, along with capital and field, to show what Wacquant refers to as the layering or the "*malleability* of habitus" (2014, p. 7, italics in original). As Bourdieu (1998) reminds us:

> Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal! (p. 133, italics in original)

At the same time, Bourdieu also cautions against assumptions that habitus is easily transformed, stating that, "wholesale conversions are very exceptional and, in most cases, provisional" (2005, p. 47).

This chapter is discussed and presented differently to the previous two chapters, with the data presentation and analysis being integrated under four thematic headings. The first section, *Embodying "a certain quality"*, focuses on the dispositional shifts that the participants realise have taken place as a result of their encounter with, and immersion in, the elite school field. Included is a discussion on how they feel that the elite school field, over time, impacted on their bodily, behavioural and attitudinal dispositions. The second section, *Developing beyond "a box mentality"*, focuses on how they felt their encounter with the elite school field broadened their outlook on the world. *Living "a bipartite life"*, the third section, discusses the participants' reflections of the impact that the dispositional changes that they made had on their relationships with their family and community. The fourth and final section, *Benefitting from "a certain status",* focuses on what the scholarship recipients feel that they have gained

from their time spent in the elite school field. According to the participants, these include: forms of cultural and social capital in terms of their academic preparedness for tertiary studies; the status that comes with being associated with an elite school; and membership of social and professional networks.

Embodying "a certain quality"

Reflecting back, all of the participants in the study referred to changes that they felt had taken place within themselves after spending five years within an elite schooling environment. The changes they described were both physical, or corporal, as well as attitudinal and behavioural in nature. Siyabonga, struggled to articulate precisely what it is that he felt that he had acquired, but recognised that 'it' can be seen in everyone who attended his school, regardless of their socioeconomic background:

> Even though you might not have money [as a scholarship student], you'll still have a certain quality because you're a [School L] Boy, and that just permeates through all interactions.

Yolande also recognised this sense of being steeped in, or embodying, the school's identity that impacts on who she is as a young adult:

> I feel like [School D] has made me. Like, the way I speak is [School D], the way I behave, the way I know how to be professional. And I know how to be positive. … And it's not like you're putting up a front in some way, but I feel like they just kind of build you up to be this kind of person.

This notion of becoming a particular type of person as a result of your schooling is reinforced by Amanda, who noted:

> Something I've gained is being a powerful woman. And I look at Facebook and Twitter and everything, and I look at all the woman who were in my grade, and … every single one of them illustrates or demonstrates mannerisms of a powerful woman.

Although Amanda doesn't specifically define what she believes these mannerisms to be, it is evident that she views the qualities associated with them in a positive light, and embraces them as a part of who she feels she has become.

What these words belie, however, is that just before making the statement recorded above in the interview, Amanda admitted that she was diagnosed with depression in her final year of school. As a consequence, she failed five out of her seven preliminary examinations; however, with the support of her "understanding and wonderful" teachers, as well as with "the help of Redbull and coffee and Powerade and Energade",[15] she managed to achieve two distinctions in her final examinations. This candid honesty from Amanda regarding the stresses she went through at school serve as a reminder that each of the participants in this study had individual journeys and experiences, and that these might be 'messier' and more complex than the retelling of their story sometimes reveals.

What the participants are referring to in the data above, is what Bourdieu describes as one's habitus; that is, dispositions that are conditioned during early childhood and which operate largely below the level of consciousness providing one with a sense of how to act and respond (see Bourdieu 1990a). The habitus is fundamentally an embodied phenomenon that denotes not only how we think about the world, but has included in it a bodily system of dispositions that are enacted in a field (Webb *et al.*, 2002, p. 37). It can be argued, therefore, that particular contexts, such as that of the elite school field, would over time 'produce' or shift an individual's dispositions, including aspects of their corporeal or physical behaviour. Bourdieu describes these physical aspects as 'bodily hexis' and explains that bodily hexis, as an incorporation of a relationship between social structures (or social fields) and one's habitus, "is a political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 69–70, italics in original).

It is this form of dispositional embodiment that Yusef noticed both within himself, as well as others who attended similar schools:

> If I look as a whole at the people coming out of the southern suburb [elite] schools … and I look at the other people [at university], you can see the difference automatically. I mean, it's weird, but the way you assert yourself …

[15] Redbull, Powerade and Energade are all over-the-counter energy drinks containing high levels of caffeine and sugar.

> it's just easier. The way you … carry yourself. Your whole body language. Like, you can spot the difference, even though it's slight.

By being confronted with a field different to that in which his habitus was initially constructed, Yusef had, over time, begun to add layers to his primary habitus that more closely resembled the dominant habitus of the elite school field, and it was these similar nuances that he recognised in others in social settings. He explained differences that he noticed between himself and his friends on campus who did not attend an elite school:

> I think their interaction with people from different cultures, backgrounds and races is not as rich as mine. Like, I wouldn't be afraid just to walk up to anyone and start a conversation with them, whereas they don't. Like, basically from my primary school I used to have this whole fear, and they are still having that now. When they come into university they are experiencing what I experienced in Grade 8, now.

This seemingly innate confidence and sense of comfort in the university space that Yusef describes in relation to students who came from elite school fields can be equated with Khan's (2011) findings in his study on adolescent elite located at one of the most prestigious secondary schools in the United States of America. Khan describes these students as possessing an 'embodiment of ease', a quality that Khan concluded as being a form of embodied knowledge that students exposed to an elite environment for a prolonged period of time learn, and that allows them to act comfortably in the world across a diverse set of social situations. Jordyn expressed a similar sentiment, stating that:

> Being thrown into an environment where I saw people completely different to myself, opened up a new dimension in my mind to see similarities in people that I [once] saw as completely different from me, and wouldn't ordinarily find anything in common.

Similarly, Charity values the fact that she now feels that she is able to go up to "different types of people" and feel that she can "fit in"; and Cebisa regards herself as more "open-minded" as she now knows how "certain types of people … think, like, and what their perception of certain things are."

Developing beyond "a box-mentality"

For Bongani, learning to deal "with different people" meant being better prepared to handle any forms of discrimination that he might encounter as an adult, as a result of his secondary school experiences:

> You know, I was involved with a lot of characters at school … people who did hint at a tinge of racism, I won't lie. But also characters who were stereotypical in terms of … attach[ing] the idea of poverty to you. … And that experience gave me a good idea of dealing with different people.

Bongani sees himself as having developed "a strong back-bone" in response to these interactions: "I don't get angered easy because of those experiences [because] I now have a thick skin."

Natasha also spoke about how she felt her experience at an elite school had broadened her views on life in general. She described how attending an elite secondary school has helped her realise that the world "has so many different fragments within. It's not just the world I thought there was." She expressed gratitude for the fact that this experience has helped her realise that "there's not only one way to do things." Likewise, Jamal believes that if he "weren't exposed to that whole new world", he would still be "stuck with my primary school friends … with the same box-mentality." He now recognises that "my normal is not everyone's normal." Amirah believes that it was being exposed to new things and opportunities by her secondary school that has helped her not to be "stagnant" like her childhood friends: "We'd just be like a clique - make no new friends, do no new sports, do nothing new." As a result, she recognises that "in a way I feel less typical. I feel like I've actually done something different."

Both John and Mandla feel that they have developed a far broader outlook on the world from their engagement with the elite school as scholarship students. John described how he feels that he now has "a more global outlook" because of the opportunities that were presented to him through the scholarship, resulting in him, "chang[ing] the way I look at simple things, like how the economy is doing, and is it feasible, and such and such." Mandla sees himself as having had his world broadened beyond that of the township where he grew up, "where you

see yourself as so limited … you don't know what the world out there has, and how big it can be … my horizons [are] broader and I want more; I want more out of life."

These expressions such as not being "typical" and escaping a "box-mentality", as well possessing a broader outlook on the world, can be ascribed to the scholarship students developing a 'transformative' (as opposed to a 'reproductive') habitus (Mills, 2008). Rather than accepting the social conditions and conditionings imposed by the degree of difference between their primary habitus and the elite school field that they encountered, the data suggests that these former scholarship students have demonstrated a capacity for improvisation (Mills, 2008).

In other words, what the data reveals, is that the students have shown a capacity for improvisation through their exposure and engagement with the elite school field. Thus the scholarship students' active agency can be compared to that expressed by some of the individuals in Bourdieu's (1999) study described in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*. Captured in this study, "there is a great deal of striving, resistance and action aimed at changing current circumstances as many of the poor and dispossessed, interviewed by Bourdieu and his colleagues, search around for ways of changing and transforming their lives" (Reay, 2004, p. 437). Likewise, the scholarship students in this study demonstrate a striving for change, a capacity to recognise opportunities, and an ability to imagine a future beyond the limitations of their socio-economic backgrounds. This is by no means a "wholesale conversion" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 47) of their primary habitus but rather the adding of additional layers that now enables them to feel at ease within a variety of social circles and contexts. Natasha, who narrated experiencing many challenges within the elite school environment due to her "heavy accent", describes how she feels she has changed:

> But now I'm looking back at the person I have become because of [School E and] I'm not unhappy with that person. I didn't change. Like, I just knew different combinations [of myself]. I let my roots grow, essentially.

At the same time, however, it is important to keep in mind just how difficult these changes were for some of the participants. Yolande described in some detail how "strained" her relationship became with her mother, who was employed as a domestic worker during her

secondary school years, and acknowledges that she was embarrassed by what her mother did for a living. However, on reflection, Yolande describes how her outlook has now shifted:

> Through all the struggles, through all the shit - sorry - I think at the end it really made me such a strong person and now I can openly say I am not ashamed of who I am. I'm not ashamed of being black and I'm not ashamed of whatever struggles, or whatever. I feel like being in an ordinary public school I wouldn't have gone through that. … I wouldn't have to have that huge struggle for all these years to kind of understand and be grateful for my past, my background and my family and all of that. So I wouldn't have learned all of that … if I had gone to an ordinary school, I guess. And that's huge for me. It's definitely huge for me.

A number of the other participants also describe (predominantly less positive) shifts in these relationships, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Living "a bipartite life"

In response to a question asked of the interviewees regarding what they felt had changed as a result of attending an elite secondary school, just over half of the participants made reference to shifts that they felt had taken place in their relationships with their family members and/or the community where they grew up. For some, they described these shifts as being a consequence of other people seeing and treating them differently even though they still felt that they were the same person, whereas others recognised that they were the ones who had in fact changed.

Yusef found being identified by his extended family as 'different' to them, challenging to accept:

> I think family-wise it's tough. Like, say for example at big family gatherings where I have all of my aunts and my uncles, all my cousins … they're all there. And basically you stand out as the golden boy. … You'd be at this family function, and they would be, 'Oh, here's the golden boy coming.' Cos, you went to a good school and you did well academically. You'd be singled out.

> Because none of the others went to these schools, and you're the first one, you're the only one who's gone. And they single you out.

It is evident that Yusef's family perceive him as having changed; however, he states that he feels that the changes have not been that significant: "It's slight, ja … but [I haven't] changed anything hectically, like any big things … but there are small things."

Likewise, Amirah referred to the fact that her extended family felt that she had changed as a result of her schooling experience. A significant aspect, for Amirah and her family, was related to her decision in primary school to start wearing a hijab. During her primary school years she was permitted to wear it as a part of her primary school uniform. However, the secondary school she attended as a scholarship student did not allow her to wear her hijab as a part of its uniform, and she was only able to wear it outside of the school context. In Grade 10 Amirah made the decision to stop wearing her hijab altogether. She narrates what transpired:

> So up until Grade 10 I had a valid reason for wearing a hijab, and then after that I had some questions that were unanswered. And I was like, I don't know why I'm doing it anymore, and then I stopped [wearing it]. … So when I stopped wearing it, everyone went bonkers. They were like, 'Ja, it's because of this white school', and … 'This is what these people do.' … And I was like, 'I'm not going to explain to you the reason. I have the reason why I stopped wearing it, but it's not because of the school.' I knew that it had nothing to with the school. But they wouldn't leave it: 'It was the white people that told you to stop wearing your scarf on your head!'

Amirah described this period as "… very difficult for me, I think that was one of the most challenging things." Amirah's stated that her choice to stop wearing a hijab in Grade 10 was regarded as a form of betrayal by her family who viewed it as 'giving in' to the expectations of the cultural norms of the 'white' elite school field. Even though Amirah protests that this was not the case, her family viewed this decision in a negative light and felt that she had changed. Interestingly, now as a fourth year medical student, Amirah is considering wearing a hijab once again.

Koketso also described his family and community feeling that he had changed, to the extent that he feels that he is now treated like a foreigner due to him spending "five years only speaking English to people" during his time as a boarder in secondary school:

> So when I came back to North West [Province] people thought that I was from outside South Africa. My vocabulary wasn't the same as theirs. People thought I speak another language. The way they treat me [is] like someone who just learned their language. Like I'm an outsider. Like a French person who just started learning Tswana, or something like that.

In addition to experiencing "this whole language barrier thing" with regards to speaking his home language, Koketso also felt that he had to change the way that he spoke English when he was at home: "To make sure that I communicate with most people I had to 'ham it down' and speak in simple English, speak slowly. … I would change [my] vernacular [to fit that] of the place." In addition, Koketso described that he felt that people within his community think that he is "arrogant … [as I] tried to get better by going away to a good school."

Similarly, Mandla knows that he was seen as being different by his friends, even though at the time he didn't feel like he had changed:

> The very first time I came back [home] I could feel nothing was the same. … The relationships and how people treated me … changed. Because now my friends were like: 'You think you're better because you go to this school.' … No matter how hard I tried to be, 'Guys, it's still me, it's still me!' You know, we lost levels of relatability.

However, reflecting back Mandla recognises that he had changed in relation to his peer group in his community,

> … our ambitions … which I think was the biggest cause of drift. … I say all this in retrospect. I'd gone to this school and … my horizons were broader and I wanted more out of life. When I got back home and I said, 'This is what I want to do', my friends were like, 'What!' You know, I seemed … I guess I started to seem foreign to them.

John also used the word “foreign” to describe the sense of distance that he now feels between himself and the community in which he grew up. He attributes this to not only attending a different school to his primary school peers, but also due to the fact that he chose to become a full time boarder over the five year period that he attended [School H]:

> It sometimes feels foreign. I mean if I walk around the area that I lived in, I literally know no one. I just walk around and people are like, ‘Oh, you’re the little brother.’ So I feel that it is foreign for me, being in my parents’ area.

John further states that “the main cost of schooling, especially in my context, was my relationship with my family.” As a consequence, John describes himself as living “a bipartite life” between his family and community, and his school and now adult life.

Siyabonga made a similar reference, describing how he “constantly [felt] a diaspora, so to speak, between my home life and my school life”. Even though Siyabonga’s school is close to where his family lives, he decided to become a weekly boarder and often chose to stay at school over the weekends:

> We [him and his mother] were so far from each other, because even though I lived in [a township that is a 10 to 15-minute drive from the school], it wasn’t always practical [to go home] because I was involved in a lot of things [at school]. So I was away from home for most of my [secondary school] life, and so my personality shifted here and there. You don’t notice these things because you don’t have that mirror. Because if it shifts it means you’re assimilating, or it means that you’re becoming one of them.

While most of the participants considered the additional layering or adaptations to their habitus as a positive consequence of their time spent in the elite school context, Siyabonga was not entirely comfortable with some of the changes in his life as he regarded them as a form of betrayal to who he was as a child, and how he was raised by his mother.

Natasha, Thabo and Amanda also discussed the extent to which they felt that they had changed and how these changes had impacted on their relationships with their families and extended families. Natasha, for example, stated that she no longer sees her extended family:

> When I was younger I used to interact with them more. But then once I went to high school, I think it's actually really dangerous to go where they live, and I have lost connection with them. … We are just very different now, essentially.

Looking back, Thabo realises that he always felt different to the rest of his family because his parents "elevated me from my siblings" as the one who was going to have "a bright future" due to him being chosen to receive a scholarship to attend an elite school. Although Thabo still lives with his family in the township where he grew up, he no longer regards this space as his home:

> Home to me now? Varsity is where I would call home, because I spend most of my time in [he names two formerly whites-only, mainly middle-class suburbs in Cape Town]. It's where my friends are. In the morning I take a taxi and go to my friends, before heading to varsity.

Amanda, on the other hand, has chosen to distance herself from her family by living on her own:

> I've become more powerful and more questioning. I don't do things that most young black women would do. You know, my father's a priest … and my mom is a very religious woman, and so that patriarchal kind of vibe is there, and I'm not about that. And so sometimes that causes a lot of conflict [as] I question things. I'll ask why. I'll decide that I don't want to do it. I'm challenging. My siblings are not like that, and they're like, 'Oh she's rude.' And I'm just like, 'No!' … I think I can sometimes be considered a problematic child or a challenging one, [and] that's a negative aspect. I now live alone; they don't really see me much.

Lebo appears to embrace who she is and the extent to which she has changed as a result of her schooling:

> I think I am more of a shock for my parents, a culture shock compared to … my four older siblings. … They [her parents] say I'm so opinionated. … When they reprimand my older sister she would just listen and then after they're

> done talking, she wouldn't say anything; she would go straight to her room. And I'm like, I would never! I want them to hear my side of the story, you know, and why I did a certain thing. I think it's because I went to a school like [School F] and the culture there is completely different to a culture of a black home.

Although Lebo recognised that the school with its different culture has played a role in shaping who she has become, at the same time she described herself at a later point in the interview as being "just normal Lebo" when she is within her home environment. This suggests that despite recognising that she is different, she is not uncomfortable with who she thinks she has become.

As noted by the data presented above, most of the scholarship students feel that they have changed, and that this change has impacted on their relationships with their families, communities and peers. Bourdieu (1999) assists us to understand the possible outcomes of change as a result of the movement of habitus across class fields, stating that upward social mobility, can result in:

> A habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and its ambivalences, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of the self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities. (p. 511)

The data shows that some of the participants are more easily able to reconcile this 'divided habitus with who they have become as young adults, than others.

Benefitting from "a certain type of status"

Many of the participants during the interviews were keen to describe what they regarded as the advantages of having attended an elite school in terms of the benefits that they are now experiencing as young adults. These benefits largely relate to their academic preparedness for tertiary studies, along with the gains that some of them feel that have acquired through their association with their school's good reputation and their automatic membership of a professional network of alumni. In Bourdieusian terms, these benefits can be considered a form of cultural, symbolic and social capital.

Amanda, for instance, is deeply appreciative of "the way of learning" that she imbibed whilst at school, as she feels that this has ensured that in lectures at university "academically, you are much more prepared than anyone else … [and I am able] to thrive actually, at university". These sentiments were echoed by Yusef, who also accredits his secondary school education for providing him the advantages that he now feels that he enjoys:

> I think, academically, you are much more prepared than anyone else. So, for example, I look in tutorials and lectures [and] you see that [with] your schooling and your way of learning … it's so much easier for you just to slot in. Whereas all of the other people who are studying … that didn't have that environment and that whole setting that nurtured you. [They] come into this environment and it's all up to them. … Whereas, the high school experience that I had allowed me to thrive at university.

Yolande recognises that she was taught specific academic skills that now stand her in good stead:

> When I'm sitting with … kids in my class [they] ask me for certain things like, 'Can you help me do my essay? Can you do this?' It's because I feel like [School D] people paid so much attention to those sort of things. Even a simple thing such as referencing, and at university where everyone is supposed to know [how to reference]. And they will be like, 'We never did this at high school!' And I'm like, 'I did it for years; I know this!' And our research skills … we did a research paper in Grade 11 and some kids are like, 'We have never heard of that before!' So in a lot of ways it definitely has prepared me for university … and I feel like I wouldn't have gotten that if I was at a normal public school.

For Lebo, it is the strong work ethic that she recognises as having been "instilled" in her that has enabled her to "remain consistent and work hard" at university: "For me, when I got into varsity … it was more of, 'Wow! Over the past five years I was trained to actually be a hard worker!'" Likewise, Jordyn credits her secondary school for her "work ethic … that's still kind of in here [points to her chest]", for the success that she is currently experiencing at university in a specialised engineering degree.

The forms of embodied cultural capital described above (ways of learning, knowledge, skills and work ethic) that the students are described, have required, according to Bourdieu (1986), "a labor of inculcation and assimilation, [that] costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor … Like the acquisition of a muscular physique or a suntan, it cannot be done at [sic] second hand" (p. 18). As Bourdieu (1976) suggests, that although schools draw largely from the cultural capital and ethos of the middle-class, the possibility exists that students who do not come from a middle-class background, like the scholarship students in this study, may acquire, with effort, what middle-class students acquire from their home backgrounds.

In addition to feeling academically well-prepared for tertiary studies, some of the participants mentioned the benefits that they have enjoyed post-school as a result of being associated with their elite school, what Bourdieu refers to as social capital. Lebo, for example, recognises the potential benefits of being linked to both her school, as well with the foundation that sponsored her scholarship:

> For starters, [School F] alone has a reputation … [Foundation 1], [School F] – they have created names for themselves, and the minute you're associated with [them], you become part of that name. Yeah, it's like having both factors on my CV is great, cos' most people will go like, 'Oh, you were at [School F]! Oh, you were a part of [Foundation 1]!'

Likewise, as a young adult Yolande has discovered the benefits of mentioning that she went to School D when applying for part-time jobs: "Because I feel like everyone has this huge expectation of what a [School D] girl is like and what they have achieved." She notes that every time she mentions the school that she went to in an interview, "I got the job!"

Mandla acknowledges that he hasn't hesitated to use the "good name" of his school to his advantage. He is now a part of the Investec Chartered Accountant Programme, and he made sure that,

> in my first year I had my [School G] Old Boys tie on, and you will be amazed: 'Oh my gosh! Are you a [School G] Boy! Are you [Foundation1]!' So many networks that I've made. … 'And this is why we need to work as a network.' That is what they always say.

Koketso identifies his school's good name, and the high standard of education associated with it as providing him with "a certain type of status" by being associated with "one of the best schools" in the country. In his experience at the tertiary college he attends, generally when he mentions his school's name, "people take note of me."

However, at the same time, Koketso realises his old school is not recognised as a place of significance across all fields:

> But then I have also noticed that it depends on where you go because … some people don't even know where [School J] is. So, sometimes you mention such a school, and people don't exactly understand what you are talking about.

In this instance, the high status inherently attached to attending a school like School J within some fields such as Koketso's home town, is rendered meaningless as "cultural capital is not set in stone or universally accepted, either within or across fields." (Webb *et al.*, 2002, p. 22) Thus, what Koketso has come to realise, is that the status and prestige associated with the elite school he attended is valued in some, but not all social fields.

A number of the participants referenced the volume of social capital that attending an elite school had afforded them. John for example stated that:

> I have heard many stories of people saying that, 'Hey, we are from [School H]' [and] then all of a sudden jobs have opened because of being of the boys' school. And that's the largest thing about being part of these old boys' schools - once you are part of the association there are just endless opportunities.

Bongani has already had an opportunity to take advantage of these connections, even though at the time of the interview he was only in his second year of his actuarial science degree:

> This last vac I worked at Old Mutual, within pensions … and the way that I got that vacation work is that I approached an actuary who also went to [School J] … I emailed him and told him who I am, told him my background, and I told him what I have done … and I told him that I went to [School J]. And through that … he told me of the vac work at Old Mutual. And more than that he was going to send his contact details to his friends who are also actuaries, and … one of them was the CEO of a company in Joburg, and we met just to, like,

> bounce off some ideas … and he was telling me his journey and I was telling him my journey.

It is evident that Bongani felt comfortable using the network at his disposal, and meeting and sharing life stories with a CEO of a company due to the social networks, or social capital, that he had accumulated through associated with his elite secondary school. Likewise, Yusef related an experience when he did some "vac work" for the accounting firm that is funding his degree. As a part of this experience, he was sent on an audit,

> with two third-year trainees about to qualify as CA's, [and one of them was] a [School I] boy. So, automatically you feel this ease and connection. Even if I'm [interacting] with [someone from] any other boys' school … they have also been through experiences that you know you have also been through. And so the whole relationship with him is so much easier than having someone who you have no past experiences with.

The benefits and opportunities that the students are describing are forms of social and cultural capital. All of these students refer to aspects of social relationships, interactions, networks and relationships such as alumni networks, which form part of the social capital that they feel they have accumulated as a result of being associated with the elite schools that they attended as scholarship students. Cultural capital, as a form of symbolic capital, is found in the students' reference to culturally significant attributes that they came to recognise that the field of elite schooling had provided them. Discussing aspects of social capital, Bourdieu (1986) notes that:

> [t]he volume of social capital possessed by a given agent … depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected. (p. 21)

Thus, what he is reminding us is that the existence of a network of connections is not a natural or social given; rather it is the product of an endless effort of an institution which enables the individuals associated with the institution to produce and reproduce significant relationships. These relationship may, over time, secure them additional material or symbolic (cultural capital) profits (Bourdieu, 1986).

Lebo, along with four of the other participants in this study, was awarded the Foundation 1 Fellowship to pay for her tertiary studies; however, as she wished to study a degree in the Humanities (a degree that is not covered by the fellowship), she turned it down despite her parents' concern regarding how she was going to be able to afford to pay for university. Lebo, recognising the social and cultural capital she had gained through her elite school alumni stated:

> I said to my parents, 'You know what - I'm going to work part-time and study.' And that's how I came back to [School F]. … So now I coach all the sports that I played when I was at [School F]. I'm staying in the boarding house and I've got free accommodation, free food, free everything.

Lebo stated that she feels "at home" at [School F] and thus has returned to live and work there while she is at university. This ongoing association with the elite secondary school she attended shows the reproduction of social capital in that it "presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed" (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 22–3). In other words, social capital, as a network of relationships, is the product of the establishment of conscious or unconscious investment strategies aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable to an individual in the short or long term – that is, the transforming of contingent relationships into "lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits" for the individual (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 22).

Conclusion

What this chapter has discussed by drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field, are the reflections of the scholarship participants on aspects of their lives that they feel have changed as a result of them attending an elite secondary school. Titled *Changing habitus?*, the focus of the chapter is on discussing aspects of the participants' embodied disposition, their habitus, that has shifted or changed. Recognising that Bourdieu warns of the durability of habitus, the chapter has attempted to provide a logic of change, as narrated by the participants' reflections, and drawing on Bourdieu's concepts to account for the changes the participants discussed in their interviews. The belief that an individual is able to change or adapt their habitus is premised on the notion of a secondary habitus that is "any system of

transposable schemata that becomes grafted subsequently, through specialized pedagogical labor that is typically shortened in duration, accelerated in pace, and explicit in organization" (Wacquant, 2014, p. 7). Thus, as is discussed in this chapter, the scholarship students, over time and through their exposure to the elite school field, narrate changes that they feel have become 'grafted' onto their dispositional ways of being through their exposure to the elite school field.

Included in the changes experienced by the interviewees, is the impact of these on their relationships with their families and communities. Their narratives reveal that while the participants recognise that they have changed during the time they spent at the elite school, these changes can be seen as the 'cost' of their decision to attend the elite school. However, most of the participants stated that given the choice again, they would make the same decision. As such, this was a cost that they were willing to pay for the benefits that accompanied an elite education.

The fourth and final section of this chapter focused on the benefits that the participants acknowledge enjoying as a result of attending an elite secondary school. In this section, Bourdieu's concept of social and cultural capital highlight how social and symbolic capital operate as a form of currency. Bourdieu (1986) states that it is "impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital" (p. 15). This can clearly be seen as the participants narrate how they feel they have benefitted from being associated with the status, prestige and connections afforded to them by the elite school field.

However, the data further reveals that although one's habitus may shift in relation to a particular field, these adaptations take place within limits. As Bourdieu (2005) notes, changing habitus it is very difficult, requiring considerable effort on the part of the individual. In addition, changes tend not to be radical, as one's primary habitus from early childhood remains core and intact, with the changes forming additional, secondary layers that are assimilated onto the existing primary habitus. The degree to which change takes place differs from one individual to another depending on their ability and willingness or openness to change (Bourdieu, 2000).

Thus, the accounts of the participants in this study show that change can and does take place within one's habitus. As stated by Reay (2004), implicit in the concept of habitus, "is the

possibility of a social trajectory that enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones" (p. 435). For the scholarship students in this study, therefore, it was the gift of a scholarship to attend an elite school that enabled the possibility of change. However, it needs to be acknowledged that, as the interviewees' narratives have shown, the offer of a gift of a scholarship is significantly more complex and multi-layered than one may initially realise. Further, it may include unintended or unanticipated consequences for the recipients of the gift.

CHAPTER EIGHT: REFLECTIONS AND PLAYING IT FORWARD

The aim of this thesis was to research the reflective accounts of a sample of former scholarship students who attended elite secondary schools in South Africa on scholarships awarded by two major donor foundations. Understanding the scholarship as a form of a gift, this thesis has focused on what accepting this gift entailed for its recipients. As stated in the introduction to the thesis, on the surface this particular practice may appear to be a relatively straight-forward transaction involving three main 'players': a 12-year old *candidate* who successfully meets the criteria stipulated by the scholarship *donors* is provided with the financial means to attend a partner *school* that has been selected for its offer of "high academic standards and a holistic approach to education" (Foundation 2 website). In accepting the scholarship, the recipient and their parents sign a physical contract with the donor whereby the recipient commits to working hard, and to behaving in a manner that is not contrary to the school's disciplinary code. This study focused on the accounts of scholarship recipients as young adults reflecting back on their schooling. Their accounts have shown the scholarship process to be far more complex, multi-layered, difficult, and at times harsh and even painful than what the recipients had anticipated at the time of the acceptance of the scholarship.

Drawing upon Mauss's (1969) and Derrida's (1992) notions of 'the gift', this study focused on recipients' accounts of the dynamic and intricate interplay between the recipient of the gift on the one hand, and the elite schooling environment on the other. Mauss (1969) argues that gifts are constructed around relationships of reciprocity, where to give is to expect to receive. Likewise, Derrida's (1992) position is that gifts involve a complex range of obligations, encompassing "reciprocity, return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt" (p. 12). These two thinkers provide a consideration of what is at play when donors and schools, in partnership with one another, provide access to a particular type of education through a gift of a scholarship.

The writings of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu have been used to present and analyse the data from the participant interviews. When I embarked on an initial review of the literature relating to the focus of this study, I was interested to note that a number of writers use his analytical tools to gain an understanding of the elite educational environment in general, and

more specifically the experiences of marginalised students within this environment (see, for example, Horvat and Antonio, 1999; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009; Mills and Gale, 2010; Khan, 2011). From the outset, Bourdieu's work helped me to contextualise the literature I was reading on South African youth, marginalised students, and elite schools and provided me with a much-needed analytical lens through which I could consider the contexts in which elite schools function and the experiences of students from disadvantaged backgrounds entering these contexts. It highlighted the complex dynamics at play and the challenges faced by these students, despite them being exceptional within their own communities. It also helped me to explain the strategies employed by these students to 'play the game' of elite schools and their accounts of these experiences. As such, a Bourdieusian framework provided the means of linking the context of the field with its inequalities to what the recipients experienced in terms of adjustments required to succeed, and what the perceived 'costs' and 'benefits' were for the scholarship recipients.

Further, a narrative research approach provided the means to explore the experiences of scholarship recipients within the specific socio-cultural framing of the students moving from disadvantaged schools and communities into a context of social privilege. This is because narratives are always embedded within a socio-historical context or structure, and the particular voice in a narrative can only be understood in relation to a larger context. As this research is concerned with the accounts of former scholarship recipients reflecting on their experiences within an elite school context, the use of an experience-centred narrative inquiry approach allowed for a rich, detailed and nuanced analysis of their stories and the notion of a 'gift'. In addition, it afforded the participants a sense of agency within the retelling of their stories.

The first section of this chapter reiterates the significance of the contextual landscape within which this study is located. This is critical because, as C Wright Mills (1959) states in his seminal work, *The Sociological Imagination*: "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (p. 3). The second section provides two key insights that emanate from a Bourdieusian analysis of the findings from the research for this thesis. The chapter then focuses on the participants' accounts of how they view the effects and consequences of attending an elite school on their adult selves, followed by a discussion of some of the implications for practice arising from these findings. Two

possible areas for further research emanating from this study are then discussed, before the chapter concludes with a postscript: the words of one of the participants that provide some insight into the participants' possible 'future selves'.

Before developing these points, however, it is important to reflect briefly once again on the research warrant for this study, as set out in Chapter Four. First, one of the limitations of this study pertains to its sampling, in that this study only includes those who put themselves forward to be interviewed and successfully completed their schooling whilst retaining their scholarship. In addition, only one of the 20 participants was no longer registered at a tertiary institution at the time of the interview. As such, the sample of participants in this study could be viewed as a self-selected 'sample of success' - a factor that must be kept in mind throughout a reading of this research. Second, a balance could not be achieved between single-sex and co-educational schools. Whilst the explanation for this lies in the fact that the majority of the foundations' partner schools are single-sex schools, care needed to be taken when analysing the interview data not to treat the sample as representative of a larger sample of scholarship students in all secondary schools. A third limitation of the research is that scholarship graduates were sampled from only two foundations, one of which operates solely in the Western Cape. While the study includes eight students who attended schools in other provinces, there still exists some geographical bias in the sample. A final limitation of the study that must be borne in mind when considering the warrant of this research and its findings is that narratives do not copy the reality of the world outside themselves; instead, they propose particular representations and interpretations of the world. As such, narratives do not claim the status of 'truth', but rather of aspects such as trustworthiness in terms of what the narratives reflect of a particular individual's 'truth' as they saw and experienced it, and are willing to convey to another individual, such as a researcher. Thus, part of the generalisability of narrative studies relies on the explanatory value of a theoretical framework.

The significance of the contextual landscape of this study

Given the sociological premise of the dynamic relationship, or interplay, between the "minute points of the intersection of biography and history within society" (Mills, 1959, p. 7), it is of significance that the contextual landscape of South Africa, with its profound inequalities predominantly linked to the racialised policies of its past but continuing into the post-

apartheid period (The World Bank, 2018), is included. A consequence of this historical post-apartheid positioning is that class, in terms of fee-affordability, is deeply intertwined with race and gender[16] in playing a significant role in determining the type of schooling accessible to the vast majority of South Africa's youth.

As outlined in Chapter One of this thesis, in effect there exists a two-tiered system of education in post-apartheid South Africa, with a wide gap between high-functioning well-resourced schools on the one hand, and poorly-functioning under-resourced schools on the other. The schools in this study are deemed 'elite' in that they are amongst the most privileged public and independent schools in the country, as signified by their academic outcomes, their broad curriculum and extra-curricular offerings, and their extensive access to resources and facilities. Much of this is maintained by charging high school fees. As Foundation 1's website (2019) declares, their partner schools provide "access to quality high school education" for their students, and Foundation 2 states that their partner schools are amongst the "best high schools" (Foundation 2 website, 2019).

The contextual landscape of South African inequality has a direct impact on how the donors and the schools view what is being offered by a scholarship. As the website of Foundation 1 (2019) states, the scholarship is a means of addressing "the lack of access to impactful education for historically disadvantaged individuals in Southern Africa and to prepare them for success in tertiary institutions." Given this, the explicit message conveyed to the recipients of this gift is that a scholarship is an opportunity to change their lives, as well that of their family, for the better. What is significantly less explicit, however, is what this 'changing of their lives' entails, and the impact (both in terms of costs and benefits) that these changes would have on their lives, their sense of selves, and their relationships with others. This is the gap in the literature investigated by this thesis.

It goes without saying that donor foundation scholarships cannot remedy the deep structural inequalities in the schooling system. They do, however, provide an opportunity for selected individuals to shift their social positioning. In this sense, they may be viewed as contributing to the formation of the new black elite in the shifting social structure of post-apartheid South

[16] Gender effects in schooling in South Africa, for example, are displayed in most statistical presentations by education departments.

Africa. Both of the foundations whose scholarship recipients participated in this research were explicit about the types of mind-sets they valued: the 'entrepreneurial mind-set' mentioned by Foundation 1, and the philanthropic modelling of Foundation 2. In both cases, providing the basis for future success was a primary goal in the provision of scholarships.

At the same time elite schools, such as the ones in this study, recognise that whilst retaining their privileged legacies they also need to 'stay ahead of the game' by engaging with the complexities of the South African socio-political and economic educational landscape, without losing their high status. A significant part of this is the recognition of the need for their student body to be more reflective of the demographics of the country. A scholarship programme presents the schools with one means of achieving this goal, by admitting a select number of historically disadvantaged students who have been identified as high achievers through a rigorous competitive process – alongside those who are able to pay fees. Thus, through scholarship programmes elite schools are able both to diversify their formerly white demographic, as well as attract 'talent'.

The narratives of the participants in this study indicate that many of them were aware that their presence was instrumental in changing the demographics of the school, while at the same time contributing academic, sporting and/or cultural talent. For example, Amirah recounted a conversation that she had on a recent [Foundation 2] camp with some of her peers who attended another school included in this study:

> During the end of year function, [School D] would mention, 'Oh, last year we only had five percent [black students], yet this year we have ten percent!' So it would be like the scholarship programme was a means of diversifying … of getting their diversity numbers up.

Amirah was, however, adamant that this was not her personal experience of her own school – a reminder that this study is based upon individual stories, and as such one must remain cautious about making far-reaching generalisations.

Having said this, however, there are some clear themes that emerged from a Bourdieusian analysis of the interview data. These themes, as an overview of the data emanating from the study, are set out in the next section of this chapter.

Key insights emanating from a Bourdieusian analysis

A Bourdieusian analysis of the research findings highlight two key themes that emerge from the interview data. The first of these pertains to the nature of the field, and the second focuses on a more fine-grained account of the different types of changes experienced by individuals from a disadvantaged background who find themselves within a context of social privilege.

Equal players, level playing field?

The interview data generated by the sample of scholarship recipients in this study showed that all the participants entered secondary school feeling self-assured, viewing their attainment of the scholarship as a form of a reward or recognition for their past achievements and proven abilities. The extent of the financial support offered by the scholarship further boosted their confidence, ensuring that for the most part, they felt well-prepared and equipped for the challenges that lay ahead, as well as excited about the opportunity afforded them. In effect, what they expressed was a belief that they were equal players entering a level playing field.

However, their accounts of entering their respective schools and being confronted by deeply unfamiliar school contexts, reveal that for the vast majority of the participants this was an unexpected and often shocking, uncomfortable and overwhelming experience, as outlined in Chapter Five. Only two of the participants described feeling 'at home' in this new environment. For the rest, the realisation of just how different the new school context was, often resulted in feelings of incompetence and inadequacy. And for some, these feelings manifested in self-recriminatory thoughts, as well as blaming their family for the differences between their lives and the lives of their fee-paying peers.

Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital provide a means of explaining the experiences of the scholarship students. Bourdieu (1992) reminds that fields have their own set of rules and regularities, and the unfamiliarity of the new elite space is an indication of how structured and profound the schooling inequalities in South Africa are. Further, it is very difficult if not impossible to 'see' from one part of a field to the other, and success in one part of the field does not necessarily mean success in another. The scholarship students in this study entered the elite school field with a habitus located in a very different part of the field, and with the

form and volume of capital that were not necessarily valued within elite schools. Using a phrase coined by Gewirtz *et al.* (1995), despite being exceptional students in their primary schools, within the elite school environment they possessed "cultural capital in the wrong currency" (p. 40). As such, they felt alienated when they realised that they did not speak the 'proper' English, eat 'acceptable' food, or wear the 'correct' clothes, live in the 'right' neighbourhood, or know how to 'behave' in an appropriate manner within the elite school space. Their feeling of discomfort, or what Bourdieu would refer to as a habitus-field mismatch, was heightened when they compared themselves to their fee-paying peers. These peers appeared to have advantages that included a 'way of being', or habitus, that matched that which was valued by the elite school field.

A Bourdieusian lens, therefore, provides an explanation of the interviewees' experiences that soundly refutes any notion that the scholarship students entered the elite secondary school field as equal players. In addition, it is evident from the participants' descriptions of their initial experiences within this new environment that neither they, nor their families, had any idea of what the acceptance of a gift of a scholarship would really entail.

In summary, what this research is able to show is that schools in South Africa have a particular specificity (public and independent schools), where fundamental inequalities are due in part to particular historical circumstances (apartheid) as well as to the new policy dispensation which has enabled some former white schools to cement their potentially elite status through charging fees. What this analysis shows is the extent of the inequalities within the field of schools, such that those selected as high achievers from schools in disadvantaged communities experience a sense of academic inadequacy compared to others from elite school backgrounds. They are not equal players and the field of schools is far from equal. As such, Bourdieusian theory provides a means of illustrating the extent of the inequalities in South African schooling.

The implicit social contract of the gift

The accounts of the scholarship students, reflecting back on their elite schooling experience, show that by accepting the scholarship, what they were entering into was far more complex and demanding than they had anticipated, or ever imagined. As mentioned previously, the donors and schools presented them with a physical contract that required them to achieve certain minimum academic and behavioural standards. What the scholarship students'

accounts reveal, however, is that on arrival in the new school field an implicit social contract existed. In Bourdieusian terms, this implicit social contract refers to the 'rules and regularities' of the elite school field that the scholarship students felt that they needed to adapt to in order to become strategic players in the 'game', as outlined in Chapter Six. In effect, the scholarship students describe how they felt pressure, albeit it possibly self-induced, to fulfil some of the expectations of the school through the acquisition of skills valued by the elite school field. In many respects, these skills represent the 'polished surface' that schools tend to emphasise as measures of success, such as academic, sporting, cultural and leadership involvement and achievements. What the study revealed is that externalities such as these were more easily acquired by the scholarship students despite their initial accounts of academic and sporting inadequacies. These experiences support Bourdieu's (1986) reference to schools as a form of an "academic market" (p. 17), wherein it is possible to acquire forms of capital that will set students up for 'success' in school, as well as beyond. However, Bourdieu (1986) also emphasises that capital acquisition requires exposure over time, as well as effort. Given that the scholarship students spent five years within an elite school environment, it is perhaps not unexpected that this capital acquisition on the part of the scholarship students is largely evident.

Beyond the acquisition of certain skills, however, what many of the participants tended to focus on in their narratives was that they felt they needed to change aspects about themselves. In Bourdieusian terms, for the students this involved a layering of a secondary habitus more closely aligned to the elite school field. Their accounts reveal that many of them did this by trying to change their accent, how they looked, what they wore, what they ate, as well as how they behaved, by way of some examples. While it can be argued that none of the scholarship students were 'forced' by the foundations, schools or peers to adapt to the cultural and social norms of the elite field, what the participants describe is the pressure that they felt, or perhaps placed upon themselves, to change in order to fit in. Bourdieu (1992) refers to this as a form of symbolic violence which he states is the "violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (p. 167). Schubert (2008) further warns that most often, systems of domination – that is, systems that impose arbitrary norms as legitimate on social agents within a field – are "reproduced to the extent that the dominant

and dominated perceive these systems to be legitimate, and thus think and act in their own best interests within the context of the system itself" (p. 184).

With that said, and given the levels of symbolic violence experienced by the scholarship students, what this study shows is that the process of change, or layering of a secondary habitus for the participants, was a far more difficult and at times painful process than the accumulation and acquisition of capital. Further, as is discussed in the following section, for some of the students, these changes resulted in unanticipated and unintended consequences.

Effects and consequences

For most of the participants in this study, they regarded their acquisition of a 'feel for the game' of elite schooling as placing them in an advantageous position in terms of their tertiary studies and future work prospects, as described in Chapter Seven. At the same time, however, some equate their mental health issues experienced as young adults with the dispositional shifts that they felt were required of them during the schools years. Siyabonga described this impact as follows:

> At the end of the day, they gifted us an opportunity, but they still hurt us. Because most of the scholars that I have spoken to still have a lot of unresolved emotional as well as mental issues. So you're sacrificing your emotional and your mental health to have the opportunity to grow in terms of knowledge and exposure to different types of intelligences. Which I appreciate, but … I still regret not having somebody tell me that your mental or your emotional health is important.

Siyabonga continued by describing how he became an insomniac in his final year at school as he felt so much pressure to perform well academically, as well as maintain his involvement in other areas of the school, in a continuous cycle that he described as "give and take, give and take." Ultimately, he felt that this existence was unsustainable and he stated that in his first year of university, "it all came crashing down and I couldn't even get out of bed."

Similarly, Khanyiswa, in considering whether or not she would one day be prepared to send her own daughter to the same secondary school that she attended, initially referred to herself as "a survivor", but one who "still has scars … [as] in high school you were assimilating to white girls, you were assimilating to 'that thing'. And it was very violent." In the next breath,

she stated that “at the same time I didn’t really survive, because I felt like I had to conform. I recognise it now.” One of the things that Khanyiswa still finds particularly challenging as an adult is that she feels that there is a continued expectation of expressing ‘gratitude’ for the opportunity that was afforded to her:

> The benefit was obviously [a] great education, but at the same time, there was also … this whole thing of, ‘Oh, you talk so well’, or ‘Hey, aren’t you lucky you got a scholarship!’ Yes, I’m fortunate, but at the same time, I got it out of merit as well. It wasn’t just given to me. … I don’t understand why I should always be happy - like compliant or just grateful. Just because I’ve got a scholarship, so I can’t say anything? I can’t voice out what’s wrong, what’s right?

Looking back, Thabo identified “three kinds of struggles” that he feels he faced at school for “being different”:

> Me being a scholarship kid made people look at me in a different way. It’s not like you can afford to be at the school. They will like, ‘Okay, you’re poor, and because of the scholarship, that’s why you are here.’ … I remember looking at it when I was in class, and people will be seen as, ‘They are so-and-so’s daughter’ and ‘So-and-so’s son.’ And when they came to me, they will be like, ‘Oh, this is the scholarship kid.’

At the time of writing this chapter, two years after the interviews were conducted, both Khanyiswa and Thabo have graduated with an Honours degree from a South African university. Jamal, on the other hand, left university in his first year and described himself as “the one that sort of went astray in their terms.” Having said this, Jamal blames himself and not the school or the foundation for what he describes as his “shortcomings”:

> The blueprint was set out for me so I can’t go back to them and say, ‘Why did you want me to go study?’ The blueprint was there from day one. The vision was there from day one. So I am the one that ditched the blueprint. … There’s a long list of things that I’m grateful to [School K] for, and I’ll still endorse [School K] as the best school in the country - because of the way I was able to

> grow myself. … That's what I feel the less privileged schools, they lack. Because they're just: 'That's your syllabus, do your syllabus, go home.'

Though having said this, Jamal adds that if given the opportunity to return to either the donor foundation or his school, he would like to say the following: "I would tell them that there need to be support services for people like me. There needs to be. Yes, you can make the books look good and show good records, but life happens."

For other participants, the 'unintended consequences' of accepting the gift of a scholarship were described in a more positive manner:

> I feel like being in an ordinary public school I wouldn't have … grown to accept myself because I would have been like, okay - just getting by. I wouldn't have to have had that huge struggle for all these years to kind of understand and be grateful about my past, my background and my family, and all of that. So I wouldn't have learned all of that … if I had gone to an ordinary school … and that's huge for me. It's definitely huge for me. (Yolande)

Here, Yolande acknowledged that the challenges that she faced within the elite school environment has made her stronger, and more accepting of herself and her circumstances. At the same time, Yolande recognised that the scholarship was a form of affirmation that she was someone special. In an emotional voice, she stated:

> I think being a [Foundation 2 student] made me feel important. It made me feel like I wasn't going to be like a statistic. … I was important enough for them to choose me - they saw something in me.

For others, like Natasha and Mandla, there was a recognition that the scholarship changed the course of their lives fundamentally and in a positive manner:

> If I didn't get the scholarship, I don't know where I would be right now. … I don't know if I would have gone to high school. (Natasha)
>
> Those [Foundation 1] forms changed the direction of my life. Now, imagine my life trajectory, I don't know. … My horizons, as a result of [the Foundation 1 scholarship], got so much bigger. I saw so much more in myself than what I could actually ever. (Mandla)

Jordyn also recognised that her life might have turned out very differently if it hadn't been for the scholarship:

> 'Cos the scholarship definitely made me feel … not that I needed to prove myself, but I needed to work hard for them, and I needed to kind of uphold that. They saw something in me, so there must be, you know? It must mean something. [I] could have easily turned in the wrong direction. I could have rebelled against my family, my parents. But I never once felt that way, you know. I always felt like I had a responsibility to do well still.

Even though Yusef also expressed appreciation for the ways in which the scholarship has benefitted him, and especially to the donors for their support, he also acknowledged that this opportunity that he was given is not a reflection of the 'real world':

> I think that the environment was set for me to thrive, and I made the most of it. But, looking back now, I think it was just another bubble I was living in. I mean, everything is too perfect for you. I mean, you go to class, the teachers teach well, you go home, you work, you write the exams, you do well. That's basically the whole process.

This 'perfect' set-up did not, however, detract from Yusef's support of the scholarship programme. At the time of the interview he was serving on Foundation 2's Alumni Committee, and (like Amirah) he wore a grey [Foundation 2] branded sweatshirt to our meeting, indicating his pride at being publicly associated with this organisation.

Another aspect of the 'messiness' of the gift is that certain aspects of it are more permanent than others. As Koketso stated in response to a question about his friendships, post-school:

> In terms of friends outside the scholarship, I think not a lot. Maybe 4 or 5. Because of the whole barriers … So, it's not a lot … just a few. My core friends are the ones that were part of the scholarship because we have more in common than the rest. So I'm not really in contact with people from [School J]. It's like I'm living a different life than when I was there.

What Koketso has revealed with these words is that certain aspects of attending elite schools, such as friendships developed with fee-paying peers, might not be as permanent as the skills that he acquired, as referenced in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Therefore given all of this, what is evident is that the notion of a scholarship as a form of a gift is far more complex and 'messier' than perhaps the donors and schools envisage, and certainly more so than what was initially anticipated by the scholarship recipients themselves, as well as possibly their families. Undoubtedly there are both costs and benefits that accompany the acceptance of the gift. Using a Bourdieusian lens, what this study thus shows is that it is possible for an 'outsider' to make the necessary dispositional shifts to fit into an elite environment; however, as Bourdieu (2005) emphasises, this is very difficult to do.

Looking forward

The findings of this thesis suggest that there is scope for donors and schools to think in more nuanced ways about what the acceptance of a scholarship entails for students entering elite education from schools in disadvantaged communities. First, in terms of the deep structural inequalities between schools, transitioning from one part of the field of education to another is not straightforward. Providing students with financial means, and support such as full uniforms and stationery, does not mean that they enter elite schools as 'equal players'. Without approaching the issues scholarship students face in deficit terms, it would be to the schools' (as well as the students') advantage to recognise the extent to which adjustments are borne by scholarship recipients, and to explore ways in which schools and donors may be reflective about the adjustments scholarship students feel are required of them.

Second, it is suggested that schools consider the assimilation endeavours that the scholarship students have highlighted in this study - issues pertaining to school traditions, culture and ethos - in order to create more inclusive school environments and a sense of belonging for all students. Bongani made reference to this as follows:

> We have the tradition of Founder's Day. … It is a space where we commemorate all the people who died in World War I and World War II who went to [School J]. And we are *forced* to participate. You have to be involved. I would like to see it as being a choice that people make for themselves. As now that I think about it, what does Founder's Day mean for me, specifically

> as a black person? Because … as a black person, you are asking me to help praise people who in some cases were oppressing my race.

Thus, it is suggested that it may be valuable for schools to make the 'familiar seem unfamiliar' in their practices, by being willing to consider what is valued, and by whom, within their school, and then have the resolve to implement necessary changes. In doing this, it needs to be acknowledged that this is not necessarily easy to do. However, as Christie (2008) points out in her book, *Opening the Doors of Learning: Changing Schools in South Africa*:

> The challenge is not to view what exists as inevitable and unchanging – and not to underestimate the task of changing what exists. The task is to keep envisaging alternatives, to keep challenging with new ideas, and to keep pressing against the boundaries of common sense towards something better. The task is always to hold an ethical position on education, which entails a commitment to continuously thinking about how we may best live with others in the world we share. (p. 216)

By acknowledging the complexities of the gift of the scholarship, and working in partnership to enhance the benefits of this 'gift' and to try to mitigate its costs, as well as recognising the inherent inequalities of the playing field, there is the potential for all individuals and institutions involved in scholarship programmes to continue to make a meaningful and positive impact in the lives of South Africa's youth.

Widening the field

This thesis raises a number of possible research questions for further studies, two of which I would like to discuss below. The first relates broadly to the field of gender studies. What is interesting to note is that beyond the emphasis placed by a number of the participants on the respective dominant cultures of single-sex elite schools (their descriptions of notions of masculinity by the boys, and perceived expectations of perfectionism expressed by the girls) as discussed in greatest detail in Chapter Six, this study was not able to identify further specific gender patterns emerging from the analysis of the interviews. However, this is not to say that a different sample of scholarship students might not raise issues around gender in single-sex or co-educational schools, and it is therefore suggested that this be considered in further studies.

The second broad area for possible future research are the foundations that award scholarships of this nature. Only two foundations were included in this study, and it is suggested a further study that researches a number of foundations would be of interest. This could include a consideration of the different foci and underlying philosophy of the different foundations and how these impact on the scholarship students associated with the foundations.

By way of example, each of the foundations in this study had a different underlying philosophy that may have impacted on the students' future endeavours. One of the foundation's (Foundation 1) focus was on developing students with an entrepreneurial mind-set, while Foundation 2 placed an emphasis on a philanthropic mind-set that involved encouraging the students to adopt a 'pay it forward' approach in their adult lives. A number of the interviewees made reference to the fact that they hope to be able to use the educational opportunities they received to make a meaningful difference to their family and community, as well as on a wider scale. For example, Bongani (Foundation 1) stated that he wants to "give a lot back to my family ... to get my family from the financial situation they are in", and at the same time his "lifetime goal is to do something impactful for [his home town]. Likewise, Charity (Foundation 2) commented that while she is "always thinking how to better myself, my family's life", she is also looking for ways to give back to the foundation that supported her by volunteering to help on their camps and workshops: "I would give an arm and a leg if I could because it helped me so much."

Having said all of this, however, the participants are still only young adults, and so it is not possible to determine the long-term impact of these expressed aspirations. The postscript below presents a glimpse into a possible future for scholarship students who have become skilled players across multiple fields.

Postscript

One of the possible questions that arise from a study of this nature is what the long-term impact of accepting the gift of a scholarship will be. Given that the two foundations included in this study were created in 2008, the oldest participant was just under 24 years of age at the time that the interviews were conducted. Further, although 19 out of the 20 participants were enrolled in tertiary institutions at the time of the interviews, none of them had yet

graduated. However, what emerged through the interviews were some indications that these young South Africans are well-placed to be skilled players across multiple fields of the deeply complex landscape of post-apartheid South Africa. It is with this in mind that I have included the following extract from Kelly who, at the time of the interview in 2017, was a 21-year university student studying Bachelor of Science Speech-Language Pathology at a Cape Town university. Towards the end of our interview, Kelly reflected on the advantage that she believes receiving a scholarship gave her and other scholarship students. In the extract she refers to a specific event - the student protests that erupted on the campuses of various higher education institutions across South Africa in 2015/2016.

"We have the voice, but we also understand the struggle."

I have the voice from the scholarship. I have the education. Basically, I have the English to talk to people who are in management positions and be like, "Look, this is what's wrong", that some other students who feel as strongly about the movement might not have. They just don't have the voice. … The reality is the majority of the UCT [University of Cape Town] board are white people. Our vice-chancellor is white, so you're not gonna go there and speak Xhosa or Setswana or Venda. You're gonna have to address him in English so that he can hear you. … So scholars have that - they have the education. But more than having the education … they have the marks, so they can't be labelled as lazy. They can't be labelled as wanting things that they haven't worked hard for.

So I'm on campus, and I'm getting straight A's, but my mom can't afford it … UCT is around a R160 000 total. It is a lot of money. … I don't think cleaners earn more than, say, R4 000. So, we're children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and we understand the struggle. … The only difference is that the other [black] students don't have that voice in terms of language and the way they carry themselves. The reality is growing up in the townships you need to fight. … If you grow up having to fight for everything that you have, it's how you gonna ask for things when you become an adult. You're always going to fight for the things that you want, and that's your attitude that's going to come forward. But we go to [School B], and we're taught to be ladies and well-mannered, so we can sit in meetings and be well-mannered and be calm, and not maybe be loud the way people might see other people. The thing is that they [scholarship students] know the struggle and they just have that added extra of being, "Okay, I can conduct myself in the manner that is required." … But we understand the struggle because we come from it. We come from mothers who have to work two jobs, we come from mothers who struggle to make ends meet. So we have the voice but we also have the struggle, which makes it easier for us to be the movement.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Online Questionnaire

Research Questionnaire: Full Scholarship Recipients who attended an Elite (in a South African educational context) Secondary School

Thank you for participating in this survey that forms part of my doctoral research. The focus of my research is on the costs and benefits of attending an elite secondary school (within the context of South African education) for full scholarship recipients, from the perspective of those who matriculated between the years 2008 - 2015 reflecting back on their schooling experience. This survey is the pre-cursor to a once-off interview and is intended as a means of gathering willing participants who fulfil the selection criteria of the research.

This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and consists mainly of short-answer questions.

Your responses and identity, as well as the identity of your former secondary school, will be kept confidential.

If you experience any difficulties completing this survey, you can contact me at XXX, or WhatsApp me at XXX. Thank you!

Jenn Wallace

Questions:

1. Basic Details
    - First Name
    - Surname
    - Gender Identification

2. Family Background
    - Where did you (mainly) grow up as a child? Please supply the City / Suburb.
    - Who was (mainly) responsible for raising you as a child?
    - What language did you (mainly) speak at home as a child?
    - Who are/were the primary 'breadwinners' in your family, and what job(s) do/did they do?
    - How did the apartheid government classify your family according to race?

3. Schooling
    - Which primary school(s) did you attend?

- Which secondary school(s) did you attend?
- In which year did you matriculate?
- Were you a day student, or a weekly or termly boarder?
- Who was the primary sponsor of your scholarship?

4. Post-School
    - Did you study or work full-time straight after school? If so, where and doing what?
    - Are you studying or working full-time at present? If so, where and doing what?

5. Willingness to Participate in an Interview?
    - I am hoping to interview some candidates for a follow-up interview (of approximately 1 hour in length, at a location and time of your convenience) in order to hear your responses to questions such as the following:
        - What do you remember about your application and selection process for your scholarship?
        - Looking back, how would you describe your early experiences of starting at your school?
        - What was it like to be a full scholarship recipient at your school? Do you consider some of your experiences to be different from those of your peers, and if so, how and why do you think this was so?
        - Upon reflection, what impact do you think that your schooling has had on you and who you have become as a person? What do you see as the benefits for you of attending your school? And the costs?
        - If presented with the opportunity, what would you like schools and organisations that offer full scholarship opportunities to hear about your experiences of schooling and its impact as a full scholarship recipient?
    - Would you be willing to participate in an interview if selected? Face-to-face in Cape Town; Skype/FaceTime if elsewhere in the country?

6. Contact Details
    - Email address
    - Cell number (WhatsApp)
    - Preferred method of communication?
    - In which city/suburb are you currently based?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. **Please tell me what you remember about your application and selection process for your scholarship?**

- *Who encouraged and helped you to apply? Why do you think you applied for the scholarship? What did you hope to gain?*
- *Why do you think <u>you</u> were selected for the scholarship - what qualities do you think the selection panel recognised within you? Do you think that you have lived up to their expectations? Why do you say this?*
- *What were your expectations of the school prior to entering secondary school? Do you think that the school lived up to these expectations? Why do you say this?*

2. **Looking back, how would you describe your early experiences of starting at your school?**

- Tell me what it was like to enter your school for the first time, and what those first few weeks were like for you? What was the easiest part of starting secondary school? And what was the hardest part of this experience for you?
- How was your secondary school environment similar to, and different from, your primary school environment in terms of their co-curricular offer? What difference, if any, did this make to you entering secondary school?
- What, if anything, did you feel you had to change about yourself in order to 'fit in'?
- What were your expectations coming into this new school environment, and have these expectations been fulfilled? Why do you say this?

3. **How did you describe your school to your family and friends back home at the time, and how do you describe it to your friends and peers now (as an adult)?**

- *How did you describe your school to your family and friends at home during your schooling years? Do you describe your school differently now to your friends and family, as an adult? If so, in what ways has this description changed?*
- *What languages were offered by the school as a part of the curriculum? What did you think of this language choice? What was it like for you to learn in a language other than your Home Language?*
- *How would you describe a typical XXX student? Do you think that you fit into this 'mould'? Why do you say this?*
- *Why do you think your school was involved in a scholarship programme? What do you think they hoped to gain by offering a scholarship programme?*

4. **What was it like to be a full scholarship recipient at your school? Do you consider some of your experiences to be different from those of your peers, and if so, how and why do you think this was so?**

- *Were there times when you felt that you didn't fit in at school, no matter what you did? If so, can you tell me about an example of such a time?*
- *Did you face any particular barriers, or challenges, to making the most of the opportunities that were available to students, and that perhaps weren't faced by the majority of your peers?*

- *Do you consider yourself to have survived secondary school, or as someone who thrived at secondary school? Why do you say this, and was this different from what your peers had to do either to survive or thrive?*
- *Did you feel that, as a scholarship student, you had an equal voice to your peers' voices at your school? Why do you say this?*
- *It is said that race and racism are still a social reality within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Was this a part of your experience at school, and if so, how did this play out?*
- *Some might refer to a scholarship such as the one that you received as a 'gift with strings attached'. Is this how you would describe it, and if so, what were the 'strings' attached, i.e. what was expected of you as a scholarship recipient by your family/peers/the school/your sponsor(s)?*

5. **Upon reflection, what impact do you think that your schooling has had on you and who you have become as a person? What do you see as the benefits for you of attending your school? And the costs?**

- *Upon reflection, what impact do you think that your schooling has had on you and who you have become as a person? What do you see as the benefits for you of attending your school? And the costs?*
- *Have you experienced any benefits, and/or drawbacks, to date of having been a scholarship recipient who attended XXX? What benefits, and/or drawbacks, do you think you may experience one day in the workplace as well as in your social interactions as a former XXX scholarship recipient?*
- *Has your schooling experience changed your relationship to others in any way, such as parents and former friends and peers? Who do you consider to be within your closest friendship circle today - your 'old' family and primary school friends, secondary school friends, or new friends that you have made after secondary school?*
- *Where is 'home' to you now?*
- *How would you imagine your life to be different if you had not been awarded your scholarship?*

6. **If presented with the opportunity, what would you like schools and organisations that offer full scholarship opportunities to hear about your experiences of schooling and its impact as a full scholarship recipient?**

- *Do you regard yourself as having a greater responsibility than your peers as a result of receiving your scholarship, and if so, a responsibility to whom or what? And how do you view this responsibility? (Are there still 'strings' attached?)*
- *If given the opportunity, what traditions and/or core values of your school would you want to keep the same, and what would you want to change?*
- *What advice would you want to give scholarship recipients entering secondary school?*
- Would you encourage your own child to apply for a scholarship to attend a top school? If so, how would you want to prepare your child for this experience?

Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

INTERVIEWEE:
I, _____ (print name) hereby grant permission to Jennifer Wallace to interview me as part of her PhD research.
I understand and accept that:

- My comments and insights from the interview will be included as part of the PhD research.
- My identity and that of my former school will be kept confidential as far as is practically possible.
- I will not receive any form of remuneration for participating in this interview process.
- I may withdraw from the research process at any stage with no repercussions.

Please tick the relevant box:

- ☐ I consent to the interview being audio-recorded.
- ☐ I do not consent to the interview being audio-recorded.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

INTERVIEWER:

I, Jennifer Wallace, as the interviewer and researcher, will adhere to the UCT Code for Research Ethics, which includes a commitment to the following prerequisites:

- I will keep the identity of the participants selected for this research study, as well as the identity of their former schools, anonymous to the best of my ability, thus ensuring confidentiality.
- In the event that permission is granted for the interview to be audio-recorded, I undertake to ensure that:
    - the interview will be accurately transcribed, and the transcriber will be required to sign a letter of confidentiality.
    - the recording will be used for the purpose of this research only, and as such will not be published or given to/used by any other person.
- In the event that permission is not granted for the interview to be audio-recorded, I undertake to ensure that:
    - I will take notes during the course of the interview that will reflect what is said as accurately as possible.
    - these notes will be used for the purpose of this research only, and as such will not be published or given to/used by any other person.
- I will ensure that the information and sentiments expressed in the interviews are reported in a responsible manner, with honesty, integrity and sensitivity.
- I will provide the interviewees with a copy of my final dissertation, upon request.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Schools

SCHOOL	GENDER	TYPE	PROVINCE	FOUNDATION	INTERVIEWEES
School A	Girls-only	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Amirah
School B	Girls-only	Public	Eastern Cape	Foundation 1	Kelly
School C	Girls-only	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 1	Jordyn
School D	Girls-only	Independent	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Yolande Shannon
School E	Girls-only	Independent	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Khanyiswa Natasha
School F	Girls-only	Independent	Gauteng	Foundation 1	Amanda Lebo
School G	Boys-only	Public	KwaZulu Natal	Foundation 1	Mandla Vuyo
School H	Boys-only	Public	Gauteng	Foundation 1	John
School I	Boys-only	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Yusef
School J	Boys-only	Public	Eastern Cape	Foundation 1	Bongani Koketso
School K	Boys-only	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Jamal
School L	Boys-only	Independent	Western Cape	Foundation 1	Siyabonga
School M	Co-educational	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Thabo
School N	Co-educational	Public	Western Cape	Foundation 2	Charity Cebisa