Out of Step but Stepping Up?

Following a Group of Students Negotiating University and Beyond

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Pietermaritzburg

2015

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ABSTRACT

This study holistically explores the experiences at university and the effects of a university education for students at a South African university. Literature on students in higher education has generally been focused on 'traditional' students and graduates in the first world. This research advances understanding of students and graduates in a unique way.

The study has used qualitative data generated from focus groups, extensive interviews, diaries and photographs of a small sample to uncover student narratives, which offer insights into the ways in which the participants negotiated their way through university, graduation and the early stages of their working lives. The participants showed evidence of remarkable resilience in navigating higher education and the job market without the requisite economic, cultural or social capital. Similar fortitude was also revealed in the attempts to fulfil the expectations of significant individuals and social groups. The findings from the research suggest that the impact of university education on social and economic mobility in the South African context is more complex than often assumed. The participants describe their unique positioning within inimical impulses of: progress and tradition, independence and belonging, conventional success and inner fulfilment. With regard to identity and emerging identities, the participants conveyed a need to create coherent links between their past, their present and their future selves. A sense of isolation emerged for the participants as a function of uneven and incomplete upward economic and social mobility, and the expectations of such mobility.

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in Sociology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Moya May Bydawell, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

   a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced

   b. Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References sections.

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28 September 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost my deep gratitude goes to the participants who shared their stories with me. Without your input and trust I would have been unable to complete this thesis. Thank you.

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Simon Burton for his mentorship, and Mrs Ruth Searle for her thorough input in the early stages of the project. Acknowledgement must also go to the School of Social Science for granting me a sabbatical in order to work on this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr Anne Stanton for her sound guidance and generous moral support. Thanks too to Ms Tami Hamerschlag for her unfailing interest, ready ear and for reminding me that writing can be fun! To Mrs Kim Ward, great appreciation for her perceptive, thorough and speedy proofreading of the thesis.

I am profoundly indebted to so many dear friends and family who have provided me with both encouragement and practical help. Special mention here of Angie, Cecile and Dallas, who with generosity and kindness, have over the long period of writing provided a haven of play dates, affection and adventures for my children. Thank you especially to my mother who has so selflessly stepped in and taken the brunt of child-rearing duties during this time. Last but not least I would like to thank Andrew for his support and Tristan, Isabella and Freya for their forbearance, optimism and unfailing affection during the completion of this dissertation.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

"I look at where I came from and where I am... Miraculous...It is a story of survival and success." (Temba interview, 25 October 2014)

This dissertation sets out to examine the trajectory of a group of students in the course of their journey *to* university, *through* university, and *after* university in South Africa. The essence of the participants' stories in these contexts is encapsulated in the above quote; university is seen as a passage opening to novel milieus. The data was collected during two stages – initially during the first six months of the students' third academic year, and again four years later. By the latter stage all participants had graduated and were engaged in new pursuits. The material collected covers the students' earlier lives (through retrospective narrative), their initial experiences of university (academic, social and economic), their engagement with university life, their relationships with their communities of origin and their experiences between a year and four years after graduation (dependent on the participants' particular postgraduate involvement).

The aim of this study was to reveal the holistic student and post-student experience through looking at the daily lives and related emotions of a small group of study participants. The intention was to examine each participant's 'lived experience' taking into account experience and interpretation of that experience, using the spoken and unspoken rules of the world around one (Van Manen, 1997: 36). As discussed in more detail in section 1.4 of this chapter, beyond assumption and anecdotal reports, little is known about the realities of family life, values and roles of the emergent student or graduate body in the South African context. Nor is there much focus on the ways that students negotiate belonging after university, particularly at a micro level. There is a need to ask: In what ways have student and graduate experiences and histories contributed to the social space in which they now reside? Change was experienced by participants in this study in all intensities and dimensions. The renewal of contact with the participants brought a longitudinal aspect to

the study: the participants were followed into their lives beyond university. Here the researcher attempted to examine whether the participants' expectations of life after university and of life as a university graduate had resonated with their early expectations, those of their families and communities.

"It's like when you come to the university it's like you are starting a whole new life and, ya that's the strange thing about it." (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). As suggested by this participant, for many in the South African context, university is not only qualitatively different to their previous experience, but also brings the potential for dramatic change.

"I'm the living proof of the fact that while education is something good, [but] it can cause a separation between people. Sometimes such gap is discomforting." (Themba diary, 28 March 2010). For example, the participant above described a sense of disassociation from those involved in his history. This study attempted to examine the sense of place and belonging as evidenced by both *students* and *graduates*. The spaces that the participants inhabited were interrogated. One might expect that the ways in which those spaces are configured, and their relative importance would alter over time. How has the university experience endowed the student with different opportunities from their contemporaries in their communities and homes of origin? In what ways has this had an impact on the participants' view of themselves and others? How do the participants perceive their identities as having changed (if at all) as a result of the university experience? In what communities do they describe a sense of belonging, and is this affected by their university experience? These questions lead to an exploration of the participants' sense of place and embeddedness in the context of possible changes wrought by the higher education experience.

The South African participants, for example, related reflecting on the ways that others regard their education, regard status and the ways in which they position themselves. They themselves seemed out of place and disconnected at many levels. For the students, over time there was a conscious move into a more sophisticated and industrialised world – a shift

that was expressed as enjoyable – but one which was shadowed with an experience of isolation and guilt.

The broad objectives of the study are thus to investigate the ways the participants (first generation and students from a background of poverty) access the appropriate cultural capital allowing progression through academia and beyond, to explore the tools the participants used to negotiate their way through the University structure , to examine where participants locate themselves on exiting the university in terms of sense of place and community and class and to investigate the ways that the participants saw their race, class and gender as shaping their perspectives and experiences of University.

Specifically the research questions asked are as follows:

- What were the difficulties and triumphs the participants experienced during their experiences as students?

- What (if any) have been the challenges and triumphs experienced by the participants as a result of their university experience (in the context of their lives in the present)?

- Do the participants consider themselves to have changed as a result of their encounter with University? How do they describe their identity and sense of place in the present?

- How have the participants' negotiated possible change with their identity of origin?

1.2 Context of Student Lives in Education

"Why is it that in life some people don't struggle a lot, but for me since I began university things have been tough?" (Tilly diary entry, 1 April 2010).Here a participant referred to difficulties resulting from her engagement with higher education. This statement can be understood as challenge at a number of levels including academic, social and emotional.

"Being a 'student' is more than an occupational or educational category; it implies certain dispositions and lifestyles, as well as a stage in the life course" (Holdsworth, 2009: 227) – all of which require substantial adjustments to be made by the individual. Apart from the specificity of the South African situation, higher education globally is very different to the higher education of the past: "Today it is in and of a world centered on consumption and consuming, globalized knowledge and high tech communication networks" (Le Play, 2008: 6). These factors, as well as assumptions made about student lives, affect practice and effectiveness in teaching and learning. As Prosser and Trigwell (2001: 42) pointed out, there is extensive deviation in the way that students comprehend their learning and in the manner in which they handle their scholarship as their previous experiences in these areas differ.

International literature shows the stereotypical student as working hard at becoming an adult – all of their experiences are part of this journey. Many are establishing their own identity as separate from that of their families and sometimes their community. In general young adults are transitioning to adulthood – and much research has been dedicated to this period (Thompson et al., 2002 in Richter and Walker, 2008: 25, Arnett, 2000). The straightforward journey to adulthood and adult identity is no longer a linear one – from, for example, school to university to the working world; rather it has become far more complex (Richter and Walker, 2008: 25).

Identity refers to who one is, or who one perceives oneself to be in the context of the norms, values, and expectations of the social space(s) in which one operates. These impact on the way that we are, feel and behave. Perry (in Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 8) suggested that students are "making commitments to ideas, values, religious beliefs, careers and relationships". It is important to recognise that some students, for a variety of reasons, may not yet be ready for this shift, or may be at different points in their identity development and identity commitment. They may still identify who they are in terms of their roots and the explicit expectations of them; alternatively, there can be an explicit

rejection of these roots. This study focused on the social aspects of identity, rather than the affective, cognitive aspects of an individual's sense of self.

The South African student's identity is likely to be varied and based in shifting social contexts. The reality of post-apartheid South Africa is one of diversity in both identity and access to resources – making for a varied student background and hence experience. Moreover the African university tends to be based on Western models of higher education – often intrinsically foreign to the African, and not validating African lifestyles, experiences and knowledges (Matos, 2000: 14-17). Thus many contemporary South African students may not conform to the researched student identity – as research often looks at what could be termed the traditional student: late teens/early twenties in age, first world (geographically and experientially), relatively financially secure and educationally (comparatively) well resourced. "References to 'student' are often shorthand for white, middle-class and mobile groups" (Holdsworth, 2009: 228).

The term 'non-traditional student' has often referred to mature aged students; those who are not full-time students, or those who have financial and role responsibilities other than the student role (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 485). In South Africa, the 'non-traditional' student has tended to refer to students who were previously denied access to higher education – commonly black, poor and disadvantaged educationally: "As a result of their disadvantaged backgrounds, the integration of these students into the social and academic environment of a higher education institution is even more complex than in the case of traditional students" (Jama, Mapasela and Beylefeld, 2008: 992). The students may also have different cultural experiences and social expectations around identity formation as a result of South African diversity, which is not necessarily covered within international identity theory. The poverty from which they perhaps emerge is at a third-world level. Thus investigation into the possible uniqueness of the South African students' experiences would be helpful.

The effects of being a first generation student – that is a student whose parents have no exposure to university – are increasingly being recognised (cf Somers, Woodhouse and Cofer , 2004, Byrd and Macdonald, 2005, Jehangir, 2009, Bui, 2002, Dennis, Phinney and Chuateco, 2005, Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson and Covarrubias, 2012, Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella and Amaury, 1996, Heymann and Carolissen, 2011). First generation students' experiences are important to understand, as the increasing push to involve people in higher education results in more first generation students. This is particularly salient in the South African situation where there is a policy of including sectors of the population historically excluded from higher education (Department of Education, 1997a). Of further interest in the context of first generation students, is the suggestion that they experience a cultural mismatch between the values espoused by their families and communities, and those advocated by institutions of higher education   (London, 1989: 166; Stephens et al., 2012: 1186). Stephens et al. (2012) proposed that this was the result of what they call the 'cultural mismatch theory'. The enforced transition caused by the cultural mismatch may lead to "biographical and social dislocation" (London, 1989: 168).

Students as a 'group' are made up of several different social identities, including those constructed around race, class and gender. Moreover, they are entrenched in different role identities depending on their life position and experience – daughter, son, mother, father, friend, lover, income generator and of course, student. All of the above carry expectations regarding the anticipations of the community at large from the individual. In the following dissertation the term 'student' is both used to identify the social role of students generally, and refer to the participants of the study. The distinct meaning of the word is clear in different contexts.

At this point we are often unaware of South African student's backgrounds in terms of these areas, beyond assumption and anecdote. Moreover, the student population is constantly changing as the political, economic and cultural environment changes. The imagined student profile of 'disadvantaged, black and rural' may become more complex as development in the above systems over the last twenty years may have opened up access to

higher education. Student roles and positioning impacts on their capacity for academic interaction as well as extra-curricular interaction. The student participants in this research provided noteworthy qualitative data on their experiences at university, their roles and their families.

At a micro level, international literature suggests that undergraduate students have more free time available outside the lecture hall, than they spend in lectures (Kuh, Branch Douglas, Lund and Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994a). Such research also showed that students who are involved in a variety of 'meaningful' activities in conjunction with their studies benefit more than those who are not (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). The experience of the non-traditional student in South Africa may differ from this international perspective. It would be interesting to investigate the perspectives on out of class activity for those who are not well prepared for the academic demands of higher education. Moreover, the concept of "free time" may be different.   It may be that in such activities, the student has the opportunity to utilise what they have learnt in the lecture theatre. The student becomes experienced in interdependent behaviours (Kuh et al., 1994a). Meaningful activities could include practical placements, work environments – particularly those related to the field of study, voluntarism and extra mural activities – for example, university clubs and teams. The 'involved' student has higher levels of persistence, is more critical, displays better leadership qualities, is better satisfied and more proactive (Kuh et al., 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). The involvements mentioned are 'meaningful' in that they are organised to some extent. However the impact of the involvement may also be a direct result, not of the organised or organising activity per se, but of the sustained contact with others (Kuh, Branch Douglas, Lund and Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994b) – which points to the significance of 'informal' student involvement.

One could assume that the South African student is no different from their international counterparts in terms of the overall benefit of free time activity. What may be different is the extent of the involvement of students in extra-curricular activities, the sorts of extra-curricular activities available and / or chosen, the level of organisation of those activities, as

well as the prioritisation of those activities within the context of a challenging academic, social and economic environment.

It has been shown that student potential is affected by their psychological and bodily development – thus it needs to be given as much attention as their mental development within the higher education setting (Miller and Prince, 1976 in Richter and Walker, 2008: 26). It is also important to recognise that "the student is a human being, has being as a human being, with all the hopes, relationships, projects, joys and anxieties that are part of human being itself" (Barnett, 2007: 28). Thus it is vital to identify those facets in the effort to treat students as multi-dimensional beings, rather than concentrating only on their academic selves.

1.3 Context of Graduate Experiences in a World Beyond University

Education is commonly regarded as a panacea for economic and social hardship – as indicated in section 1.4 below. In particular, higher education is regarded as a tool to escape such situations – both at an individual, communal and national level. Unfortunately graduating with a degree does not necessarily result in employment. While graduate unemployment figures are controversial as discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.10.3), it has been suggested that 30% of South African graduates are unemployed (Jenvey, 2012). Moreover, those who have degrees in the arts and social sciences have less chance of employment than their counterparts in science and commerce (ibid.). Race also decreases the likelihood of postgraduate employment: "Most black youngsters do not have the family and other labour market connections generally enjoyed by whites and a few, more affluent blacks" (South African Minister of Education, Dr Blade Nzimande, in Jenvy, 2012).

However, as discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.10.3), the opportunities for people with a matriculation certificate or with less than a matriculation certificate are less hopeful still. According to 1998 figures, 15% of people with a matric are poor (at a poverty measurement

of R800 per month per household) and 5% of individuals with post-school education are poor. The latter figure includes those who are still engaged in tertiary study and who are thus not yet in a position to actively seek work (Woolard, 2002: 3). Thus it is clear that despite possible unemployment for some, a tertiary education is a worthwhile investment. It also suggests that immense pressure is felt by students and graduates to belong to the number who are employed and economically secure. One would further imagine then that for those successfully employed, tertiary education offers opportunities which are difficult to acquire elsewhere. Much of the existing literature on graduates deals with the employability or lack thereof of the graduate (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011, O' Regan, 2010, Holmes, 1995, Jameson and Holden, 2000, Elias and Purcell, 2004, Mtebula, 2014, Tymon, 2011, Morrison, 2013, Su and Zhang, 2015) as opposed to narrative accounts of graduate encounters. Moreover the acuteness and the magnitude of the development of graduate identity on exiting university has remained largely overlooked (Perrone and Vickers, 2003: 69).

"It is a little bit difficult … they (pre university friends) don't …they don't have degrees – and ya, it's a little bit difficult." (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).As this participant's quote and figures from the previous paragraph suggest, it could be that those engaging in tertiary education are exposed to the world in a way that is not part of the general milieu. Information regarding the social experiences at a qualitative level of South African graduates is not readily available. However, an American study showed that within the 'working class', graduates, their families and communities experience changes in the identity of the graduate with regard to ways of thinking, ideas , morals and access to resources (Miller, 2006: 109).

South Africa, as outlined in the Education White Paper (Department of Education, 1997a: 17) aspires to develop "graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including, critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas". Moreover graduates should be able to behave

conscientiously in the workplace and show resourcefulness in their actions (Department of Education, 1997b: 10). Some of the above (for example, critical and problem solving skills as well as communicative know how) can be regarded as personal talents rather than solely as academic abilities. This would suggest that the graduate is imbued with not only knowledge, but also ways of relating to the situations in which they find themselves. It is also argued that it is necessary to recognise not only the graduate attribute, but also the ways in which such qualities are communicated, as well as assimilated, translated and put to use (Bitzer and Botha, 2011: 224). This too suggests an internalisation or identity modification as necessary for some as the result of higher education. The perception of graduate identity is one in which individuals regard themselves as highly educated (Holmes, 1995). The idea of being a graduate rests on the agency of the graduate to both reconcile their personal view of themselves and their social presentation of that self as a 'graduate', as well as to maneuver for acceptance by those who would allow entry into the perceived echelons of the graduate (ibid.). Thus the identity of graduate is based both in individual agency and social recognition. As with the term 'student' the word 'graduate' in this study is used both to identify the social identity of graduates in general, and to refer to the participants of the research. The differentiation is clear in the context of the text.

International literature refers to the strength of graduate identity with their alumni. This is based on the shared experiences of students (Patouillet, 2013). These experiences, rooted in shared rituals, transcend time and space, resulting in group support – a need important to human beings. This is heightened if the university from which one graduated is regarded as having a positive status (Ishler, 2004: 30). There is a paucity of South African data looking at the identity of being a graduate as an individual or as part of a group.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

"Education is the great engine to personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become a head of a mine, that the child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It

is what we make of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from
another. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

(Mandela, 1995)

It is thought that "countries which have managed to sustain high levels of economic growth with significant improvements in the living standards of the masses of their populations are those which have given priority to excellent education and training, and to higher education and training in particular as an agent of socio-economic change and development" (Council on Higher Education, 2004: 14). Higher education is thus significant in that it prepares people for professional vocations and nurtures innovation. Within this context, student success and meaningful learning can contribute towards the development of the economy and ultimately result in poverty alleviation and the decline of social harms. As described by the South African Higher Education Qualifications Framework, there is a need to "facilitate the education of graduates who will contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa and participate successfully in the global economy and knowledge society" (Department of Education, 1997b: 10).

For this reason, understanding South African students and their challenges is important. As already indicated, it would seem that many contemporary South African students do not share the student experience that 'students' have traditionally been presumed to have, nor do they share the lifestyle or background of this group. The expectation is that higher education can propel individuals into new loci in a stratified society. As discussed in Chapter 3, the notion of society in reference to the traditional notion itself may be of questionable value. While in-depth debate is beyond the scope of this study, the term will be used to refer to the social organisation of people living within South Africa. As described in section 1.3 of this chapter, despite its potential, education may not necessarily lead inevitably to economic well-being, nor does it provide a failsafe entry into higher social strata. The question here is: Had this been the case for the participants in this study? If so, how had the participants reconciled their positions with regard to their expectations, history and community?

Much of the existing research into students and their experiences seems to be focused on looking at particular groupings of students – for example gender, culture, language, gay, disabled, racism and so on. For example, Matshedisho (2010) examined the provision of services for the students with disabilities and students' experiences of that provision – to find that integration at a social level was rated as important by students with disabilities. Pillay and Collings (2004) showed that 56% of students in a University of KwaZulu-Natal study had experienced racism. Moreover a qualitative study at the same institution found that students experienced high levels of racism and segregation (Durrheim, Trotter, Piper and Manicom , 2004). A study at Stellenbosch University examined the experiences of gay and lesbian students, who described the prejudice they encountered (Graziano, 2004). Banda (2000) investigated the phenomenon where students with different mother tongues show a preference towards learning in English. There is a paucity of information dealing qualitatively with the experiences of South African students and graduates.

The research in this study does not set out to look at the distinct experiences of particular groups of students in relation to others. It does set out to look at the holistic experience of the student in general – including their experience of their identities and their social roles. As discussed, students in contemporary South African universities could be assumed to have very different lifestyles and experiences when compared to the students of fifteen years ago, or those from first world nations.

As discussed in Chapter 4.9, many South African students come from situations of disadvantage and poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa includes a number of extremely poor countries – approximately 40% of its population live below the US $1 per day poverty measure (Southern African Regional Poverty Network, 2012). Unemployment and poverty are particularly pressing concerns. Using a 'minimum living level' of R1871 per household of 4.7 people, 46% of the South African population live in poverty (Landman, Bhorat, Van der Berg and Van Aardt, 2003: 30). Almost one half of the households in South Africa benefit from state grants (Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn and Argent, 2010: 34). In 2008 24.4% of people of employable age were unemployed (using the unemployment definition that requires the

respondent to have searched for work in the preceding 14 days to the data collection (Leibbrandt et al., 2010: 32). KwaZulu- Natal, the province in which the study was undertaken is one of the poorer provinces – with 6 of the country's 10 poorest areas being housed within KwaZulu- Natal (Teke 2015).

The South African student also lives within post-apartheid South Africa, in which there are high levels of inequality, both materially and in access to services, including education. Inequality in South Africa stood at 0.65 in 2011 (Swales, 1990). This is one of the highest rates of inequality in the world. In South Africa inequality exists both at a racial level – that is between white and black sectors of the previously separated and differentially privileged population and at an intra-racial level – particularly within the black African sector of the population. Inequality within the previously disadvantaged black African segment of the population is increasing (Leibbrandt et al., 2010: 10). "Inequality in the sub-region is manifested through rising levels of impoverishment, the paradox of 'jobless growth', entrenched patriarchal systems, rising unemployment and the inability of the majority of people to access sources of livelihood or basic services" (Southern African Regional Poverty Network, 2012). Opportunity is still racialised in addition to being based on class and networking contacts.

Moreover, the South African university grapples with a variety of challenges: not least how to redress the inequalities of the past political system within a context of the globalisation and commodification of the higher education system. Part of this redress is to facilitate the success of students from previously (and currently) disadvantaged backgrounds in terms of South Africa's racialised past. In congruence with such efforts, the numbers of first year registrations have increased in recent years (Letseka and Maile, 2008: 17), which has put increasing strain on the capacity of Higher Education institutions. However, according to Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007: 10) improvement of access for the disadvantaged is less substantial than had been hoped – only 16% of student aged youth (20-25 years old) are registered students, and only 12% of black South Africans of this age group are registered students as compared to the 20% registration rate of countries in similar economic brackets.

In 2010, only 7% of the total population of average tertiary aged people (between the ages of 20 and 24 years) in South Africa were registered at a higher education institution (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). 8.9% of South Africans had a post-school qualification according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2008). For the students registered for social science degrees in 2000, there was a dropout rate of 36% (Letseka and Maile, 2008: 35). This is particularly common for black African students (Scott et al., 2007: 17). South African universities also show evidence of prolonged degree times for those who do graduate (Scott et al., 2007: 12) . Research shows (see chapter 4) that parental involvement is instrumental in student success. There is little evidence dealing with parental involvement in the South African higher education situation. It may be that there is little parental involvement as a result of poverty and a minimal exposure to higher education, which may have negative ramifications. On the other hand, one may find that there is significant parental involvement as a function of family effort to move out of poverty through investing in the university student. These are dynamics which would be interesting to examine.

Thus, those attending and graduating from tertiary education in South Africa are the privileged few.

In an attempt to provide access to higher education, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) finances needy South African students through low interest loans and 40% of that loan can be converted into a bursary if the student performs well. Once the student begins to earn more than R26 300 a year, they are required to start to pay the loan back (Letseka and Maile, 2008: 27). In 2007 15% of all students registered at government tertiary education institutions were recipients of financial aid grants (ibid.).

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2008) South Africa drew high numbers of foreign students – mostly from the sub-Saharan region – into higher education. In 2007 the students drawn from the Southern African region into South African Higher education

numbered 5% of the total registrations (Letseka and Maile, 2008: 27). International students are typically charged higher fees than their South African counterparts and contend with difficulties in getting study visas and overcoming xenophobia (ibid.). This is despite the prioritisation of increasing these numbers by the Department of Education (DOE, 2008 in Letseka and Maile (2008: 15). There is an increasing trend internationally of globalisation in terms of the availability of transnational university choices for those with resources (Ball and Nikita, 2014: 84). In the case of South African universities in the context of sub-Saharan students, that choice would be vertical in nature. As detailed the student and graduate experience is an unusual one in the South African setting, and that student experience must for many be coloured by a background of poverty and struggle. Moreover, survival in the light of student poverty is of interest.

Both the profile and the involvement of the contemporary student and graduate have implications for competency and capacity. South Africa's distinctive positioning with regards to history, diversity, cultural and social expectations and levels of poverty produce unique experiences of South African students in higher education which requires investigation. It is also essential to understand the student as a holistic being, rather than one divorced from context or experience. A deeper understanding of the student and graduate may be helpful in informing practice for the better. Understanding the projected experiences of students and graduates may also be interesting in terms of understanding dynamics regarding inequality and redress. The scope and depth of this study mean that it is exploratory and the results are not generalisable, however may provide direction for further research.

1.5 Overview of Dissertation

On a practical note this dissertation may be lengthy as a result of the exploratory nature of the research topic and the qualitative methodology. The participants' words were regarded as important to provide textural context to the discussion. In addition, the number of themes generated by the data necessitated a wide ranging literature review.

1.5.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This sets the scene in terms of the situation of higher education in South Africa, poverty and the existing research into students in South African Higher education, and post higher education.

1.5.2 Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter seeks to explain the process of data collection. It explores the ideas of qualitative data collection and analysis using narrative. The interrogation of the researcher's position, the relationships between the researcher and the participants and the approach to data analysis within this chapter is essential for the project's validity.

1.5.3 Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This section examines studies and literature dealing with student identity and student experience, graduate identity and graduate experience.

1.5.4 Chapter 4: Literature Review

Using Tinto's model of institutional departure (1987), Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory and Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital as a framework, this section tries to understand the student/ post student experience within the South African context.

1.5.6 Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

This section explores themes common to all the participants, as well as to issues that were particular to individuals. As discussed in Chapter 2, the analysis is accomplished using a thematic approach. It interrogates the question of the students' relationships with their communities of origins, the university community and their experiences of these dynamics after leaving the university.

1.5.7 Chapter 6: Conclusion

The final section shows how parts of the student/ post student experience are functions of the students'/ graduates' prior experience, the wider social, political and economic context, and other aspects are functions of their micro level interactions. The positions they find themselves in now are a result of their positioning within a social milieu that values higher education as a transformative tool, but lacks the ability to integrate transformation into the wider context.

2 Methodology

2.1 Methodological Paradigm

The research has been anchored within a qualitative framework, as the nature of the information required is of a textural, detailed and personal nature. It is the human aspect of action and interaction that is of interest in this study. A qualitative approach likewise allows for an emotional component to the stories being told here to be communicated (Farrall, 1996: 5). Weber describes meaning as having two possibilities: meaning as constructed by an individual or individuals, or subjective meaning as attributed to conjectured actors in a particular situation (Heydebrand 1994). Accordingly there is no 'correct' meaning, only the insightful interpretation of such meaning (ibid). As Mouton and Marais (1990: 130) pointed out, qualitative researchers let the subjects under investigation communicate for themselves; moreover, the researcher is often involved in the sphere under investigation leading to them being conversant with many of the themes that evolve. In this instance the researcher is involved in higher education as a lecturer, and is therefore involved in student issues on a daily basis. The participants, being students during the initial phase of the research (2010) initially shared the same immediate environment as the researcher, albeit from a very different position. The researcher is also a citizen of Southern Africa, experiencing many of the same daily events and history as the subjects.

Qualitative research is also appropriate for cross cultural research (Liamputtong, 2010: 16) in that it allows for a sensitisation around difference. This study has needed to be sensitive to difference, as it is difference that has in many cases been central to the South African experience. It also allows proper recognition of hegemonic dynamics and thus enables the experiences of the marginalised to be shown. In this case the participants are not of a formally powerful identity or culture, and such sensitivity is necessary. It also has to be ensured that historic dynamics of exploitation are not repeated, particularly in countries with colonial pasts (Liamputtong, 2010: 17). The responsive and reflective possibilities in qualitative research allow this, as was the case in the said research. At this point it is important to make explicit that the researcher is 'white' (a formally powerful racial characteristic in South Africa) and the research participants are not. However, while the above point is taken, one cannot argue that the identity itself makes for an exploitative

relationship between researcher and participant. An awareness of the possibility of such a dynamic can be constructive in terms of prevention, as was the case when conducting the research for this study. An acceptance of diversity without prejudice is important.

In addition, the focus of the research is exploratory and personal. It involves an attempt to investigate the concerns of the participants as experienced on an everyday basis. Using qualitative research allows researchers to attempt to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view and to unfold the meaning of their lived world" (Kvale, 2006: 481). It also allows the researcher a window into not only the reported actions, emotions and feelings of the participants, but also the "the meanings and interpretations that people give to their behaviour" (Liamputtong, 2010: 19).

2.2 Time Frame

The study is longitudinal in nature in that the research process was separated into two stages: the first research tranche occurred in 2010, when the participants were recruited and the second in 2014, when the same participants were re-contacted in the manner of panel research. The same respondents were approached by the same researcher as a once-off follow-up opportunity. Longitudinal research is regarded as research that occurs over time, taking into account change (Saldana, 2003: 1). Its ability to allow for the recognition of change can enable the link between macro and micro social processes to be uncovered (Farrall, 1996: 5). Social change may take time to reflect in the experiences of the individual. Longitudinal qualitative research allows for 'dynamic analysis' which engages with how people relocate within and between disparate social settings over time (Macmillan, 2011: 5, Holland, Thomson and Henderson, 2006: 25). The research here looks at the changes in individual positioning in relation to the university and to social strata at large. Panel design is appropriate to the investigation of maturing and of "understanding the interrelationships between life events, behaviours, preferences, and later outcomes that affect people's life chances and well-being" (Laurie, 2013: 7). Panel data also enables the investigation of causal relationships between variables due to the time span involved and the consequent opportunity for the identification of patterns of social action (Blossfeld, Schneider and Doll, 2009: 11).

Longitudinal qualitative (panel) research enables the research to uncover (and perhaps) understand the variances between peoples claims and their actions (Thomson, 2007: 572) through looking at the amassed conversations and assessing contrasts within them (McLeod, 2003: 285, Farrall, 1996: 4). This is useful when investigating aspects of human life which have an expected developmental trajectory (Farrall, 1996: 2) – change, as mentioned above, and identity formation, becoming adults, or community embeddedness as does this study.

During the first part of the research process the participants were all students nearing the end of their undergraduate degree. They reported on current events in their lives as well as reminiscing about their pasts. The second stage of the research process took place four years later when all the students had exited the university, and all but one had exited graduate studies. The research hopes to capture the changes that were experienced in the participants' lives during their degree period and the intervening four years.

2.3 Approach

2.3.1 Narrative and Biographical

Specifically, the researcher chose to use narrative as a research approach as it involves people telling their stories in a chronological fashion (Elliott, 2005: 7). As understood by Silverman "all we sociologists have are stories. Some come from other people, some from us. What matters is to understand how and where the stories are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to intelligent use in theorizing about social life" (1998: 111). Here the everyday experiences and concerns of the participant are allowed to become visible which was the intent of the study.

Three important aspects of narrative are their chronological nature, that they are meaningful in nature and that they have a social dimension – that the stories are produced

with an audience in mind (Elliott, 2005: 4). In this case the audience is the interviewer/ researcher. These differentiate the narrative from simple description, and allow it to contribute an understanding of the relationship between the subject and their social context. Moreover, narrative has the potential to allow for attention to both "individual agency and social structure" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989: 5) and the relationship between the two (ibid., 6), as well as to engender transformation for the research subjects through increased levels of self-knowledge (Bold, 2012: 23). This is particularly apt as the research hoped to capture the experiences of the subjects (as students and after) in the context of their respective environment. Narrative has to be understood to characterise the experience being relayed in a way that makes sense, rather than claiming to "provide the reality" (Bold, 2012: 23). This is relevant as the participants in the study can only make sense of their own experiences within the contexts that they are familiar.

The narrative approach "provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (Webster and Mertova, 2007: 3). Moreover, narrative is a representation of how the subject experiences life rather than a neutral account of that life (ibid.). Implicit in the process of constructing narrative is that the participants are at the same time making meaning of their experiences (Lawson, 2008: 16). Human life is of a narrative arrangement – people organise and are shaped by their lived and reported narratives (Neimeyer, 1993: 222). Here the research approach taps into a natural process of personal meaning making, this hopefully having good potential as a way of knowing and understanding for the researcher. As the narratives particular to this study have been produced over time, they have the potential to take into account change at social and personal levels, and to examine how these changes are constructed by subjects (Holland et al., 2006: 12). As discussed above this construction takes place within the constraints of the existing social structure. When humans are asked to tell their stories "they are being given an opportunity to create an identity, a particular self which they may go on to develop and further live out" (Sikes and Gale, 2006). Because the telling of stories (in this case the narrative construction) has a performative aspect, the representations of the events by research participants often have different meanings at different times and in different contexts (Elliott, 2005: 62). This project with its lengthy and

diverse data collection strategy and the gap between the first and second stages of data collection is positioned to capture the above.

As in the tradition of Thompson (1970:13) within the narrative approach, one can then write with an acknowledgement of the agency of the participant, or as Sharpe (1997: 27) suggested to explore realities 'from below'– that is from the perspective of those who are not powerful and who are perhaps experiencing events rather than directing them thereby avoiding a reductionist perspective (Thompson, 1971: 78). The research here is well suited to the application of such sensitivities as most of the participants come from historically disenfranchised groups and their stories have resonance for the project of transformation on which South Africa has embarked, with all its complexities.

This project falls broadly under the realm of biographical research, where in this case, participants' narratives are used to construct a comprehensive understanding of their life within the social world. The task of the researcher is to collect and analyse the information in a way that makes sense of the subtleties of the participants' stories. In the feminist tradition of Heilbrun (1989), biographies, when approached with an attempt to uncover experiences which may have been rendered invisible as a result of prevailing ideology, can lead to a recognition of the complexity of issues which may otherwise easily be dismissed or discounted in favour of more acceptable and hegemonic narratives. Biographies also allow for the adjustment of the perceptions of the individuals involved.

The biography allows entry into the lives of the participants without direct interference. Moreover the biographical approach allows consideration of both the particular and the universal (Erbin, 1998: 4). It opens up the opportunity to analyse the personal in order to move towards an understanding "into the nature or meaning of individual lives or groups of lives" (ibid.). However one has to be aware that the participant can choose what to disclose and how to present it (Meth, 2003: 201). Thus the information presented within the study

has to be understood as that which the participants were willing to share- which both creates limitations and strengths for the data itself.

2.4 Method

A triangulation of methods has been used, in order to deepen the information gathered. Qualitative work is often 'multi method' in nature, which attempts to deepen the understanding of the issue in question (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 8). Triangulation of methods is particularly important in this case as the nature of the material is highly subjective and bound by the individuals involved. Narrative is more effective when supporting and supportive of multiple data sources. The ways in which the data was collected during the first part of the research process – 2010 (in-depth interviews, diaries, focus group) – was a deeply considered approach to accessing knowledge about the participants (Stewart, 2002: 582). At this time, the participants had more time available to engage with the researcher in multi modal methodologies due to their student status and their geographical location relative to the researcher.

The second phase of the data collection (2014) was restricted to in-depth interviews due to the new life phases of the participants. They were no longer able to manipulate their own time to the extent they had been able to as students. They were engaged in the working world and family life. Moreover, physical distance in some cases constrained the possibilities of experimenting with different methods, as had been possible before. This is unfortunate as the data gathered in the second phase is not as extensive or as nuanced as a result. However this is a pitfall of longitudinal qualitative research and the concomitant constraints of time, money and energy.

The follow-up study engages with the same participants through in-depth interviews four years later, specifically focusing on the participants' retrospective views of their experiences of university and their current experiences in the context of community (past and present),

position (past and present) and expectation (past and present). All seven of the participants were enthusiastic with regard to the follow-up interview process.

The research was conducted as follows:

2.4.1 Focus Group (2010)

An initial focus group was held in this research project in 2010. It consisted of all the participants and the researcher. The focus group was constructed on the premise of the participants' shared characteristic in being students at the same university at the same time. Its function was to clarify with the participants items of significance for interviews and for including in their diaries. This perception of what the participants believed to be significant in their daily lives is in itself of interest. The focus group also served as an opportunity to discuss and agree on the expectations of both the researcher and participants. It further enabled the participants to ask questions about the research, and generally orientated them regarding the research process.

Focus groups are regarded as a powerful tool for garnering information quickly. The form of the focus group is a few people engaging in a collective conversation on a predefined topic or experience. The shared nature of the focus group interview enables participants to give voice to their experiences facilitated by the interviewer (Liamputtong, 2011: 2). However the interviewer needs to consciously create space for all the participants to participate fully within the setting of a 'natural' discussion (Wilkinson, 2004: 178). This is difficult to attain without interference, and takes much awareness and restraint on the part of the moderator.

A strength of the focus group is the range of communicative strategies that can be employed by the participants in the (albeit artificially arranged) group social setting. These could include discussion, humour, bragging, anecdotes, banter, repartee and dispute (Wilkinson, 2004: 180). The researcher's reflective notes on the focus group refer to laughter, teasing and high spirits as the overwhelming impression of the said focus group:

"overall the mood was high, with lots of interaction between the students" (Researcher notes, 2010).

The strength of a focus group is that it is adaptable, inexpensive, quick, has good face validity and allows the participants to use one another's input as a catalyst for their own input (Babbie, 2011: 316). It is also for many, more closely related to natural ways of communicating: it is similar, for example, to discussions amongst groups of friends, coffee meetings and social get togethers (Kulavuz-Onal, 2011: 1717). In some cases focus groups are thus powerful for people from cultures with strong social habits or generations who interact in more social ways. The respondents were encouraged to talk to one another, rather than to the researcher so that the interpersonal dynamic could be utilised to its maximum effectiveness. In 2010 it was found, as in Wilkinson (2004: 180), that intimate details were readily forthcoming in the group setting: "*Despite my being there (or perhaps because of it?), the students seemed to get into a good natured competition about who had had the worst time getting to varsity … The discussion was an eye opener, with some shocking info, and lots of in group talk …*"(Researcher, notes 2010).

It may be that this dynamic in turn served as an ice breaker in terms of the individual interviews that followed and the interviewer / participant relationships which developed. The focus group benefitted from what has been termed the "synergistic effect", where conversation builds on itself, and the dynamic between the individuals leads to rich data (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014: 19). The participants certainly seemed to impart information and ideas freely.

In this case the researcher followed the advice of Liamputtong (2011: 4) and allowed the discussion to develop with as little structure as possible – in order to explore how the respondents construct their ideas around the topic. Thus the conversations were fully engaged with the topic. The danger is however that the discussion veers off course – thus the researcher has to be alert, keeping the discussion on track without curtailing discussion

that may lead to valuable information. It may also be the case that members of the group are influenced by one another to express themselves in ways they might not usually, as a result of peer pressure.

The focus group also shifts the relations of power (Wilkinson, 1999: 230) as within a group interview scenario, the power of the researcher through pure weight of numbers is lessened. While the collection of information might be compromised as a result of the lessened control, the communications of the participants are then primary. In the case of the 2010 student focus group the above holds resonance.

2.4.2 Diary (2010)

One of the biographical approaches was the keeping of a diary (dealing with the present in 2010) of significant subjects. Daily interactions, issues and 'minutiae' can be 'observed' through the participants' diaries and concurrent in-depth conversations (allowing for the emergence of a coherent version of the subjects' world to emerge, albeit with all the wrinkles and inconsistencies associated with multiple and changing realities).

A diary was kept by the (then) students for a two to three month period covering vacation and term time to enable comparison. The diary was to have been a daily write-up of how the students had spent their days and detailing anything of significance that may have happened to them, practically and emotionally. Berger has described journals as 'meta autobiographies' which allow one to enter into thoughts and emotions that the "author has not even been aware of having" (in Jackson, 1999: 352). Autobiographies can be regarded as content which is "broadly self-narrative or self-revealing" (Gray, 1982: 33). Furthermore they are "any reflective effort made in the interests of giving or restoring meaning, purpose and value to one's life" (ibid.). In this case the participants were, through their participation and the very research topic of student lives, attempting to share the meaning, purpose and value of their lives.

Diaries are useful research tools for a number of reasons – not least the flexibility of viewpoint and narrative – in that diary writing is an intermittent process allowing for "alternative accounts and different themes" (Meth, 2003: 198). These then mirror more truthfully the multiplicity of opinions and moods experienced by people (ibid.). Moreover, since diaries are created in the present tense, memory loss or fabrication is not a factor. Diaries can also be used to record experiences that happened in the past (ibid.). This indeed was the case in some of the diaries in question – they were used to discuss the participants' early lives and backgrounds.

The participants were provided with broad guidance on how to keep the diary. This guidance was mutually developed during the initial focus group as mentioned elsewhere. Guidelines were necessary in this study as the participants are in fact the fieldworkers and are researching their own daily lives. It was decided that participants should include what they did over the course of the day, their enjoyment of that activity and the relative priority it had for them, as well as any connected emotions they wished to share.

Such approaches rely on personal reporting which amount to "only partial accounts collected at certain stages in a life" (Goodsen and Walker, 1991: 135). As quoted in Goodsen and Walker (1991: 256): "That is how it was, a part of life seen from a point of view. Much more happened that I cannot tell or remember. To others it would be, I am quite sure, a different story." No claims beyond attempt can be made to have entered fully and understood the lives of the students in the sample. For Edmunds, Houston and Watkins (2007: 127) biography was an important tool for examining the "mediating factors on student learning and its outcomes", as is the case in this study.

Unfortunately, despite agreement, in actuality the participants were unable to write in their diaries every day. This was explained as a matter of habit and time constraints. The participants did however claim to have benefitted at a personal level through the experience of keeping a diary. Diaries were described as a new experience to five of the

seven participants (the exception was the mature aged exchange student, and one of the female foreign students). These diaries were described as useful as both reflective devices and time management tools, for example:

> *"… since you gave me this book I mean … I find like I mean, I find like things are kind of easier, so I can say I just have a lot to do, but in terms of managing time though I was like doing it I mean I was just like doing it; but happen to learn like I mean to keep… what can I say…. not to manage time as such but to make sure that I keep the things that I should do like write them down that I know that I don't forget much for the things that maybe I have to do at least now; at least that's some part of time management. I guess it has helped me in a way and like kind of managing my time and I even wrote it in my journal. Ya I am the one who should be thanking you. Because after a week we tend to forget everything cause I realise that no! after a week you can't really tell what, if they say what happened to you Monday last week I can't tell you at all but if you can remind me about the event then maybe I can tell you but if you can say Tuesday what was happening I won't tell you, I don't know so I will be buying a diary very soon."* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010)

And according to Kirsten (interview, 30 March 2010): *"Diarising it's … I'm actually enjoying it because it's like I reflect on what happened the whole day and then I realise ha ok this was nice ah this person pissed me off today, you know am just out of fury and ya … and I get to like say out everything that I'm feeling. It like gives me a chance to like say OK next time what am I supposed to do if I get into a situation like this and then ha this person for some time I just don't want to talk to them or ah this situation just taught me something it is quite constructive for me."*

And on 15 May: *"It's like you sit down and to say this was a very nice day but then ha during the day I experience this boring thing and someone put me to the edge today and I didn't like it … so it's like you are talking to someone … ya you get to like take out everything that you are feeling and then at the end of it you feel so relieved that ha at least I took it out of my chest … but I was able to talk to the person about what the person did to me and I really didn't like it but then I'm just going to put it down … ya because it's like it's like it pisses off,*

you develop inside like you say after this experience I was able to really see who I am. I think that you discover who you are everyday with the experiences that you go through and everything so that's how it really helped me."

Diary writing has been described as a life handling mechanism by Burt (1994) in Meth (2003: 201). Moreover Meth referred to the therapeutic nature of research diaries (ibid.). The above seems to indicate that the diaries in some instances helped to organise the participants' experiences from the chaotic to the coherent.

Unfortunately two of the students (Lucy and Themba) mislaid their diaries: Lucy, the whole document at the end of the process before allowing a copy to have been made, and Themba half way through the process: *"You know what happened to my diary … I forgot it somewhere, It might be somewhere in the LAN and I tried to recap some of the things that were there so you know."* (Themba interview, 7 May 2010). Moreover, despite the enjoyment of and usefulness of the diaries, they were difficult for the participants to keep due both to the novelty and the participants' other commitments. According to Patricia: *" … like I mean I won't say it is a nuisance but sometimes when I need to get something done ya you can't spare the energy"* (interview, 29 March 2010) and Lucy: *"it's so hard to keep a diary, but I was … it's like enjoyable because I like writing … I just I will even lose track of data just write and write"* (interview, 4 June 2010).

Problems for the students may also have been that they were keeping the diary in English, not the home language of all but one. Despite conversational fluency, the barrier of writing may have been both psychological and practical. Moreover the students were keeping the diary long hand, which may have been laborious for them.

2.4.3 Photographs (2010)

The research participants also took a series of photographs of things and moments that were significant to them between two scheduled interviews. These were subsequently discussed and used as a stimulus for further unstructured narrative. The use of photo voice

allowed the participants to visually explore what they regarded as important, and to communicate these things to the researcher in a different way. The use of the photographs was thus stimulative and allowed the researcher to verify and deepen knowledge about the participant's lives. According to Bold (2012: 22) narrative also contains a visual aspect, the use of the participants' photographs deepened and gave substance to their narratives.

Photo voice research has commonly been used as a participatory research device enabling communities to reach for self-awareness and the awareness of those in power of various problems they may have – see for example Wang and Burris (1997: 370). Central to the use of photo voice as a participatory strategy is that the research participants are in control of the images – that is that they decide what photographs to take and what is significant about those photographs (Given, Opryshko, Julien and Smith, 2011: 2). Here a research method becomes a political tool. In the case of this study, the idea of a photo voice evolved in that it was originally conceptualised as a tool to encourage communication; however the communication and reflection enabled by the photos allowed for deeper understandings as reported by the participants.

Many of the pictures were of *things* that were of importance to the participants such as their living space, electronic equipment and clothing. Other pictures showed moments of happiness: being dressed up, being with friends or, as in the case of the exchange student, things which were consciously identified as different to her 'normal' life at home (for example taxi's, a visit to the local hospital and shrubs) . The use of photographs in social research enables the researcher to enter into the settings (physical and social) of the researched by the means of the visual. This is useful in that constructs of language are then bypassed to some extent (Wang and Burris, 1997: 371). The problems with the photo voice are also one of its strengths: the participants can choose what to represent and this has the potential of both revelation and concealment (ibid.). Moreover were the pictures to be used as an analytic device (unlike in this case, where they were primarily used as conversational tools, the researcher may introduce bias through controlling their selection.

2.4.4 Interviews (2010)

The interviews were unstructured allowing for the feelings and issues of the subjects to emerge through their own narrative (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2007: 197). The interviews engaged with the students social, familial, financial and academic concerns. The researcher believes that narrative is a powerful approach as it is congruent with people's attempts to make sense of their own lives, which is often done through organising experiences into self-told stories. These stories allow people to create constancy and lucidity in their lives (White and Epston in Freedman and Combs, 1996: 31).

In utilising one to one in-depth interviews, the researcher, as in the words of Stewart (2002: 583), hoped to "make implicit knowledge explicit and to transform habit to knowing as these students discussed the meaning they made of identities through story". Interviewing in the qualitative framework "provides strangers access to the subjects' authentic inner personal life through the creation of warm and personal relationships" (Kvale, 2006: 492). However, interviews can also be described as data 'generating ' (Baker, 1998) due to the influence of the interviewer in their capacity to ask questions, understand, encourage and categorise themes that are spoken of.

In this case, the interviewer was not the 'neutral' being, gently guiding the participant into relevant areas, but a participant in and of him/herself in the data making process. Moreover each individual belonged to different categories (roles) and used membership in these to produce coherent and socially acceptable responses in given situations (Baker, 1998). So, for example, in the interviews the participants would respond as 'students' (2010) and later as 'working adults' (2014) and the researcher as a 'lecturer' and 'academic' and 'friend'. The roles played had an impact on the data generated as did the identity of the researcher (as discussed in more depth in section 2.7.2 of this chapter).

Initially a weekly interview was planned with each student. However, due to the students' commitments this was not possible – interviews were scheduled when the students were available. On average each student participated in five individual interviews during the two-month duration of the study. The students told stories of importance in their lives during these interviews, focusing on experiences, emotions, concerns and triumphs. These were in a narrative format.

For Kvale (1996: 43), it is in 'open' interviews that research participants are able to articulate their narratives. The interview was unstructured in order to allow for the students' experiences to emerge in a natural and unprompted manner. The researcher, while engaging conversationally with issues where necessary, attempted as little intervention as possible. Within narrative interviewing the literature suggests that the researcher is "a curious, unknowing and tentative participant in an unstructured narrative interview in which 'interview schedules' are abandoned in favour of conversations wherein one question may lead to a 'one thousand page text'" (Speedy, 2008: 60).

However, even in the latter role the interviewer may transgress the boundaries of the traditionally neutral and unforthcoming researcher. Holstein and Gubrium (2004: 148) labelled the interview as an active space and the interviewer as integrally active in the formation of the participants' meaning. In order to elicit significant data, researchers engage in discussion of their own feelings and experiences with participants. The interview begins to resemble a naturalistic form of communication between two people. There is a sharing of context, which could be seen as bartering information for intimate material in return, or true exchange. In the latter case the researcher is active and needs to acknowledge themselves as such. The claim of the approach is one of dialogue, representing an essential equality in the relationship between researcher and research participant (Kvale, 2006: 483). The term 'dialogue' implies a conversation, while interviews have the capacity to be interviewer led, uni-directional, instrumental (conducted for the use of the researcher) and strategic (Kvale, 2006: 484). Thus dialogue in the terms of an interview can be a serious

misnomer, unless the power relations between interviewer and interviewee are seriously considered.

The notion of the 'active' interview enables the human characteristics of individual researchers to be recognised – those of liking, disliking, agreement, and disagreement, shared or unique experiences. This is the case in this particular research; the researcher was active and engaged rather than neutral, objective or detached. The latter is often preferred for data validity, but it can be argued this is unrealistic as researchers exist with their own set of worldviews. In this research, being an active researcher served to open up avenues of communication with the participants that detachment would not have allowed.

The words shared also have to be interpreted by the receiver (in this case the researcher) which creates dynamism in the narrative (Lawson, 2008: 21). As discussed by the Personal Narratives Group (1989: 201), the generation of the participant's story needs to be recognised as a collaborative endeavour. The researcher has an impact on the narrative through his/her powerful position in the production process which can colour the texture of the story. The collaboration of what is included, how the narrative is directed, responded to and interpreted, needs to be made explicit. This can be seen as a problem in terms of the authenticity of the narrative; however, it can also be regarded as a function of many communications. The recognition of and sensitivity to interpersonal dynamics is thus essential.

While this was not the intention, the interviews were described by three of the participants (Eve, Kirsten and Tilly) as therapeutic and in some instances spurred practical action:

"The whole interview that I have been doing is like I'm able to also talk out and say okay this is how I'm suppose to do it because the last time when you say you know it helps to like talk about things and everything … ya and then that's when I decided let me just to talk to my

boyfriend and then find out what he is thinking so it helped me to be able to say out what you are feeling and be open about everything (laugh)." (Kirsten, interview, 15 May 2010)

"I met with Moya Bydawell and the time was therapeutic for me." (Eve, diary, 25 March 2010)

"Thank you very much for initiating a research on student lives, it was really helpful for me. You know the research actually turned not only to be just a research but a counselling session where l would open up and say out my problems and my life as a student. The way you acted during the interviews actually showed me that there are some people who are able to feel for your problems more than what you do yourself. Again as someone who has a desire to pursue a career that is research related, your research was more of training session that also invested some skills upon me. Once more I am really grateful." Tilly (email, 5 June 2010)

The experience of interviews for research purposes as being therapeutic is not an unusual; see for example studies cited in Speedy (2008: 62) which describe similar effects to the above. The research process was also described by all seven participants as enjoyable. These comments were unsolicited. Generally the research process itself was positive, with the sample students eager to participate – indeed some even asked to be interviewed more often than was requested by the researcher. This echoes the experience of others engaged in qualitative research in Higher Education: "I tapped into one of the richest sources of information – students' own stories. Students are excited to talk about their life"(Newtonin Secuban, 2012: 17).

The longitudinal nature of the study (the revisiting of participants' stories after a gap of four years) enabled the possibility of revision and rearrangement of narratives in the context of new situations and experiences. As recognised by Mbilinyi (1989: 225), narrative is open to revision and rearrangement in the context of current experience and need. Notwithstanding the need for intellectual rigour in the production of reliable and valid research, the latter is useful in understanding perplexing anomalies in story and opinion.

The interviews (at both points in the research process) allowed the participants to discuss current events as well as enabled them to reminisce about their pasts. This is a different dimension of longitudinal data to the panel approach – one which relies on the retrospective (Elliott et al., 2008: 4). This relies on memory which may be unreliable, but the story is also then constructed with the benefit of perspective.

2.4.5 Interviews (2014)

In 2014 the participants had all moved out of the student university environment. All were occupied with new pursuits in new places. Therefore the interview strategy needed to change. The discussions centered on familial, social financial and career experiences. While still in-depth and structured by the participants, some were telephonic, some via video internet link and others face to face. While logistically helpful, the remote interview strategy lacked the intimacy of earlier meetings and perhaps enabled fewer confidences. Moreover, the subjects were unable to make multiple meetings, which had an impact on the depth of the data.

All the participants were eager, however, to revive the research process with the researcher, and were happy to share their new experiences. *"It is good to hear from you after such a long time and as for chatting with you, it will be my pleasure"* (Themba email, 14 December 2013). *"Sorry I got your reply lately. I miss you my dear. You really made my years wonderful and enjoyable when I was in SA. You are very welcome to call me … can't wait."* (Tilly message, 11 February 2014). *"Thank-you Moya for the opportunity to reconnect with you. I look forward to continuing to stay connected across the ocean and several time zones"* (Eve email, 29 October 2014). Thus while the dynamics of the interviews in 2014 were similar due to relationships already established, they were constrained by distance, both physical and psychological.

2.4.6 Benefits of the Process

It would seem that two of the research methods were evaluated as useful by the participants. While the research was not consciously rooted in a critical or feminist research paradigm, it has in some ways been able to fulfill their central mandate: "Empowerment,

namely the ability to effect progressive social change through the research process" (Meth, 2003: 201). Feminist research highlights a principle of enablement: "emotional engagement and the development of long term trusting relationships" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 57). The research conducted here, through the personal nature of the narratives, the time spent in a one-on-one (and group) situation and the curiosity on the part of the researcher and participant, inadvertently resulted in the above to some extent. In fact relationships which developed between researcher and participant continued after the completion of the research, with some participants visiting the researcher. The participants described feeling empowered through the research – their descriptions and reflections on their own lives were helpful to them. This was however brought to an end when the researcher was away from the university for eighteen months, during which time the participants had (in most cases) graduated and moved on.

The revival of contact in 2014 for the second part of the project dealing with post university life was met positively by the participants, all of whom expressed gratification that their experiences were interesting enough to merit attention.

Another factor for consideration is the reflexive nature of the narrative process (again although the research did not set out to be reflexive); it may have provided the participants with a platform to understand their own situations in more depth. This has reference to both the process of diary keeping and interviews itself. In some instances, the researcher role (albeit coincidental) became a "sounding board", leading to the consolidation of self-knowledge. As Elliott (2005: 15) pointed out, narratives are context specific, and the communication is rooted in that context which includes the position of the communicator and listener. Narrative, in the words of Rathbone and Burns (2012: 1), "is one of the ways in which agents construct their knowledge of the world around them, their understanding of themselves, and their interlocution with other persons". It is, as suggested by Giddens (1992: 75), a technique which connects structure and agency through the use of reflexivity.

The students through the research process all told stories about who they are, who they were, where they come from, and their future dreams. Interestingly, the process of narrative construction can in itself be regarded as part of the identity building process as a function of what Habermas and Kober (2014: 140) identified as 'Autobiographic Reasoning' where narrative works to connect different parts of an individual's life together "to relate the present self to one's personal past and future". Ricoeur (1992, in Rathbone and Burns, 2012: 2) regarded the construction of identity through narrative as becoming conscious of one's own life story, and the realisation that your story is affected by your words and behaviours. As a research approach, narrative is useful in that it "can provide a particularly rich source of knowledge about the significance people find in their workday lives" (Rosaldo, 1986in Freedman and Combs, 1996: 30). In the context of the study into participants' lives, it is helpful as it can make visible the invisible habits of the participants, as well as their perspectives on their actions. Narrative also captures the social aspect of human existence: "Narrative is a unifying lens through which humans view the world around them" (Rowe, McQuiggan and Lester, 2007: 126). This was useful in the context of this study as the participants are agents within a social world.

2.5 Sampling

The researcher elected to situate the study at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal for the practical reason of it being her place of work. In addition the university is situated in a province experiencing acute poverty (Teke 2015). The sampling technique used the nonprobability approach of volunteer / self-selected sampling, where the subjects decide of their own volition to become part of the sample in response to a call for research participants. Thus the demographic makeup of the sample was not planned. The participants were made up of seven volunteers from a third-year class held in the first semester of 2010.The small sample size and the nature of its selection means that the study is not in any way generalisable to the entire student population. However it is still valuable in that it gives some insight into the experiences of students that remain largely unexplored – thus providing a basis for further study. The small sample also allowed for the generation of exceptionally in-depth data. The preoccupation in this study is not the search for a large

sample and quantifiable results, but the attempt to produce meaningful information from the participants' stories as is enabled through the approach taken.

The research proposal was put to the entire class where the reason for the study, the subject and need for the study as well as the ethical issues and expected work load involved in the study, were discussed in depth. The students then volunteered to participate. Interestingly, five of the seven students were friends and study mates to varying degrees.

In addition, the sample has been constrained by the nature of the course and the students likely to choose that course. The exit level course is a research methods module for Sociology students, Furthermore, the final participant number and demographic make-up was dependent on a voluntary process. The same sample was re-interviewed four years later. A fundamental characteristic of longitudinal panel studies is that the same participants are engaged in the research at different points in time (Laurie, 2013: 5).

2.5.1 Make-up of Sample

The sample consisted of seven: five females and two males. Three of the participants were foreign, one of them originally a short-term American exchange student. This participant was a mature student, while the others were all in their early twenties at the point of first contact. References to ethnic group and home language are necessary due to South Africa's long history of racism: these issues have reference to the resources that people and families are able to access even in the present day.

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Home language	Ethnic group	Year of study	Academic standing
Lucy	Female	21	South African	isiZulu	African	Fourth Augmented Curriculum (third year, but not final –courses outstanding)	Good
Kirsten	Female	22	Zimbabwean	Shona	African	Third (final year)	Good

Patricia	Female	22	South African	isiXhosa	African	Third (final year)	Good
Eve	Female	43	American	English	Coloured	final	Good
Tilly	Female	23	Zimbabwean	Sindebele	African	Third (final year)	Good
Themba	Male	23	South African	IsiZulu	African	Fourth, Augmented Curriculum (final year)	Good
Lukas	Male	24	South African	Xitsonga	African	Fourth Augmented Curriculum (final year)	Good

Table 2: Details of participants as students, June 2010

From Table 1 it is clear that the participants were all regarded by the university as being of good academic standing. It may be that the participants are more conscientious than their peers, interested in academia and thus self-selected on those grounds. It is also probable that their experience of university life is very different to those students who are not managing academically. Three of the students entered the university through the augmented curriculum route (a system allowing students without entrance requirements to gain entry to the university) and three were traditional entrants. All students, except for Lucy, were in their final year of study for a bachelor's degree during the initial research phase.

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Home language	Ethnic group	Academic Qualification	Employment
Lucy	Female	25	South African	isiZulu	African	Bachelors	Full time job
Kirsten	Female	26	Zimbabwean	Shona	African	Honours	Full time job
Patricia	Female	26	South African	isiXhosa	African	Honours	Full time job
Eve	Female	47	American	English	Coloured	Masters in progress	Full time job
Tilly	Female	27	Zimbabwean	Sindebele	African	Bachelors	Part time job
Themba	Male	27	South African	IsiZulu	African	Honours	Internship, Full time

| Lukas | Male | 28 | South African | Xitsonga | African | Masters | Internship, Full time |

Table 2: Details of participants, second stage, November 2014

At the time of the second stage of data collection, the students had exited the university. One is married, one is a parent, another is an expectant parent, two are residing in Pietermaritzburg (not their home town).Two are back in / living near to their home towns.

2.6 Study Constraints

The methods used in the research, while having great strengths as described above, also had certain drawbacks. Study constraints were ones of time and capacity – participants found it difficult to write their diaries on a regular basis, and in a coherent manner. Many had never kept a diary previously so the discipline was a new one. The in-depth interviews, due to their unstructured nature, were long. This compromised the intention of holding an interview with each participant weekly in 2010. While interviews were still regular, they had to be arranged around the participants' commitments. Thus, the commitment to the research became a large one. However, the number of interviews and their length grew organically; they had originally been planned to be more contained.

On average each participant was interviewed four times (2010) over a two-month period, spanning term time, vacation and exam time, and twice over a two-month period in 2014.

A possible problem that could influence the quality of data gathered is the overarching power relation between the researcher and the participants. The researcher, as a member of the faculty at the institution that the study participants were initially attending and in which they were trying to succeed, had a certain position of influence. Moreover the researcher had, before the research began, completed teaching these students in a course which is a major for their studies. These relations are bound to have spin-offs, where the researcher is seen as powerful and important to please. Thus the perceived needs of the

researcher are to be met in terms of congruent information and behaviour. This effect was acknowledged with the participants and the relationship was discussed during the initial focus group (2010). Thus an attempt was made to ameliorate the possible negative ramifications of power relations on the data itself. The participants were receptive and engaged during the discussion. Moreover none mentioned the issue during the debriefing session held at the end of each last interview.

The reliance on the unstructured interview and student narrative response in conjunction with time constraints of the participants has in some instances led to incomplete stories. These may in some instances have been resolved by more vigorous probing and directional action by the researcher. However, intervention would at the same time have curtailed the participants' ability to choose their own issues of importance and the construction of the narrative. While the role of the researcher as an active participant has been discussed, the control over the generation of the story must rest primarily with the participant. This 'incompleteness' is not unusual within the genre: "The world of research like the lives it is describing is full of incomplete, non-commensurate stories, some based on themes and categories, some on statistics, some on the narratives that people construct that shape and are shaped by their lives" (Speedy, 2008 :22).

As alluded to previously, although rated highly by the participants, the diaries were difficult for the participants to keep. The limitations of diaries include the respondents' skill levels and concomitant ability to keep the diary, the effort and time required to actually write the diary and the possible selectivity of the participants in their entries (Meth, 2003: 201). It is possible that the writing manifests an awareness of what the researcher requires from the research (ibid.). The participants were not asked to keep a diary for the researcher in the second stage of the research project (2014) as it was felt that the commitment required would not be conducive to participation.

Also unfortunate is the small and self-selected nature of the sample– while making qualitative data collection possible (as a result of its time consuming nature), it can in no ways be regarded as representative of the student experience as a whole. It may also cause some of the findings to be exaggerated in nature. Also adding complexity is the sample makeup (the grouping is nether South African or foreign, male or female, old or young) which prevents a concerted look at the experiences of any of these groupings. However the texturally rich data generated from the small sample is of value. This can give researchers clues as to issues worthy of further exploration. However the small sample allowed for intense and prolonged interaction, which a larger one would have curtailed.

Both limiting and exciting is the general nature of the topic. Looking at the 'whole' of the student's experience in an unstructured and exploratory way, while allowing for the student's individual stories to come to the fore, also became a constraint in that issues which emerged could not be explored in any further depth. The time span and length of the study as well as the participants needing to move on, disallowed this.

2.7 Ethical Concerns

2.7.1 General

Longitudinal research within a qualitative framework brings with it certain unique ethical issues. Here general concerns with anonymity and confidentiality are heightened due to the increasingly identifiable nature of the participant thorough prolonged involvement. For these reasons extra vigilance is required to ensure that such confidence is not broken. Also at issue is the possibility of "intrusion, dependency, distortion of life experience through repeated intervention, emotional involvement and problems of closure" (Holland, 2011: 26). In the case of this study all of the above need to be considered. With regard to the former, the participants had to be carefully approached, particularly in the case of the second data collection phase, as they may have felt an imposition due to new life phases, the distance from their original position as students and the information and time requested.

Moreover, the emotional ties between researcher and participant had to be monitored through constant reflection by the researcher and discussion with the participants. In this case feelings of positive regard were productive, and contact was sustained on an informal level. "Due care must be put into the relationship between researcher and researched and into ensuring an understanding of the consequences of involvement for all those taking part" (Holland et al., 2006: 27). It is through the very reciprocity of the relations inherent in the interview (and in this case the longitudinal nature of the research) that information of depth is collected "…reciprocal influence of interviewer and interviewee on a cognitive and an emotional level is, however not necessarily a source of error, but can be a strong point in qualitative research interviewing" (Kvale, 1996: 36).

Problematic within the researcher and research subject dynamic is that in order to attain useful information through creating a kindly interview environment, researchers may be "faking friendship" and purposely "creating rapport" in order to elicit confidences that would otherwise be unforthcoming (Macmillan, 2011: 108). Here the subject may be misled into believing that they have become friends with the researcher. It is necessary too that the researcher engender a trusting relationship which uses understanding to encourage sharing (Burman, 1997: 790).

As discussed previously, the researcher was part of the data generating dynamic. After much consideration, however, the researcher can truthfully assert sincerity of regard concerning the participants, their experiences and well-being. Moreover, the sharing of information by the researcher was genuine. The contact between the participants and researcher has also continued subsequent to the research process. The reflective nature of diary keeping and in-depth interviews were felt by the participants to allow them to engage in understanding their own lives on their own terms as argued elsewhere in this chapter. The above concerns were minimised through the use of informed consent mechanisms, frank discussions regarding the use of the information and the obviousness of the recording instrument during the interviews at both points in the research process.

Notwithstanding the above, the emotional attachment between the participants and the researcher engender a responsibility. In what ways can this responsibility be honoured? As

described, the participants reported positively on the experience of the research. It was felt that the benefits were at the level of affective support.

The approach of active interviewer, and the acceptance of the researcher and researched as human with human traits begs several questions. How does this attachment impact on the veracity of the participants' stories? How can researchers, traditionally embedded in positivist notions of legitimacy in terms of information, justify the ensuing findings? As suggested by Guba and Lincoln (2005: 161) 'reliability' and 'validity' can be constructed in different ways. For example 'credibility' – the immersion of the researcher in the subject; 'dependability' – the open-ended nature of the design, 'transferability' –the social positions of the researcher and researched can be used to ascertain data quality. Guba and Lincoln (2005) also suggest an engagement with the 'authenticity' of the information claiming that one needs to interrogate whether the participants have been represented justly. Also required is a discussion of the benefits felt by the participants (which they name as the 'catalytic' nature of the research). As discussed elsewhere, the researcher was in this case deeply immersed in the subject by function of her own position. The research design was flexible, and the relationship between researcher, researched and the research data was made explicit, adding strength to the legitimacy of the narratives presented.

The highly personalised contact between lecturer and student (first research phase 2010) was of concern at an ethical level as was the fact that only a few members of the class would have access to that contact (as well as the extra work!). This was ameliorated by the honest and open communication with the class about the research and its aims, and the voluntary nature of the sample selection. Furthermore, a contract was entered into with the participants that was openly available to the rest of the class. This contract specified the roles of the researcher and participant, confidentiality, reward and penalty, and the open opportunity to exit the study at any time.

The diary and interview stage occurred after the particular course taught by the researcher was complete. As a result it did not appear that the students were in any way concerned. No possibility of favouritism or victimisation within that course was possible, as it had been

completed. The participants' names have been changed and references to places obscured to protect identity while not compromising the data. The time lapse between initial data collection and submission of the research is also helpful in this regard as many of the students and their cohort have graduated. However the second phase of the interview process (2014) could jeopardise the participants' anonymity due to the narrowing of the field and the long term nature of the information available (Elliott, Holland and Thomson, 2008: 237) Thus extra care has been taken to preserve privacy and ensure consent.

The nature of narrative and biographical research is sensitive as it is "based on the real lives of people made public, converts what is private into public; can violate privacy and can cause mental, legal, social and financial hurt and harm" (Bakan, 1996 in Speedy, 2008: 47). For this reason it was important to approach the research and its participants sensitively. The opportunity to withdraw from the research was reiterated to participants halfway through the research. The participants were asked by the researcher if they were feeling uncomfortable about their discussions in any way when appropriate. The participants were debriefed through a short and mutual (researcher/participant) discussion about the involvement at the end of the data collection phase.

The position of the researcher is also of concern as an ethical issue – it has ramifications for the quality of the data collected and the analysis and interpretation of that data. Within qualitative data collection, the researcher's position has relevance as inbuilt biases and own experiences can impact on the information collected (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 33). For these reasons it is important to make the position and intention of the researcher explicit. The use of diary entries as personal tools of autobiography and narrative was made ethical in that the diary was solicited by the researcher – that is written with the full knowledge that the writing had an audience and that the audience was the researcher. If this had not occurred, the public consumption of the diary could have been problematic.

2.7.2 Researcher

It is important to recognise the situation of the researcher as the qualitative paradigm accepts that researchers are socially situated beings with their own frames of reference

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 31). These impact on the data gathering process and the analysis. "Any biographical writing is always mediated through the biography of the writer" (Sikes, 2006). The researcher is a 41 year old white female living in post-apartheid South Africa. She is a mother of three young children, and lectures in Sociology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Her own student experience occurred at the same university in the few years before the first national elections of 1994. At that time, while access for all races to the university was encouraged, there were few programmes to ameliorate the difficulties faced by the disenfranchised. Thus, the student majority at the time was white, middle class and comparatively privileged – more like the description of the 'traditional student'. The researcher comes from and lives in a community and family where access to higher education is common. While not necessarily engaged in high forms of culture (as referred to by Bourdieu (1986), most have better access to luxury goods on average than do people living in other areas.

As the researcher engaging in a qualitative research setting of the said project it is important to describe the benefits ("materially and symbolically") of the research to myself as the researcher (Kvale, 2006: 482). As asked by Shostack (1989: 232): " Can personal narratives be used freely in our own work for our own purposes?". At an ethical level is the use of the narratives of participants exploitative? Here one needs to be explicit about the benefit the researcher will reap as a result of the stories of others. In this case the researcher is using the information for a PhD dissertation, and the stories are of direct importance. Would this constitute a misuse of the relationship developed between participants and researcher? As described, the terms of the relationship were positive between all the participants and the researcher. Many confidences have been entrusted to the researcher.

In response to the above, one might say that the participants were aware of the reasons for the implementation of the research project, and of its reinvigoration. There were several

conversations about the use of what the participants were telling me. Moreover, three of the participants described being interested in seeing what had been written on completion of the degree.

2.7.3 Ethical Approval

The study was submitted to and passed by the University Ethics Committee.

2.8 Data Analysis

2.8.1 Focus Group

The focus group was particularly difficult to analyse. As suggested, the dynamic aspect of the interview needs to be foregrounded in the analysis (Kitzinger, 1994: 104, Wilkinson, 2004: 188). The relationships and communication between the participants need to be examined in addition to the discussion itself. It is suggested that conversation analysis be used. Here there is a recognition that talk is an action, engaged in for a purpose within the conversation (Wilkinson, 2004: 188).

This is difficult to honour in the light of the fact that the researcher was asked by one of the participants after the interview, not to use an audio tape. The interviewer had decided to facilitate and record interviews on her own as a strategy to engender trust and confidence amongst the participants. However this had the effect of limiting the notes made of the event, particularly with regard to non-verbal cues. As a result, content analysis was used in the main.

2.8.2 General Analysis

As discussed above, the "interpreter is an active participant involved in distinctive ways with the shaping of a personal narrative" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989: 201). Thus the above reflection of the researchers' position is an important consideration in the creation of trustworthy data.

In the consideration of the data, content analysis was used with both an inductive (developing data into opinions) and deductive approach (developing from opinions to data) as identified by Aristotle. When one is based in the deductive approach, one moves from the general to the specific – for example from theory, or research question to the meaning of the data. Inductive reasoning by contrast moves from examining a specific observation to the construction of theory or generalisation. These two ways of thinking are often seen as mutually exclusive, however need not be so. In fact these processes of logic are often both used in social research projects at different points during the same project (Trochim, 2006). The use of both the inductive and deductive approach can result in a stronger study (Blackstone, 2012: 44). In the case of this study, theory and research questions were clearly delineated to provide structure before the research process began. However the approach taken in the research was open at the same time to allowing information to emerge from the data in unplanned for ways.

Some describe the identification of themes within qualitative data as an art (Krippendorff, 1980: 76). According to Krippendorff (1989: 403), content analysis is a "technique that makes replicable and valid inferences from data to their context". The rigours of research methodology require that the emerging themes clearly stem from the data. The themes were not predetermined, but emerged out of the data once it had been assembled as a whole (inductive analysis). However at the same time themes had been identified in literature and theory which were searched for in the data (deductive analysis). Moreover theory was both allowed to emerge to explain the conditions under investigation, but had also been extensively used at the design and analysis stage.

In analysing the data I attempted to adhere to the following guidelines on narrative reporting as outlined in Sikes and Gale (2006)who suggested that the account of the narratives has to make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of the social world, that the report has to make an impact on the audience, that the report has to generate an authentic and judicious version of the milieus it attempts to represent, that the participants are characterised legitimately and that the conditions of the data collection are

acknowledged honestly. All these suggestions have been reflected upon and attempted with sincerity in the case of this study. The position of the researcher, the relationships and allied questions brought about through the methodological approach, have also been represented as candidly as possible.

For reasons outlined above the analysis section of this dissertation is lengthy, and includes full quotes made by the research participants. It was felt that the discussion had to be in depth in order to fully explore the participants' positions without damaging the integrity of the data. As pointed out by Bold (2012: 163) "narrative research needs space to use sufficient data for the demonstration of quality analysis".

3 Theoretical Framework

Within this study the participant (as an individual) is the unit of analysis, rather than the 'institution' or 'society'. Thus the analysis is participant -centred which in turn affects the theoretical lens. It looks at the individual student (who then becomes a graduate) and their encounters in the context of the wider environment. This study echoes Barnett's (2007: 4) approach and is initially "more interested in the student in herself, and in the pedagogical relationship that bears in upon the student's sense of herself and her learning". However this has to be done within the context of micro and macro influences and upon the participant and actions of the participant – at both the student and the graduate phase.

As outlined in Chapter 1, upon leaving the institution of higher education, the (former) student's link with their pre-university, university and post-university experience is investigated. Here it begins to concentrate on the participant's sense of self within social spaces. The study does not set out to explicitly measure success in terms of marks, progress, or level of employment but concentrates rather on the participant's own development and perceptions of that development. As a result of the multiple themes and range of experiences covered by the data, the theoretical framework investigates theory related to the student phase as well as that of the graduate. Moreover as a consequence of the complexity of class and pervasiveness of inequality, multiple frameworks were called for to enable insight into the various dimensions of experience that were investigated. In the following chapter the ideas of Tinto (1975, 1987, 2002), Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998) and Bourdieu (1973, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1996, 1997) have been explored.

3.1 Tinto's Model of Student Attrition

Tinto (1987) theorised about student departure from university before graduation. He looked at student integration as an important factor in student attrition. His model makes explicit students' pre-entry attributes, goals and commitments, intra institutional settings, and formal and informal systems within the academic sector that the student may be involved in. The resulting paradigm is useful not only to those interested in looking at attrition, but can also be applied to the issue of student persistence or even success (Bitzer

and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004: 121). In the context of the current study, the topic of retention is of central interest, as all the students involved in the study were in their final year at the study's inception, and had stayed in the university despite various challenges as described in the data. What is also useful for the purposes of this study is the attempt to recognise the wider social context of the student, the interplay between various contributory factors of persistence or attrition, and the phasal nature of the student involvement in university. Many of these same factors can also add depth to the understanding of graduate interactions.

3.1.1 Rites of Passage

Tinto (1987: 91) foregroundedthe development of his theory with an anthropological approach to rites of passage. Here he adopted the ideas of Van Gennep (1960) to explore the ways in which youth move through a variety of stages in their journey towards fully fledged adulthood. University life and the change that it engenders is "a major rite of passage to adulthood" for the student (Secuban, 2012: 13).

Van Gennep's (1960) work speaks to the development of people as they progress from group affiliation to group affiliation in the normal course of maturing and moving through the life cycle. Specifically Van Gennep (1960: 11) investigated what he called rites of separation, transition and incorporation as making up rites of passage. Here participants progress in a systematic way from childhood to full adult membership in a community and beyond. This has reference to students as they are transported into membership of the university community as part of their rites into adulthood – the experience could perhaps be regarded as what Van Gennep referred to as a socially sanctioned rite of passage (1960). It could also capture the graduate experience as they perhaps assimilate into yet another set of roles, norms and expectations. It is interesting to question the potential for adjustment of individual's norms within the framework of a changing world. Are these parts of identity able to be translated through the development of 'society', or by the movement of the individual from one social context to another? How does the individual experience a shift into new sets of social experiences – does identity change at an essential level, does one's

identity change, or does the individual take on multiple expressions of their essential identity? The assumption made in this instance is that Van Gennep imagined such progression to occur within a society whose overarching expectations are congruent at all points in the cycle. The norms and values that the subject is being introduced to would therefore not be completely alien. This may not be the case in all scenarios. The idealisation of the concept of 'society' as the way in which a group of people sharing geographical space and cultural rules organise themselves socially, politically and economically and create long lasting relationships, may not be useful in the context of this study – as it may be that people living in the same geographical area, do not share common norms or values, social or political spaces. Furthering such differences may be an existence of multiple or disparate groupings within common boundaries. In essence some individuals may exist on a different axis within the same social space – thus diversity of experience, norms and values are more significant than coalescing social forces often seen as synonymous with the idea of 'society'. Nevertheless the term 'society' remains useful to denote the shared aspects of the social, political, economic and geographic environments which people inhabit.

The movement into the strange environment of the university could be seen as a life crisis for the student (Tinto, 1987: 97). A life crisis often accompanies the membership of new groups and the critical development that happens at the same time as that membership. A 'life crisis' can be seen as congruent with the 'identity crisis' suggested by Erikson (1970: 732) where adolescents attempt to build their own identity during the confusing and tumultuous adolescent period. At this point there are multiple roles from which an individual needs to create an identity leading to confusion and insecurity (ibid.). Young adults may ameliorate their stress thorough forming tight friendship groups, finding mentors and or engaging in romance (ibid.). Not dealt with by Tinto, a life crisis could also be experienced on leaving university as one is then again engaging with different groups and expectations. In both settings, one could see that the creation of social and emotional support within the context of flux and confusion could enable the individual to create a sense of stability. This would in the process create identity, enable 'incorporation' and bring to a head the experience of turmoil.

Van Gennep (1960) referred to the separation of the participant from any preceding links they may have had. The idea of separation is taken up by Tinto in his suggestion of the 'break away' where important ties with the original culture for the student are severed (1993) in order for them to fully integrate with the university. This would seem extreme, as other theorists, for example Bronfenbrenner as discussed below, refer to the need for the individual to be supported at all levels (micro to macro, entrenched and novel) in order to enable educational success. However such a 'break away' could conceivably be experienced in very real terms by students who have no prior introduction to university life.

During the 'transition phase' the person starts to interact in ways increasingly congruent with the new group. Finally incorporation occurs, where the initiate adopts the pathways of communication of the new group and becomes a fully-fledged participant in that group. At this time less communication occurs with the individual's previous group. During the process the individual may experience feebleness, loneliness and transient normlessness, having foregone original norms and not yet having submersed themselves in the new ones (Tinto, 1987: 93). The abovementioned stages may not occur in a linear orderly fashion – rather they may be incompletely experienced, in different orders, and be revisited or coinciding (Tinto, 1987: 94).Tinto (ibid.) regards this as applicable to the student experience due to the movement of the student from the home and school environment to that of the university. Their movement into the university requires adjustment (Gerdes and Mallinckrodt, 1994: 286, Friedlander et al., 2007: 272), persistence and integration (Tinto, 1987: 107), as well as evidencing disorientation at initial stages.

Many suggest that going to university is one mechanism which delays fully fledged adulthood and allows the individual to (slowly and in a controlled environment) emerge into the new adult role (Holmstrom, Karp and Gray, 2002: 439, Arnett, 2011: 256, Arnett, 2000: 469). However once leaving university one would imagine that individuals are required to complete the same process of development and assimilation into groups outside the university. These may or may not be the adult groupings of the societal arrangements in which the individual grew up – this is particularly relevant within the context of the

developing world, where a movement from traditional ways of life to those sanctioned by the western world are common. Within such a situation the nature of life and identity crisis while experienced may not be of a contained nature in terms of one's phase of life, or community affiliation. In such cases it may also be that the university does indeed play a major role in providing the individual a channel through which to access a newly constructed adult role – perhaps in Bourdieuian terms, as discussed later, to provide the requisite capital to improve one's class position, or the capital to translate desires for movement into spheres of the elite and resourced.

Perhaps the separation from the world of childhood to the world of university should rather be regarded as partial and temporal, as opposed to the full break implied above. This would imply that while separation may occur, it is not with the nature of a full break, but rather through independence and shifting perspective. Or perhaps a full break might occur, but with the possibility of a return in the long term. In a sense, then the actor becomes able to reconcile the needs of two different cultures and retain their relationships with the spaces of their origin as well as the spaces of their future. Thus the image becomes generative of a new space, rather than rejecting of the old in favour of the new. The suggestion is that individuals can belong in multiple worlds and cultures concurrently.

3.1.2 Social Integration
In understanding student retention and attrition Tinto (1987: 99) also drew on Durkheim's study of suicide which points to the context of social environments and experiences of social integration. Durkheim examined an ostensibly private action (suicide) and explicated it through using social structure as a contributing factor. According to Durkheim, the categories of suicide include 1) *Altruistic* suicide, where a person takes their own life under certain circumstances as encouraged by society, or as Durkheim (1952: 219) explained it "because it is his duty", indicating that societal requirements are stronger than those of the individual. In Tinto's application, for example, similar to altruistic suicide, universities (and larger society) could have developed value sets which idealise departure from the institution prior to graduation.

2) *Anomic* suicide which refers to the taking of one's own life where the norms of society are weak, and do not contain the individual, thus providing people with nothing to hold onto. Individuals are without community support and the guidance of group norms. Durkheim (1952: 246) describes anomic suicide as being the result of a "crisis or disturbance of the collective order". The same situations described for anomic suicide could also be related to the university setting – where through disruption or turmoil, the connections which a student may have to the institution would be broken; this results in the student leaving the institution – conversely, strong connections with the institution would encourage the student to stay at the university despite odds (Tinto, 1987: 103).

3) *Fatalistic* suicide, unlike the former, is the result of overly strong and coercive norms – where individuals have no way of expressing or fulfilling personal needs and values: "it is the suicide deriving from excessive regulation, that of persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive discipline" (Durkheim, 1952: 276). Universities which have overly strong boundaries and norms could lead the student to leave in search of less constricting environs (Tinto, 1987: 103).

Finally, 4) *Egotistical* suicide occurs where people are unable to form strong bonds with the society in which they live: "when a man has become detached from society, he encounters less resistance to suicide in himself, and he does so likewise when social integration is too strong" (Durkheim, 1952: 217). Here individuals cannot assimilate into the society effectively nor can they activate membership of that society. Durkheim (in Tinto, 1987) describes such membership as attained through being socially integrated and having common values with other members of the group. It is suggested that integration and membership in society are important features of collective experience. In the application of student persistence, a relationship between the strength with which students are included in the social and intellectual activity at the university, and their congruent persistence is suggested. Tinto (1987) favoured establishments which are able to fully integrate students into university life – on all levels – as being less likely to have high attrition rates.

As extracted from Durkheim's thesis, one can conclude that both inadequate and overly compelling norms are experienced deleteriously, as are extreme detachment and excessive belonging. Thus the quality of social integration requires examination: for example, Kushner and Sterk (2005: 1142) suggested that one has to examine the perceived quality of the relationships suggesting integration, rather than simply assuming that multiple relationships represent integration. Moreover Durkheim's rejection of the role of religion in preventing suicide, in favour of the attendant social integration of religious belonging, has also been questioned. For example, Stark, Doyle and Rushing (1983: 128) found that while social integration is important, so is a certain religiosity or integration into a spiritual belief system when examining suicide rates. Such criticism for the issue of suicide could be related to Tinto's assertion that social integration is important for students. While Tinto includes other issues in his model, for example individual goals, institutional commitments and skill (to be discussed later), it is integration which is at the heart of the theory. However as suggested in the criticisms, one cannot presume to ignore other factors which may influence student commitment and ultimately their success. This study has attempted to explore the strength of social integration of the participants as well as the more esoteric aspects of their identity and related belonging.

3.1.3 The Individual and the Institution

Tinto (1987: 105) suggested the need to make the above more sensitive by adding a perspective accounting for individual's activities – as discrete from group behaviour. It is pointed out that while colleges are often regarded as microcosms of wider society, they are in fact different. These differences lie in the transitory nature of the student's membership of the university – whereas the membership an individual holds in society at large is lifelong, a student leaves the university after a few years. Additionally, happenings occurring outside of the institution have ramifications for student membership. Further complicating matters is that the university itself is made up of different groupings and subgroupings, all with their own rules and ways of functioning. Wider society is similarly complex.

These groupings would also have differential access to power. As described by Tinto, membership within one or more of these groupings integrates the individual into the institution to different degrees, depending on the relative importance of those groupings within the university and the embeddedness of the individual in these groups. Thus "two forms of affiliation bind the individual to the life of the college, one which is localised in a particular community, like the bond of a satellite to a planet, another which ties the individual via the networks of affiliations inherent in the community to the centre of college life as a planet is tied to the centre (sun) of the solar system" (Tinto, 1987: 122). Tinto regarded the strength of the student's attachment and the relative importance of the groupings to which they are attached, as having different 'gravitational' effects depending on their proximity to the central powerhouse of the institution, thus committing the student to the institution. However, while described above, the differential access to resources as enabled in such ways needs to be more critically examined. Clearly such memberships would influence student persistence, experience of higher education and life as a graduate, but the mechanisms by which individuals enabled membership in groups with better access to resources, to structures of support and 'gravitational' force needs interrogation.

According to Tinto (1987) the social and academic components of institutional life are separate to some degree – they exist side by side and with varying importance. These two systems are important components of any educational institution's functioning. The academic system is engaged with the formal learning of the student. The social system includes the non-classroom dealings that individuals have on a sustained basis. It is structured around the everyday existence and requirements of the individuals in the university. In some cases the two systems may clash – they may not provide support for congruent goals. Moreover the students' experiences in the two systems will differ – they may be sustainable or satisfactory in one and not the other and vice versa. Adding to the complexity is the separation of the formal and informal components of these two systems. For example, the academic system has a formal component including lectures and seminars and informal structures such as self-organised reading and discussion groups. Incorporation into one of these systems can spell success in the other, but the one does not always

accompany the other. In the social system, one may have organised clubs and events as well as social activity arising from daily interaction which is not organised by the university.

Tinto (1987) suggested that the integration of an individual into one of the systems (social or academic) does not guarantee success or even integration in the other. Moreover the effect of the structures is not uniform or equal – involvement in the two systems will have differing ramifications at different times. However 'positive experiences' – those that integrate the academic and social – encourage the student , while 'negative experiences' – those which are not integrated – can diminish student dedication (Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004: 121).

Added to the internal life of the university are external forces and choices (Tinto, 1987: 108). Here issues concerning the student which originate outside of the institution have ramifications for the student's experience of university life – affecting relative success or failure for the student. Here Tinto especially points to the exacerbation of these effects for those students living off campus, for whom the outside world remains an everyday factor with an immediacy of demands and role conflict. In his opinion those in residence have a less intense experience of the outside world enabling them to integrate better. However it would be interesting to discuss the above in relation to the University of KwaZulu-Natal student – where residences are configured slightly differently to the American college of yesteryear. Here students are expected to cater for themselves, which leads to another dimension of self-care and interaction with the external, not expected of Tinto's students. Added to the above, students go to university with a range of different backgrounds and experiences – this is of particular relevance in the South African context, with its high levels of inequality, history of disadvantage and programmes to overcome these legacies. Family size and composition, socio-economic status, gender, race, religious affiliation, community circumstances, educational background, political values and so on, all impact on the student experience as they enter the university and while they are attending university. Thus original dedication to higher education is shaped by the student's pre-university features. Particularly relevant categories of student pre-entry characteristics include: family

background; skills and abilities; prior schooling; intentions and aspirations (Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004: 122).

In examining student attrition and persistence, it is also necessary to include analysis at the individual and psychological level. These characteristics mediate the above systems. Individuals respond differently to different stimuli in those systems resulting in unique decisions regarding attrition or persistence, which ultimately impact on student success. Tinto (1987) identified intention and commitment as being of particular importance. Intentions specify the objectives (both educational and occupational) of the student and commitment their pledge to attain those goals. Such individual decisions can work in tandem, but are not necessarily seen together. A student, for example, may have elevated goals but very little commitment. In this sense Tinto attempted to recognise the influence of internal factors in student success. Despite the above, the aspect of 'agency' is not well incorporated into the model, resulting in a lack of capacity to truly examine the individual's activities and relationship with his/her own integration.

For Tinto, the better aligned the individual's goal is with the goal of their institution, the better their chances of success. For example, if the goal of the student is to attain a degree within an institution that is committed to supporting its students to successful graduation, there are better chances for timeous success. Moreover, the commitment of the university to student success is central to student performance (Tinto, 2002: 2). Here commitment has to be actualised beyond marketing claims and be experienced by the students through resources and encouragements. Also, the expectation of student success needs to be present within the institution. However I feel that the nature of the goal itself should also be called into question: for example, there may be a disconnection between the goals even though they are ostensibly the same. As such the student may have an instrumental goal for their degree, while the university or course within the university may regard their purpose as more abstract. This subtlety does not seem to be recognised, and could affect student completion.

Pre-Entry Attributes Goals and Commitments Institutional Experiences Personal / Normative Integration Goals and Commitments Outcome

Academic System

formal
Academic Performance

Faculty/Staff Interactions

informal

formal
Extracurricular Activities

Peer-Group Interactions

informal

Social System

Family Background

Skill & Abilities

Prior Schooling

Intentions

Goal & Institutional Commitments

External Committments

Academic Integration

Social Integration

Intentions

Goal & Institutional Commitments

External Committments

Departure Decision

Time (T) ⟶

Figure 1: A model of institutional departure (Tinto, 1987: 114)

The model (Figure 1) elucidates the effects of the interactional nature of the system: decisions in one part of the institution will affect other parts of the institution and invariably the student to differing degrees. As Tinto pointed out, students come to university with a preconceived set of experiences, backgrounds and expectations – these include family backgrounds and relationships; social position, ethnic and racial identity, educational experience and attainment – all of which impact on the expectations and commitments that the student has towards their course of study (1975: 96). These are all important factors to consider when examining student experiences of the university environment. Also useful is the explicit acceptance that reality as experienced by the participant (the student in this case) affects their experience of that reality (Tinto, 1975: 98).

The model's recognition of the longitudinal nature of student involvement, and the realisation that students are affected by a variety of factors (social and academic, formal and informal, historical and current) is advantageous. While specifically aimed at looking at attrition, in the case of this study, the model is found to be applicable for examining student experience due to its cognisance of time, the focus on both individual and contextual factors, as well as the history and affiliations of the student and their future goals (Tinto,

1975: 94). Student involvement occurs within a contained period of time, the length of which is variable. Membership within the greater university community for most is temporary. The focus on attrition may result in the model not recognising factors essential for success – factors affecting not succeeding are not automatically the opposite to the factors contributing to success.

While Tinto (1975: 97, 1987: 114) recognises the effect of external factors such as community of origin, educational background and external commitments, which play out in the students' investments and ambitions, he specifies that the model is not based on a systems approach. There is a need to more fully recognise the encompassing nature of some factors external to the university such as the community within which the university is housed, the society and political structure within which that community is based beyond an input and output based philosophy. It is also necessary to consider relationships between such factors.

In order to situate the student within an external environment more firmly, I also turned to Bronfenbrenner(1979, 1993, 1977, 1992) whose ecological theory nests the individual within concentric rings of outside influence. "An examination of the reciprocal interactions between students and their environments provides a lens for understanding individuals in multiple, layered, and interacting environments, only some of which they encounter directly" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 264). It would seem sensible to understand the relationships and effects of these relationships engendered by various settings in which the participants find themselves. Moreover, according to Tinto (1975: 107), social integration, which is important to student success, requires "integration and congruency between the individual and his environment". Similar concerns could be applied to post institutional experiences as well.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1992: 188) regarded his Ecological Systems theory as an expression of the interaction between a human being, who has some power of determination, and his/her constantly changing environment: "The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life-course, between an active, growing, highly complex bio psychosocial organism – characterised by a distinctive complex of evolving interrelated, dynamic capacities for thought, feeling, and action – and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which these settings are embedded" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 7). This development occurs as a function of the interaction between the individual who is active in their own development, and their environment. The author referred to this as the "process-person context model" (1992: 193). Here both the spheres of the individual and their surroundings need to be equally noted. Useful for the purposes of this study is that the model takes cognisance of the dynamic impact of family and friends (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 267). As the individual engages with the increasingly multi-faceted settings and encounters progressively complicated tasks, development occurs. But is the suggestion that the individual is centred in such engagements a strong enough mechanism for understanding the individual and their interactions within situations where the micro and meso realities are very divergent and perhaps even unrelated?

3.2.1 Impacts of the Environment and of Time

Bronfenbrenner postulated the existence of what he called "ecological niches" (1993: 18, 1992: 194) which are environmental areas which nurture or conversely, discourage the development of people with certain personality traits. An example of an ecological niche in the higher education scenario might be centres of excellence which draw students with those particular interests. In the post education environment such a niche could be a specialisation or workplace nurturing particular talents or worldviews.

Added to the model itself, which will be discussed below, Bronfenbrenner (1992: 201) considered what he calls the 'chronosystem'. The chronosystem allows one to examine the passage of time as it impacts on human development. "A major factor influencing the course and outcome of human development is the timing of biological and social transitions as they relate to the culturally defined age, role expectations and opportunities occurring throughout the life course" (Bronfenbrenner,1995: 641 in Renn and Arnold, 2003: 273). Here, there is recognition of the continual experience of "constancy and change" for both the individual and the environment. Both actor and environment are affected by and affect one another through the passing of time. One's life course is a component of time related change. Human development over the life course may be due to factors in the external (environmental) or internal (within the individual) situation.

These factors change the relationships between the environment and the individual and can be short or long term (1992: 201). In what Bronfenbrenner referred to as "ecological transition" he discussed the changes to an individual "over time, in role, activity and often place as well" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 525). Students, for example, are "shaped in part by the era in which they attend college" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 272). Thus an ecological perspective attempts to take account of the life cycle and its concomitant changes and challenges for the individual.

3.2.2 The Micro, Meso, Exo and Macrosystems
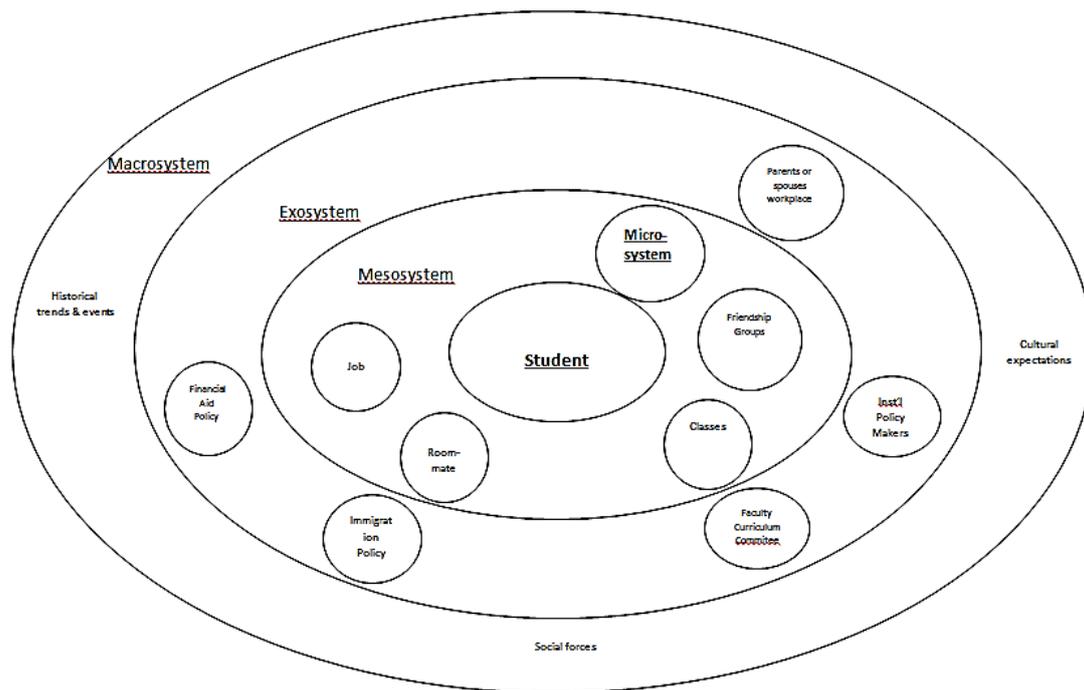
Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's model as applied to a Postsecondary Environment (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 268)

Bronfenbrenner's model identified what he referred to as the micro, meso, exo and macrosystems – all of which impact on human development (1979, 1993, 1977, 1992). The *microsystem* "is a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, *social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 15, my emphasis). Microsystems have "physical, social and symbolic features that promote or inhibit increasingly complex interactions" between the individual and the setting (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 270). Microsystems are suitable for depicting the intrapersonal functioning of individuals, for example, agency, drive, self-control, reasoning skills and interpersonal relationships (Heymann and Carolissen, 2011 : 1380). Examples of university students' microsystems could also include their hall of residence or communal living space, their sports team, or student organisation (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 270). Thus the microsystem is concerned with the multiple associations that an individual has with their

immediate environment and their characteristics. These environments are referred to as 'settings' which can be defined as locales with specific physical characteristics, where the individuals engage in specified activities using specified roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 514). Examples of the latter could include the home where the individual behaves as a son or daughter, or the university where the individual behaves as a student. Individuals' psychological processes react variably with the environment, ensuring unpredictable experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1989: 225 in Renn and Arnold, 2003: 270). An example within the university setting here would be the different ways in which different students experience a lecture theatre (ibid.). At a micro level, face-to-face interactions are important as they justify why research into student relationships with their cohorts is necessary (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 268).

Within the microsystem there is a collaborative interface between the different aspects of the person's life-world. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that it is important to recognise the context within which the actors find themselves and furthermore to examine the interdependence of psychological processes and the interaction of environmental factors. For Bronfenbrenner "development is an evolving function of person-environment interaction" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10). One has to examine what happens in situations where there is no interface, or where the interface is weak. In such cases is the individual required to consciously mediate between the environment, their experiences and their identity?

Bronfenbrenner further believed that the individual within the system has what can be called "Developmentally Instigative Characteristics". The first, "personal stimulus characteristics" (1993: 10), refers to potentials in the person that encourage or dissuade reactions from the surrounding environment, in turn leading to emotional development. An example of this would be the ability of different students to inspire different reactions from university staff members (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 268). Such characteristics can be applied at any life point. Second are what Bronfenbrenner referred to as "selective responsivity" (1993: 12) which refers to the different ways in which humans respond to and discover the

world. Here one is reminded of how different students (or graduates) engage in different extra-curricular activities to differing extents (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 269).

Third, the individual also manifests "structuring proclivities" which are the different inclinations to participate and persevere in increasingly challenging undertakings that people display (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 12). Renn and Arnold (2003: 269) use the example of students who engage in undertakings that are related to their study, work or social life and necessitate evolving problem solving skills, leadership and critical thinking to show structuring proclivities. The fourth and last aspect of Developmentally Instigative Characteristics are the "directive belief systems about the relation of the self to the environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 13). These are similar to what might be called the 'locus of control' but include relationships with the environment resulting in either progress or immobility being experienced by the individual. Here one could think of high achievers who would have confidence that they know the academic milieu, and act knowing that the correct effort – and they are able to identify what this is – leads to high marks (Arnold, 1995 in Renn and Arnold, 2003: 269). Developmentally Instigative Characteristics can be seen to explain some of the differences in university achievement or post university experience despite issues of social identity such as race, class or gender. However they do not govern the developmental path, but rather affect its movement and shape (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 14).

The individual is embedded in reciprocal relationships with others, and behaviours are shared (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 519). An example could be the relationship between graduate and employer. The individual, as a member of society, is also expected to fulfil a particular role which is a set of 'activities and relations' that a person has to fulfil depending on their position in society. These roles evoke particular responses from others (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 85). Roles are often identified by labels showing what the person's position within society is. Similar to the example above, such roles could refer to the marker of 'student' and 'lecturer', 'graduate' and 'employer'. Such labels are defined through race, class, gender and age. These refer to the inequalities characterising the social and economic

systems. These roles function at the point of the microsystem, but are constructed through the macrosystem, in that roles are configured through culture, ideology and institutions. Roles that exist in a particular system evoke behaviour which is in accordance with those roles and other roles – thus the environment and other role players encourage socially acceptable role behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 94). Moreover diverse situations result in discrete configurations of role activity for the participants (ibid.: 109).

Bronfenbrenner refers to the second level of complexity within the model of Human Ecology as the *mesosystem* (1979, 1993, 1977, 1992). The mesosystem refers to two or more microsystems which are experienced by the same individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 20). It is a relationship between two or more microsystems. Here one needs to consider the relationships between the different settings in which the person finds themselves at different points in the life course and the "synergistic effects created by the interaction of developmentally instigative or inhibitory features and processes present in each setting" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 22). An example of the mesosystem could be the relationships between home, university and friends. Bronfenbrenner postulates that transition into a new setting is eased and made more developmentally effective if the participant is accompanied during the initial transition into that setting by individuals from previous settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 211). Positive growth is also maximised if the role demands of discrete systems in which the individual is involved are compatible.

The mesosystem is a useful conceptual tool in that it allows the same individual to be researched in the context of the different settings that they are subjected to (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 523). It also makes explicit the mutual effects of several settings. The development processes that are part of the meso and exosystems are shaped by the beliefs held in one system about the other. University students are entrenched in the "interacting mesosystems of academic, social, family, and work life" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 270). The entrenchments of graduates could be seen likewise. All of these impact on the students' and graduates' development, and the ways in which these systems interact may create coherence or disturbance in the lives of students or graduates.

The third level of the model is the *exosystem* which is made up of the relationships between two or more systems, where at least one of these settings may not include the direct involvement of the individual themselves, but which impact on the situation in which the subject lives. Within these settings things happen which impact on the microsystems in which the person exists (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 24).The exosystem is an expansion of the mesosystem where formal and informal social structures which do not directly contain the individual, but impact on them, are considered (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 515). Here major social institutions play out at a community level. An example of such a system for a student could be governmental agencies as related to student financial aid, in turn impacting on the student's daily life. In the case of the graduate, economic policies could impact on work opportunities.

Bronfennrenner's fourth level is referred to as the *macrosystem*. "A macrosystem refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational legal and political systems, of which micro-, meso- and exosystems are the concrete manifestations" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 515). This system is made up of the commonalities in micro, meso and exosystems which exist within a society. A variety of factors are important: including belief systems, available resources, dangers, opportunities choices and patterns of communication that are acceptable and available. Here Bronfenbrenner is referring to what he terms the 'societal blueprint' where individuals are socialised into the prevailing norms and values (1977: 515, 1992: 228).

Some of these blueprints are formal (i.e. in the written form) and many are informal (known). These establish the ways in which concrete structures manifest, as well as how activities are organised in reality (Bronfenbrenner, 1977: 515). This level is of particular importance as Bronfenbrenner recognises that human beings are "culturally rooted" (1993: 37). People may be brought up in a separate subculture from the one in which they live as adults. Both systems impact on the individual. The macrosystem is characterised by the way

that it is made up and by the substance of its parts. This level enables an examination of, for example, "social or cultural values and norms, constructs of race and ethnicity and also cultural and social capital" (Heymann and Carolissen, 2011 :1380). In the same vein, gender constructs would be included. A further example of the macrosystem would be the esteem in which university graduates are held in society – affecting how students interact with others.

An important point is that the constancy and regularity of the way that these systems operate is important to their effectiveness, and the health and optimal development of individuals within those systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1992: 241). Bronfenbrenner also described what he calls "proximal processes" which operate at all levels of the system and are reciprocal and regular interactions with 'persons, objects and symbols' (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998: 996). The way that these proximal processes work (in terms of their "form, power, content and direction" (ibid.) are the result of the individual's characteristics, the environment and changes which may occur in that environment over time. As one can see, the Ecological Systems Theory allows for the examination of the "outcomes and processes of development by incorporating the interactions of individuals with their environment over time in a Person-Process-Context-Time model" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 263).

A student's perception of how well they fit in with their environment affects their educational attainment (Tinto, 1987). Similarly the graduate's perception of environmental fit would affect employment chances. Equivalence between individual characteristics, microsystems and mesosystems could lead to the kinds of "attitudes and behaviours that characterise Rhodes scholars" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 278). Such high achievers may exhibit a fit between family, friends and teachers who support academic success.

While providing a context for the development of the individual in a complex set of relationships, not all of which are easily identifiable, Bronfenbrenner's paradigm does not

adequately address the actor's part in the construction of the system in which they are nested or their manipulation of those systems. Moreover the boundaries of said systems might be more fluid and overlapping than allowed for in the model. The systems also might change or partially change, thereby changing the individual's responses to and experiences of the systems. The model also does not allow for the possibility that the environments in which the individual is embedded may not always function on the same axis. This would allow for the examination of the lack of positive press for the individual, but not necessarily the disruption of oppositional forces and proper understanding thereof. I also believe that the model also does not adequately enable one to examine ways in which individuals are able to transcend or even reinterpret 'negative' environments in which they are positioned. The ways that these multidirectional influences, shifts and stresses are responded to may become central to differing outcomes. In this sense the agency of the individual is again not fully acknowledged. Moreover, there must be caution regarding any value judgements which may spring from a desire to encourage environments that create an encouraging background for education. In this case one could regard an education system mainly based upon a particular ideal of knowledge, knowledge ownership and creation and environment (micro, meso and macro) encouraging thereof as the only format of credibility.

It is critical to recognise that within the spaces inhabited by individuals, their positions in those spaces and the values assigned to those spaces is a constant jostling for control. The environments as described by Bronfenbrenner (as above) are not static, nor are the rules of engagement within those environments. Further complicating the actors' negotiation of their position, is the access to power structures or lack thereof.

3.3 Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Thesis

Bourdieu's concept of Cultural Capital and his Social Reproduction thesis (1997) will be explored to understand further the student's access to the institution and their experiences post institution. Bourdieu's concepts are useful in that they provide a critical framework in which to understand the two theories above, and bring the problem of inequality into focus, which in my opinion is not adequately dealt with in either Tinto or Bronfenbrenner's work.

Bourdieu's ideas on social reproduction have been used as tools in explaining social inequality (Tzanakis, 2011: 76). The focus on processes of social reproduction also engage the researcher in micro and meso levels of analysis which assist in the bridging of the theories of Bronfenbrenner and Tinto in the context of this study. In the social reproduction paradigm, "sociologists are compelled to attend closely to the seemingly trivial 'games' of culture and the routine choices of everyday life" (Weininger, 2005: 130). Bourdieu regarded all actions performed by humans as interest driven (Navarro, 2006: 14) and social life as having an inherent logic to it that has the potential for being uncovered. This logic is universal in nature and can be applied in all social schemas (Bourdieu, 1996: 8). Thus actions and interaction at a micro level have a deeper relevance.

3.3.1 Class

Bourdieu considered actors' positions in society or 'class' to be a result of social, cultural and economic factors (Anheier and Romo, 1995: 859). For Bourdieu the configuration of class is historic and relational in nature. Further, class is a conceptual and variable notion as opposed to a concrete entity. As Thompson (1970: 10) argued there is a "temptation to suppose that class is a thing……. 'It', the working class, is assumed to have a real existence, which can be defined almost mathematically". It is in part created by the labelling of a group as a 'class' (both by insiders and outsiders). Verbalising class is part of what Bourdieu termed "symbolic capital" and acts as a legitimating device in that it enables the articulation of differences, the articulation of membership and the mobilisation of a group identity (Weininger, 2005: 132). Thomson believed: "Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and in the end, this is the only definition" (1970: 11).

It is the difference (or "distinction") between social groups which situates capital (the access to or ownership of goods). Symbolic capital refers to the way in which status and prestige is recognised within the other capitals. Patterns of consumption and related social membership vary according to the actor's position in social space, and are reliant on economic, human, cultural and social capital, which all vary over time, geographic location and demographic identity (Bourdieu, 1990: 125). Social class is thus described by Bourdieu

as "multi-dimensional" and enables a degree of social mobility through the conversion of capital from one form to another (Weininger, 2005: 124). Consumption choices also change over time. They are subject to a 'trickle-down' effect, in which the choices of the elite are translated into choices that are attainable for the poor. There is also a constant appropriation of what symbolises status by the poor, at which point the items lose their attractiveness as a symbol of exclusivity (Weininger, 2005: 129, Bourdieu, 1996: 10). Lower class practices can likewise be adopted by the elite. Practices then, are not "intrinsic properties" of a status group but are legitimated at different times and places (Bourdieu, 1996: 10).

It may also be that behaviours within different classes seem functionally the same, but are understood as symbolically different and 'belonging' to different status groups and thus rated differently (Bourdieu, 1996: 11). Consumption choices and the related attitude, likes and dislikes, symbolise a struggle for status and class occurring within society. For Bourdieu it is neither the consumption nor the preferences that they indicate that are of importance, rather it is the symbolic relationships and social practices which are evidence of power and dominance and the struggles for that dominance. Thus, the actual examples of what are considered as valuable resources, Bourdieu regards as arbitrarily assigned (the "cultural arbitrary") – that is that they have no particular intrinsic value. However the fact remains that a regard for the value for whatever good has to be longstanding in order to entrench its currency.

As a general concept social space is an "invisible reality that can neither be shown nor handled and which organizes agents' practices and representations" (Bourdieu, 1996: 17). Social space can be understood as a metaphor for understanding how individuals are organised and placed within social structures. The implication of a divided social space is that people inhabiting them have a reduced chance of meeting one another, or of transgressing the boundaries (unless they are transgressing the boundaries in a deviant sense). Thus, according to Bourdieu, "distance becomes predictive of encounters, affinities, sympathies and even desires" (ibid.: 19).

Bourdieu uses the concept of "habitus" which is the "socially constituted system of dispositions that orient thoughts, perceptions expressions and actions" (Bourdieu, 1990: 55) to describe internalised opinions and reactions to stimuli. Habitus is a component of an individual's character and their thought process which arises from socialisation within the family and other institutions, and results in a "style unity" (Bourdieu, 1996: 15). It is both controlling of the individual and can be controlled by the individual. Habitus is also the consequence of social training, where possessions and items become related to different class groups (ibid.). In sum it refers to the individual's identity and as such the way that an individual moves within the social world. For Bourdieu, 'habitus' is a notion which mediates between structure and agency, in that it allows for the recognition of both forms of influence on the actor (Sullivan, 2002: 150). The actor translates social structures through their habitus, and within the translation they create room for individual responses. Mutekwe (2014: 360) identified the habitus of South African students as being an essential determinant of their success or lack thereof of the higher education system.

Habitus can also be expressed spatially with geographic areas being appropriated by different classes (where social space is translated into physical space and valued according to that training). Again this designation is often oppositional in structure (Bourdieu, 1996: 16). Such examples would be in the juxtaposition of high and low (for instance in physical stature and position or in geographic placement) and left or right (sides of a river – as in Bourdieu's example of Paris, sides of a road or railway track – 'right and wrong'), front of house or back of auditorium. These differences are symbolic as opposed to having any intrinsic superiority (Bourdieu, 1996: 16). Within the South African context many of the spatial dimensions of inequality are more than symbolic in that they had been historically formalised in a logical and pre-planned manner. Historically habitus for South Africans could be seen as being strategically and formally constructed through pervasive ideologies of discrimination and consciously planned access or lack thereof, to status and resources.

Bourdieu recognised the dimension of the social world in which agency is demonstrated which he calls 'field': the analogy of a sports field or playing area where humans jostle for

dominance represents the figurative description of a social space in which such interaction occurs. Put more formally, 'field' refers to the structured positioning of actors within society-positionings which configure and are configured by the actors' access to resources (capital). The university environment could constitute a field. Within the university there are finite resources, a struggle for dominance and the existence of capital in all its forms.

3.3.2 Capital

Bourdieu referred to capital as amassed effort – which can be material in nature or symbolic of those material goods and efforts (Bourdieu, 1986: 241). Capital can be used as "social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (ibid.). The social world, according to Bourdieu, is organised with reference to the apportionment of those capitals to actors or groups, and the maneuvering for position with regard to those capitals. Actors who experience similar access and ownership of these capitals are placed in similar social positions and thus begin to make up social groups or strata with similar "dispositions, interests and habits" (Anheier and Romo, 1995: 860). Capital of all types is bequeathed by family creating a long term reproduction in inequality (Tzanakis, 2011: 76). Capital in whatever form (there are several) takes time to build up and implies the existence of a resource of some sort. Lareau and Weininger (2003: 567) further described capital as affording rights to limited assets; being capable of being passed on to subsequent generations, and of being open to appropriation. Actors are constantly strategising to appropriate or preserve ownership of scarce resources (social and physical).

Capital for Bourdieu can be identified in a number of forms including economic, cultural (containing linguistic capital), social and symbolic forms. These are discussed below. All the concepts mentioned are also paradigms dealt with by other theorists in addition to Bourdieu (for example, Social Capital as dealt with by Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988). Bourdieu's ideas are not all new, but are based on a variety of classical positions.

3.3.2.1 Economic Capital

Economic capital (a capital that includes money and other assets such as property, quickly convertible into financial resources) or the lack thereof, is often regarded as a basis for inequality. However ownership of economic capital alone fails to explain the social dimensions of inequality. Human capital, including "body capital", is regarded by Bourdieu as the resources and preferences generated in the physical body, which are a result of class bound diets and nutritional access. Often human capital is defined as skills and physical power. With regard to skills, the idea overlaps with cultural capital in that technical prowess can be generative of prestige.

3.3.2.2 Social Capital

Social capital for Bourdieu (1986: 247) considers the resources (which may already exist or which have the latent capacity to exist) engendered through stable relationships of social contact and mutual identification. These could include social networks and personal relationships. Members of a group have access to a collective capital. Membership of that group entitles actors to translate that capital in various ways. Social capital can be practical, material or symbolic in nature, and can be mobilised to different effects depending on the actor's number of connections and the intensity of such connections.

Such connections are based on group cohesion. The networks themselves are often unconsciously produced and based in cultural capital. They are the culmination of effort and engagement in the creation of institution. These relationships have to be worked on and made symbolic in order to produce the capacity for useful action. The creation of such capital takes other forms of capital, time, energy and will. Thus follows Durkheim's (1952) suggestions that communal rituals are a capacitor of solidarity.

In the case of social capital, the positive outcomes of essentially being affable become a power and gregariousness an investment. This includes the access to positive prospects through one's (or one's families) social networks. Social capital works on the understanding and adherence to common group norms, and the idea that any action will be reciprocated

(albeit not necessarily directly or immediately). The resource that is attained through the social capital is not the social capital itself – that resides within the relationship between members of the community as described by Bourdieu. The idea of bounded solidarity is slightly different in that it refers to the altruism and common focus of people who have the same experiences. Thus their motivation to share social capital has the boundaries of shared community (Portes, 1998: 8). Social capital can be regarded as a source of social regulation, of social support and of family support (ibid.). In some cases dense networks have the effect of inhibiting social flow, in that members can become cut off from the outside world, in which case it becomes a social and economic liability (Bankston and Zhou, 2002: 291, Bird, 2007: 3). Negative costs of social capital (which are not often recognised as it is a favoured concept which holds the hope for positive change (Portes (2000: 2)) include: it could result in segregation, constraints on autonomy, too many claims made on certain members – which then in turn could reduce the attainments of the donor, and norms decreasing the experiences of members (Portes, 1998: 15).

As Portes (1998: 2) showed, the concept of 'social capital' is not new or unique – ideas regarding the value of group life have been central throughout theorising about society. In recent times, the concept has become popular and useful. Some of these writings have conceptualised the idea of social capital in a very similar way to the concept of Bourdieu's cultural capital, leading to confusion and validity problems in research and policy (Portes, 2000: 3). A critique of many of the descriptions of social capital is that the units of analysis have become conflated – individuals and groups are interposed, as are cause and effect, thus resulting in circular reasoning (Portes, 2000: 2).

Those members who extract a return for social capital due to their membership within the community, without the corresponding input, place strain on the system. The group adherence to norms and values that engender strong social capital may begin to be overpowering, and demand conformity for all. This sort of situation, while creating social capital discourages independent thinking and problem solving (Portes, 1998: 16). Social capital can be the source of both benefit and social control.

Group solidarity is sometimes made stronger by the group's shared encounters with hardship. This can lead to a generalised opposition to the larger structures of society – particularly if those hardships are experienced as the result of discrimination (Portes, 1998: 17). In the studies of communities reported by Portes, those who leave or experience upward mobility are considered traitors.

There is also a possibility of a class bias in the writings about social capital. Suggestion of deficit amongst poor communities, and the related recommendations for improvements within such communities could on occasion be indicative of biases often held by the non-poor. Such value judgement in itself is indicative of mechanisms in place protecting the status quo and position of the elite- even within academia.

3.3.2.3 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is a long-term characteristic displayed by an actor, and is inculcated during their socialisation (although the term socialisation was not favoured by Bourdieu), experience of formal education and its effects, as well the ownership of prized goods. Culture generates the relationships between groups, social grading and access to power (Navarro, 2006: 15). Culture can be understood as the social patterns that are common to groups of people. These can include beliefs, habits, norms and values and ideas about the relative importance of such which endure over time. Cultural capital is experienced in three ways. The first, according to Bourdieu (1986: 242), in an *embodied form*, refers to ingrained ways of thinking, behaving and confidence. The second is comprehended in an *objectified form* and refers to cultural artifacts, for example books, instruments, objects of beauty, fashion and music. Here cultural capital is symbolised materially through objects which are rare, unattainable and even incomprehensible for most. While the material good imbued with the cultural capital can be transmitted through heredity and economic capital, the appreciation and understanding of such objects are within the subjective realm. The actor's ability to do such depends on the inherited or commandeered 'embodied' form of the capital.

Cultural artefacts are 'segmented' into belonging in different sectors of the social structure (Anheier, 1995: 865). Segmentation occurs on the basis of rarity vs mass production; 'high' vs 'low' culture; 'serious' vs 'light' literature (ibid.), art vs craft and so on. Here cultural capital is allocated an institutionalised recognition, and place in a hierarchy of value. Moreover, it enables the translation of economic capital into cultural capital through the investment of money into academic pursuits.

The process of absorption of cultural capital within actors indicates that its possession is a process of long-term personal investment and the work of "assimilation and inculcation" (Bourdieu, 1986: 243). These efforts need not be conscious in nature, and the capital itself is often not obvious. The behaviours or understandings of cultural capital are ranked in value depending on their rarity – as in economic capital. These are evidenced through the lifestyle and preferences of the individual and community. For example, body language, manners, food choices, language and expression.

> In language, it gives the opposition between the popular outspokenness and the highly censored language of the bourgeoisies… The same economy of means is found in body language: here too, agitation and haste, grimaces and gesticulation are opposed … to the restraint and impassivity that signify elevation. (Bourdieu, 1984: 175)

These qualities are examples of the values of a society at a given time and place. At a general level, Bourdieu described the cultural capital of the poor as being based in necessity and preferring "function over form". This changes as status increases, to the cultural capital of the bourgeoisie, which evidences a preference for 'pure' art, luxury and intellect for its own sake. The logic of the argument is that those with more resources can afford the luxury of form over function, while those with fewer resources are required to value items and behaviours which are functional. This is one of the ways in which exclusivity is maintained.

Further, cultural capital has been interpreted by many social theorists as referring to a "highbrow aesthetic culture" often operationalised by looking at museum outings, going to

the theatre, and learning to play a classical instrument or appreciate classical music (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 567). The operationalisation of such capital has variously included: the number of books within the home, presence of cultural resources in the home (i.e. musical instruments and art supplies), parental reading choices, attendance in extra mural classes, visits to museums, engaging in classical dance forms and music (Sullivan, 2002: 157). Many of these refer to what is traditionally regarded as belonging to the elite in western society and could be criticised as such. However further reading of Bourdieu (1996) provides support for the suggestion of Lareau and Weininger (2003) that the characteristics of cultural capital are examples that differ from society to society. In fact, Bourdieu referred to the particular characteristics of elitism as the "cultural arbitrary" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 22). Thus no value judgement is made as to the features of cultural capital – it can be manifested in any number of ways.

Subsequent examinations of cultural capital have found that the "highbrow" characteristics of a culture with status is not evident in all situations, as per Bourdieu's suggestion of the 'cultural arbitrary' (acknowledging that the items of value within a culture are of no intrinsic value and are changeable). For example, a modern version of highbrow cultural capital in the United States of America can be regarded as a valuing of "multi-cultural capital" which appreciates "cosmopolitanism" (Bryson, 1996). Here an exposure to diversity and the resources to remain unthreatened by that diversity secures the status quo. Thus while the elite protect their positions within the social strata through the use of cultural capital, the make-up of such capital would change over time.

As already indicated, cultural capital is evident through the consumption choices of individuals, which suggests a membership in particular social groups and a separation from others. Consumption choices are wrought by habitus. These choices often become automatic and ingrained; however there is some agency available to individuals. For Bourdieu however, this agency is not commonly in evidence. This is because the selections made by the actor, while not 'habit' per se, are the result of "pre-reflexive" action and take place before conscious understanding (Weininger, 2005: 125).

Academic qualification can be translated into cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 246). In this case actors can (with certain difficulty) access cultural capital from outside of the elite. In such a form, the capital is accepted, consistent and guaranteed. One of the characteristics of the exclusive classes is a valuing of education which results in a further ease and proficiency within the social settings of the elite (Bourdieu, 1973: 495).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990: 43) claimed that an important chunk of a person's education occurs in early childhood, in the readying of the child for school, language and the inculcation of cultural codes inherent in language. Children at schools and universities without those codes are unable to decipher the mechanisms of success (ibid.). Bourdieu's suggestion is also that children inherit their parents' 'cultural assets'; the cultural capital engendered in children is then translated into educational success (or failure). Educational qualification in turn is a tool of success which contributes to joining or staying in the groups with access to power (Sullivan, 2002: 154).

Thus the third form of cultural capital is the *institutional form*, which also serves to preserve the value of cultural capital. The inculcation of cultural capital within the home is a strategy of reproducing the social system, as different classes transmit different value sets, which are in turn differentially valued within the educational system: "In cultural matters the manner of acquiring perpetuates itself in what is acquired..." (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 116). As such, a cycle of stratification is created. According to Bourdieu, education is central to the reproduction of inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

Cultural capital in relation to education has also been defined as the commonly understood academic standards through which instructors reward academic behaviours, habits and motivation. Such skills are recognised as cultural capital and rewarded as such. These are then translated to academic success which in turn contributes to one's cultural capital, or can be translated into cultural capital for those without, as this allows for elite group membership through the endowment and endorsement of cultural proficiency (Bourdieu,

1984). One could separate the inheritance of cultural capital from the development of cultural capital through education; however the two are intertwined in that the elite define what is valued and valuable in cultural capital. These values are approved of through education, thus ensuring a reproduction of the status quo (Bourdieu, 1973). Due to the value placed on vagaries of cultural capital, pupils are forced to comply to the values of the dominant class in order to get through school, a system which is regarded as an example of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

There is conflicting evidence as to whether or not such favouring occurs in the empirical sense (see Tzanakis, 2011). In some cases, schools and higher education institutions have in fact attempted to compensate for inequality. Other evidence also shows (see Sullivan, 2002: 146) inequalities have persisted, despite educational and policy efforts to the contrary. According to Price (2012: 2), the South African education system generally holds particular forms of knowledge, particular ways of knowing and particular methods of getting that knowledge in higher esteem than others: western based discourses are given primacy. These ways are all congruent with the long held values of the affluent and powerful. The education system therefore encourages success for those with relevant cultural capital. Thus, while race is not central to the attainment of such success, South Africa's history has become aligned with race.

One of the means that cultural capital is transmitted within education is using parental education. Parents with knowledge and experience of the educational system are able to help their children to navigate the system successfully. They are able to communicate with teachers; they assume right to that communication and are active in it. Parents who have traversed the education system and are the bearers of cultural capital also have competence in the language of instruction and dominance, and are more likely to use expressions of status in communication with educational institutions on behalf of their children (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 586). Lareau also suggested that while both working class and middle class parents can and do become involved in their children's schools, it is the middle class parents who reap a "social profit". Laureau attributes this to a facet of

parental cultural capital (rather than schools engaging in the symbolic violence described by Bourdieu) as it occurs in situations where educational policy is consciously designed to overcome inequalities (1987: 82). However, she qualified the above: were the schools to require something more aligned with working class parents' expectations and expertise, rather than requiring interactions aligned with the skills of middle class parents, there might be a different outcome (ibid.: 83). This in fact supports part of Bourdieu's thesis.

Cultural groups and classes differ in their ideas about the role of children and appropriate child rearing tactics (Roska and Potter, 2011: 315). Upper and middle class parents tend to believe that active, engaged and involved parental styles are optimal for child development. These reinforce the general middle and upper class value system (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 590). The values described are moreover, Western middle and upper class positions, and thus support western versions of cultural capital. Parental intervention and engagement in a child's education are thought to transmit a sense of cultural entitlement that is absent in those whose parents are unable to engage (ibid.: 593). Children without cultural capital might experience school as a 'hostile' environment – this is as a result of interaction styles rather than access to high cultural capital (Sullivan, 2002: 161). This supports Bronfenbrenner's (1993) suggestion that education needs to happen within a set of supportive and coherent institutions: the family, community and society. For many who are unable to create or benefit from such interactions, education is a difficult road. There is a suggestion that participation in highbrow culture itself has an indirect relationship with cultural capital in that it is facilitated by education, which has a direct relationship to cultural embeddedness (Sullivan, 2002: 160). Thus, while not always empirically supported or similarly operationalised, it could still be conceptually useful, and merits extension (Tzanakis, 2011: 85). He also believed that there should be more emphasis on examining agency in the establishment of cultural capital.

A number of empirical studies have failed to provide support for the educational aspect of Bourdieu's social reproduction theory as summarised inTzanakis (2011). He suggested that the reproduction of inequality may work in different ways to those envisioned by Bourdieu

(2011: 84) including inequalities that continue regardless of the reorientation of schools, due to schools not being as important to the process as had been thought.

The concept of cultural capital and parental education have often been conflated, by Bourdieu himself too (Sullivan, 2002: 156). It is often in a situation that values a western education (such as South Africa) where parental education has been found to impact on the child's educational success. However the conflation and the attribution of value from one sort of cultural capital should not lead to ignoring the contributions that parents without such 'capital' still make to their children's life chances: they nevertheless act as major socialisers of their children, are important to the development of their habitus and identity and may provide the space and resources for their offspring to engage in education – even if not to the requirements of the particular education system itself.

Rather than using an appreciation for high artistic forms as a measurement of cultural capital, this research investigates an emphasis on micro-interactional processes where families (and thus students) are able or attempt to communicate with educational institutions, employers and gate keepers using their knowledge and skills. The ability to engage in such strategies ensures the status quo is protected and entrenched. This follows the research of Di Maggio (1982) who investigated whether there was any relationship between cultural capital and school pupils marks. His study found that there was an ease of communication and appreciation between teachers and pupils who were part of or displayed elements of elite cultural groups. It seemed that teachers gave such children more help, focused attention and thought that they were cleverer than their counterparts (Di Maggio, 1982:190).

The ideas of Bourdieu give rise to the perception that a social reproduction of the status quo is inevitable, and that the agency of the individual is unlikely to overcome the structures within which they were raised. This can be supported by the indications that significant change – for example within South African society – has not occurred despite efforts to the

contrary. I would also suggest that the malleability of habitus requires investigation. Is it possible to undo the habitus of one's early life? Can education reformat habitus in the light of its ability to become cultural capital, or is this capital simply added to one's portfolio, perhaps changing ones social position without the agent fully internalising the change? Or alternatively, is it possible for the agent to re-socialise, but at the same time retain their original identity? These are all of interest if one is to regard the possibility of changing one's position in the social strata with any seriousness. Without investigation, the impression is of a society where mobility is in actual fact unlikely. The suggestion that Bourdieuian theory tends towards the deterministic, despite Bourdieu's denial of such is not an original one (see for example, Goldthorpe, 2007).

Position and experiences over the life course can be affected by agency more than is currently thought. Humans' store of assets change over the life course as a result of many factors: human, social and economic in nature (Roska and Potter, 2011: 315). Although education can play a part in the structuring of inequality, it is not the only means, nor is cultural capital as clear as previously described. Critically, teachers are not necessarily agents of the upper classes, nor are schools necessarily deeply embedded into the values of those classes. This may be applicable in the South African context as many schools and individuals have been consciously excluded from dominant culture for many years. They may not have the resources, nor awareness to transmit those values. Moreover, the attempts at alleviating poverty and deprivation may result in a different environment within education than what was originally described by Bourdieu and Bourdieuian researchers.

Tzanakis called for a new conceptualisation of the cultural capital thesis to include more than one sort of cultural capital (he suggested that agents and groups may have access to a number of cultural capitals on different dimensions: for example, religious, ethnic and occupational cultures). He further suggested that cultural capital could "exist within cultural capital" (2011: 85). The idea that cultural capital of one sort may have currency in one arena but not in another could be useful in understanding the ways that actors negotiate their place.

Both cultural and social capitals can be generated, bypassed or inhibited by economic capital. For example, the ability to maintain social networks requires investments of time and resources which may be difficult to access were one to experience a decrease in economic resources relative to the rest of the group. Similarly, the transmission of cultural capital may rest on the ability of the family to afford a parent within the home as a full-time caregiver (to oversee the inculcation of appropriate values). If the household requires the parent to be in the workplace, those values may be less effectively taken up by offspring. The problem with the transferability of different kinds of capital is that the rates of exchange are obscured, and dangerous. Actors might incur loss, or uncertainty when attempting such exchange (Bourdieu, 1986: 251).

What is not acknowledged is the possibility that an actor may redefine their belonging to a class based group, or define their belonging to multiple classes in a shifting and dynamic schema. The ways in which people regard their class and the possible movement between classes is obscured in the neatness conveyed by Bourdieu. Moreover the impression given when looking at Bourdieu's theory is that class and one's membership in a class is fairly intractable –despite Bourdieu's explicit claim that mobility may be possible. The suggestion that class is self-defined seems to refer to a definition made as a collective rather than a sum of individuals. The definition then seems to become part of the social structure and, it would seem, overrides any sense of agency. Thus agency, while recognised, is not in fact made part of the central processes of social organisation as discussed by Bourdieu.

Moreover while it is useful to regard class and class hierarchy as more complex than being based simply on economic difference, becoming too reliant on a Bourdieuian framework could lead one to underestimate the influence of economic power. It is clear that financial wherewithal has a major impact on one's experience of the world around and on the world's reaction to one. While Bourdieu (1997: 53) did suggest that economic capital can be transformed into other forms of capital, the mechanisms of that exchange are not clear, and the acknowledgement seems to wither. There is also an absence of significance applied to,

for example, gendered positioning in relation to class and the creation of capital/ access to that capital.

To be explored within this study is the participants' perceptions of their own positions within a changing society; thus the different foci of the three theorists discussed here enable a more inclusive examination of the data in its multiple dimensions, and provide a multifaceted prism through which to understand its depth. The use of the three theories provides a lens to concurrently examine the participants positions within the status quo, and their maneuvering thereof. It also allows us to look at the position of the individual within the institution of higher education.

4 Literature Review

The literature review presented below is organised around themes of relevance to student and graduate encounters. However many of the themes investigated in the 'student' section refer to life before entering university and likewise to life as a graduate. As in reality, the experiences analysed here resonate for the participants at multiple levels and points in time.

The Student

The study under consideration examines the participants' lives, as students and beyond. The reason for doing this is to understand the student and graduate better – their perceptions, their capabilities and their experiences. Life outside university can have an important effect on university results as students are often unable to separate the different parts of their lives (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000: 584). As we shall see in the following review, a student's past, their present, and their ideas of their future all play a role in determining student success. Barnett (2007: 27) suggested that "the student's being in the world is more important for her learning than her interests in developing knowledge and understanding in a particular field". Thus the experiences of the student and the way those experiences are interpreted are of significance. We will also examine available literature detailing university graduate experiences – socially, economically and culturally.

Barnett (2007: 2) suggested that one needs to ask the following questions pertaining to different areas of student life:

The following refer to the project of being a student:

- "What is it to be a student?"
- "How do we understand the tasks and achievements of being a student?"
- "What are students called to be and to become?"

Questions about the student's learning are also necessary:

- "What kind of changes might students undergo in their educational journey?"

- "What is it to develop as a student?"

One further needs to examine issues of accountability within higher education:

- "What kinds of pedagogies might help sustain students on their educational journey?"
- "Are there educational principles that might help tutors and professors who might be reflecting as to ways that they can be helpful to students?"
- "What forms of 'student experience' are likely to prompt a student's continuing engagement with her studies?"

To move towards answering these questions, it is necessary to understand the substance of students' lives. This study attempts to do so in a little way by looking longitudinally at a small sample of students (later becoming alumni within the boundaries of the study) and considering their everyday life and associated experiences. Thus the literature presented deals with pertinent aspects of student and graduate life.

> The college environment, structural characteristics, and student background traits are all seen as directly influencing the frequency and content of interactions with major socialising agents on campus (for instance peers and faculty). The quality of student effort is posited as being directly affected not only by student background traits (e.g. aptitude, personality and aspiration level), but also by the press of the dominant environment and the norms and values of the peer and faculty cultures with which the student is in contact. (Pascarella, 1985: 49)

In light of the student's identity and in terms of his/her academic development, as well as the university environment itself, the student faces changes and challenges which will be investigated in the following review. To move towards understanding the dynamic of higher education, it is important to consider the experience, relationships and antecedent histories of the participants at multiple levels.

Barnett (2007: 67) further suggested that the educational component of the student is not automatic but that the student has to go through a process for that component to emerge and mature: "This process of becoming is delicate. It has continually to be worked at. It can be injured, and very quickly so, even lost forever" (ibid.). Thus the student is fragile and vulnerable in all interactions. Callousness or criticism can disrupt the student's growth (Barnett, 2007: 67). The acknowledgement that the student's 'educational being' has a developmental aspect is useful as it is at this juncture where much of the immediate student interaction with university occurs.

As outlined above, in order to understand students, it is necessary to examine students' development in terms of their identity, their social worlds and their stresses during the course of university life. Much of the available literature seems to be based on the experiences in American or European universities. Of particular interest in considering the sample of this study is the experience of the 'non-traditional' student as discussed elsewhere – essentially a non-hegemonic group in terms of race, ethnicity, class and language. In the overseas context, 'ethnic minorities' could be said to belong to the non-hegemonic cultural group. This is not necessarily so in the South African context, where the ethnic majorities (in terms of numbers) have historically been marginalised.

4.1 Identity

The investigation of student identity is important for this study as identity and its development permeates the students' (and graduate's) experiences and daily life. Moreover the identity developed as a student sets the stage for the identity the graduate assumes. Identity as a concept is much debated, with multidisciplinary arguments and inputs. Central to these are the views that identity is either a function of social structures, or the production of internal psychological processes. This short review attempts to synthesise positions, with a view to understanding the lives of the sample, rather than debating the merits of polarised opinions. Thus recognition of both structure and agency, external and internal forces is necessitated.

Barnett (2007: 68) suggested that higher education is an experience which encourages students to become themselves. It develops individuality, but at the same time dislocates students from themselves. This is because the university is a site of new experience – both at the level of institutional organisation, at the practical level and at the intellectual level. New and different ways of thinking and operating are required. These allow the student to both grow into themselves, and to separate from themselves – from their deeply held beliefs and histories, they move from the known to the uncertain. "Whether we inherit an identity -- masculinity, being black -- or we actively choose one on the basis of our political predilections -- radical lesbianism, black nationalism, socialism -- our identities are ways of making sense of our experiences" (Mohanty, 1993: 48). These processes occur for every student, be they familiar with the environment engendered by higher education or not. Thus identity development is bound to happen – added to the above is the fact that the traditional aged student is still growing and maturing through late adolescence and into their early twenties, a time of expected identity development. For Arnett (2000: 473), who followed a group of American adolescents longitudinally, identity development is an important task of the phase he coins 'emerging adulthood'. Emerging adulthood covers the ages of 18 to 25 years, and is epitomised by a phase of experimentation with different choices that present themselves (in ideology, relationships, living arrangements, habits and work). Arnett suggested that the phase he refers to is distinguishable from the phases of adolescence and young adulthood in that it is without the full dependency of adolescence, but also without the complete independence and attendant responsibility experienced by new adults. The phase is characterised by what has been labelled as a "roleless role" (attributed to Parsons, 1942), where individuals are not yet constrained by role obligations as they are engaging in multiple activities and not yet committing to any in particular. The identities and behaviours of youth at this point are often not acceptable to older members of the society (Parsons, 1942: 608). The emerging adults are characterised by a situation of partial independence (for example, students who are subsidised by their parents, living with parents) as mentioned above, and 'instability': where change is a principal and constant experience, and risk taking is common (Arnett, 2000: 471). The change and experimentation eventually lead to full independence, self-sufficiency and identity consistence.

To illustrate, in the industrialised world, marriage is on average being delayed – for example in the United States of America to about 27 years of age for women and to 28.5 years for men (United States Census Bureau, 2010) and in Europe for women the average age of marriage is 30 (United Nations Statistics Division, 2010). Maternal age at the birth of a first child is also being delayed in the developed world (Matthews and Hamilton, 2002). Similar patterns have emerged for home ownership and employment. Arnett did qualify that maturing is culturally constructed, and that not all people of the ages 18 – 25 are able to experiment with their lives at this point (Arnett, 2000: 470). Schlegel and Barry (1991: 11) described many cultures as regarding adulthood as being entered into at the time of marriage or parenthood. For many non-western communities, marriage typically occurs between 16 – 18 (females) and 18 – 20 (males) (ibid.). However in South Africa the average age at first marriage is 27 and 28 years of age respectively (United Nations Population Division, 2000). Schlegel and Barry (1991: 12) pointed out that while the concept of adolescence is common in non-western cultures, the idea of a time between adolescence and adulthood was rare. Also the expectation in many communities was reported as one where growing children take on responsibilities for family welfare (Schlegel and Barry, 1991). Arnett further suggested that there is an economic dimension to the engagement in identity formation of the volitional character. For those without funds, access to experimentation is a costly exercise. Moreover access to cultural hegemony may also colour the individual's ability to move through this phase in the ways described. Thus as pointed out, for youth living in inaccessible, agrarian and poor communities, traditional patterns of maturity are most likely, while those in urban areas, with access to media, western ideology and economic diversity are more likely to engage in prolonged experimentation (ibid.: 478). Arnett also pointed out that as life expectancy increases, the attractiveness of a prolonged journey into adulthood also increases, whereas shorter lifespans make the entry into adulthood more urgent. However, it may be that in today's globalised world the idea that adulthood can be delayed has permeated many social structures on the periphery of the industrialised world. In these cases one may find examples of partial take-up of the developmental phase.

While the above is clearly a crucial point in the development of identity, it is becoming increasingly apparent that identity development is a lifelong project in the contemporary world characterised by constant change and uncertainty (Cote and Levine, 2014: 4). In the past, identity was more static and rarely open to change – the roles that people found themselves in were culturally predetermined and historically entrenched. The world in which we now find ourselves, however, demands that individuals engage actively in making meaning for themselves in a situation of constant flux (Cote and Levine, 2014: 2). Part of the process of identity development is for the individual to find meaningful connection within a community (ibid.: 4).

Giddens (1992: 189) regarded the development of self-identity as a 'reflexive project' – identity is constructed by the self in an instinctive manner. It is something that individuals unceasingly labour on and contemplate. Individuals consistently create a narrative of the self through biography – a story resulting in the understanding of who they are, and how they became (Giddens, 1991: 53). For Giddens, one's identity is not a set of innate characteristics, but something that is actively constructed by the individual through their understanding of their life story. Identity can also be understood as having two dimensions: the individual's inner assessment of their own value and their outward external awareness of connection and belonging (Matthews et al., 2014: 2357). Giddens (1984) asserts that social experience is neither the result of only an individual's actions nor the outcome of the pressure of social structure- but rather that social life is the product of a relationship between both actor and structure. Thus identity, actions and experiences are the result of a complex interrelationship between micro and macro forces- this has relevance to this study as the participants are manoeuvring themselves through a complicated set of structures in order to forge their futures.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, one's identity is constructed in reference to 'habitus' – the self as created by interactions with and perceptions of the social world (Bourdieu, 1990). "Identities are theoretical constructions that enable us to read the world in specific ways" (Mohanty, 1993: 49). Thus there are two suggestions, one where identity is

constructed through one's understanding *of* one's narrative, and the other where identity is the key *to* understanding that narrative. It may be that Giddens' suggestion of the development of identity as reflexive, can explain the above as working in tandem in the formation of identity. People constantly relocate their identities in relation to their histories, their futures, their emotions and, importantly, their needs for belonging, for acknowledgment, for security (Norton, 1997: 410). One's ability to express one's needs is based in material possession – thus identity changes with economic position (ibid.). Identity can be seen as 'relational' and 'positional' (O'Boyle, 2014: 170) in multiple dimensions – as constructed on an inner level (one's own inner history) and in terms of social positions (for example, age, gender, role, status). It is also suggested that different environments enable different identities: "The identities available in certain environments do not necessarily fit existing selves and, in some cases, may exist in contradiction to the established self " (O'Shea, 2013: 138). Students may find themselves mismatched if they are pioneers in the university environment: culturally, economically, and socially which creates a sense of risk, in that change brings the possibility of the unknown. Such experiences are undoubtedly difficult for first generation students as well as those experiencing poverty, as also indicated in the discussion in sections 4.4 and 4.6.2.

Agency – as in a sense of self determination (Abbott , Wallace and Tyler, 2005: 8) – is an important component in identity. However, in acknowledging the primacy of agency, one opens up the issue of choice (Lawson, 2008: 16) . As discussed by Lawson, an individual's choices are constrained through structure (the systems and institutions that organise individuals' lives) and through the sustained interaction of the individual with others. Both of these then impact on identity formation. Individuals can also interpret their positions within systems and control structures in autonomous ways. Thus, the nature of the students' connections and relationships, their situation (the systems and institutions of which they are part) and their understandings of these things are important to their identity development. They are also important for us to attempt to understand.

It is understood that adolescents inhabit multiple social contexts which they move between with varying degrees of ease or difficulty (Phelan, Davidson and Cao, 1991: 224). These transitions have implications for the individual's ability to capitalise on education, form relationships and thrive in later life. In order to unpack the dynamics of moving from one context to another, Phelan et al. (1991) suggested what they call the 'multiple worlds model' (with world referring to the "cultural knowledge and behaviour found within the boundaries of students' families, peer groups, and schools; we presume that each world contains values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders" – ibid.: 225). Students use the cultural knowledge that is developed in their different worlds in different social contexts. The boundaries between these social worlds may be easy to traverse or difficult depending on the integration of the different worlds, and the synchronicity of those worlds.

Phelan et al. (1991: 244) found that adolescents whose worlds were congruent tended to come from stereotypically nuclear families, valuing effort and individual success. Their parents were involved in school activities, parents, peers and teachers belonged to intersecting social systems. Here the students were able to cross the boundaries of the different parts of their lives with ease. Adolescents who came from worlds which are incongruent, but still managed to traverse the boundaries of these worlds with ease, tended to keep the members of different worlds separate – thus peers were separate from parents who were separate from school. These individuals also seemed to become 'invisible' (ibid.: 245) and are unknown to those around them. "Even though many students are able to cross perceived boundaries successfully, they are frequently forced to deny aspects of who they are. This is illuminated by these youths' efforts to keep the actors in their worlds separate, and the tremendous discomfort they feel when unable to do so" (ibid.).

Bhabha (1994: 1) points to the construction of identity in the spaces that exist in between cultures and roles. As the individual moves between roles, occupying the transitional areas are in themselves constructing the self. It is also these differences that shape the person. Thus the boundaries themselves are a building constituent of identity, rather than only

being exclusionary measures. It is this space that grows into a hybrid culture in and of itself through interpretation and compromise (Bhabha, 1994: 38). Thus rather than traversing the boundaries as discussed by Phelan et al. above, there may be an element of identity creation between those boundaries.

Qualitative information was gathered from a small sample of South African students were found to make an effort to retain their original identities and their connections to their original homes upon entering university (Bangeni and Kapp, 2005: 2). This was seen to have a political dimension as well as a personal one in that the university was perceived as a traditionally 'white' space which had the power to erase less powerful ethnicities. Over the period of their degree those same students had become reconciled from identity fluctuation, to developing their identities in new ways. As conceptualised by Bhabha (1992: 141), the idea of being "unhomely" rings true: where the 'home' – including the sacred parts of one's identity, becomes part of the wider world and is at the mercy of its transitions. The further description of "unhomed" also refers to the experience of having to reconcile two different sets of cultural demands (Bhabha, 1994: 13). As suggested by Stewart (2002: 579), identity assimilation is important for development of the healthy self. The mechanisms through which individuals (particularly those whose socio cultural identities are regarded as marginal) manage this, are important. One strategy is to find a community in which one fits, another is to engage in faith as a way of explaining one's experience of the social world (Stewart, 2002: 581). Faith based organisations are primed to meet individuals' needs in this regard.

Youths with disparate worlds and who only traverse the boundaries of those worlds in certain circumstances, tend to vacillate between participating and retreating, academic success and failure. To overcome the failure, staff need to have knowledge of the students, their needs, and show individual attention (Bangeni and Kapp, 2005: 2). Some students find the boundaries between their different worlds impermeable which results in pressure. These students may search for situations where they are comfortable or do find support (Phelan et al., 1991: 246). South African students may find themselves having multiple and

incongruent worlds – particularly those who come from deep rural, traditional and poverty-stricken backgrounds. Moreover, they may be first generation students with no experience or assistance in crossing such boundaries. A longitudinal study by Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 202) of twenty South African students showed that these students' engagement with university discourse resulted in a separation , rejection and alienation from home, community and peers of origin; at the same time the university was a site of isolation. As a result they express a loss of "home" – an environment where they can "be themselves" (Bangeni and Kapp, 2005: 17). The ways in which the students understand the world and their experiences in the world is changed (Mohanty, 2000: 44). According to Tinto (1997: 611) participation in learning communities can assist students to bridge the different worlds they inhabit – by narrowing the academic and social divide; however this would not change the community of origin's perceptions towards the student, nor the student's attitude towards that community.

In examining the above, it becomes necessary to have an understanding of class: class can be regarded as a social system, where status is the divisor. Income, capital, occupation, culture and education are some of the components making up one's status (Barratt, 2011: 12). Within such social hierarchies some members are privileged, which could and does oppress those who are not through various means – political, economic and through status (ibid.). Socio-economic status was not perceived by a student sample in a study conducted at the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) as important in defining their own identity, but race, ethnicity and language were (Goldschmidt, 2003: 214). Barratt (2011: 14) suggested that students tend to keep to a 'class bubble' – that is they have contact with those who are similar to themselves in class and identity markers. Class divisions are exacerbated by the education system through role socialisation: "Still too often, school, family, and community encourage children with fewer class resources to accept identities and behaviours that lead to an abandonment of their earlier dreams" (Holmstrom et al., 2002: 458). This finding was from a study interviewing a large sample of college bound American school children and their parents.

It is interesting to note that the South African situation may be slightly different, however, as one of the goals of higher education is to redress inequality (Department of Education, 1997a: 3). Unfortunately the reality may not meet the goal (Christie, 2008). "It appears that the government has decided that the costs of getting working-class children to university are too high" as the government funding to higher education is comparatively low (Letseka and Maile, 2008: 2). Moreover, universities' student profiles are not yet representative of national population ratios (Soudien et al., 2008: 123). Moreover, the throughput rate of students in higher education is low – and that of black African students very low – this despite existing support programmes (Soudien et al., 2008: 20). Letseka and Maile (2008: 1) reported a graduation rate of only 15%; with the graduation rate of white students being double that of black students. In the South African context it has been found that household income, English as home language, having a degreed brother or sister, being the recipient of a scholarship or favourable loan and having attended an urban (as opposed to rural) school are factors influencing favourable degree outcomes (Bhorat, Visser and Mayat, 2010: 116).

Barratt (2011: 7) described class as dynamic where individuals have a class of origin, a felt class and an attributed class. He pointed to first generation students as improving in social class, thereby creating tension between their different class identities. Within South Africa, while it is reported that students experience racism on campus (Soudien et al., 2008: 28), social class has also begun to have a separating effect as experienced between black students (ibid.: 70) – this appears to be experienced between the relatively well-off black student who has attended an educationally advantaged school and the poorer student from a disadvantaged school. While South African children have fairly good access to schools, the quality of their education within those schools is poor, particularly in rural areas (Spaull and Taylor, 2014: 6). Of every hundred children starting school in South Africa, only twelve will be eligible for university (Spaull, 2013a: 6). Unfortunately South Africa still evidences a split education system entrenched in racial inequality. In this case the former 'black' schools remain disadvantaged: their pupils receive inferior education, are more likely to drop out and are less likely to gain entrance into higher education. Former 'white' schools, however, have retained privileged access to resources, and to children of parents with better economic standing – these schools are now also attended by black African middle classes

(Spaull, 2013b: 6). While policy and intervention attempt to overhaul the above, these have been ineffective (Spaull, 2014: 53) .

Language too is experienced as a device of separation with English and English proficiency being prime (Spaull, 2014: 94). American research points to students of colour (i.e. 'non-traditional' students) as becoming more aware of their ethnic identity during college, and of being very aware of discrimination while at college (Maramba and Velasquez, 2012: 309). Interestingly from a sample of 145 students at Rand Afrikaans University, students indicated that similarity in race, language and socio-economic status are "characteristics that the majority of them share with their friends" (Goldschmidt, 2003: 214). It would be interesting to evaluate South African students' awareness and value of ethnic and cultural identity prior to, during and after university.

When using the role of 'student', different behaviours are expected from the student in different situations (Albas and Albas, 1984: 8). Sociologically speaking, a role is a defined pattern of conduct which places the role holder in a given position in society. Roles are seen as fairy constant, but individuals filling those roles may change. Roles hold attached rights and obligations and are a marker of an individual's status. The many relational expectations held of an individual when relating to others is seen as a role set (Merton, 1957: 110) – this can be applied to a student as a student is expected to perform differently in reference to lecturers, peers, administrators and so on. This is in part dependent on the differing status of such relational roles. For example, as outlined by Albas and Albas (1984: 8), the individual occupying the student role acquires norms which necessitate the individual spending time in study. A student is also expected to behave in certain ways towards members of faculty, their peers and their work. People inhabit multiple roles – thus the student may also be a child, parent, worker, friend and so on. These may complement one another or create strain for the individual if the role needs are in competition or at odds. Individuals' roles occupy different social positions, referred to a person's 'status set' which is where a person's multiple roles have separate statuses (Merton, 1957: 111). For example, an individual may be a student as well as a father and a street cleaner – each role has a different social status.

Again these statuses could complement or create conflict for the individual holding the roles. Also of interest is the idea of 'family role assignment' where emotional labour is divided up within the family, making different members of the family responsible for different emotional tasks. These roles (and attendant responsibilities) have important ramifications for an individual's identity (London, 1989: 146). The concepts of 'role' and 'identity' are difficult to define and their relationship can be obscure (Josselson and Flum, 2014: 133). However both have a direct impact on the individual's mobility and experience of the social world. The concept of emotional labour (Hothschild 1983) where an individual externally shows appropriate emotions- in both the workplace and the private sphere is of interest here. According to Hothschild (1983) emotions are managed through expression, the body and thought patterns.

Emerging adulthood – the late teenage years and early twenties – is regarded as an important period for identity development (Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz and Branje, 2010: 1577, Arnett, 2000: 473). The development of identity (in this case defined as self-image) is closely related to moral development (Buczynski, 1991: 572). Those students who begin their university careers with a more complete sense of identity show that this is positively related to their intellectual development (ibid.: 581).

The above is hypothesised to be due to several factors – for example, that students with a better sense of self then have the confidence to engage in intellectual activity, and communicate with lecturers, tutors and peers. However, those with a low sense of self are more likely to feel uncertain, and be unable to engage in class discussion, ask questions or approach authority figures for help. Added to this, those with a better developed sense of identity are better able to withstand peer pressure. Thus it is suggested that student identity and sense of self is positively related to student success. Here one can link success with the phase in student development (see Chickering and Reisser, 1993) as well as imagine that feelings of being "unhomed" as referred to by Bhaba (1994) or of ambivalence as to identity, could impact negatively on the individual's achievements.

According to Jordyn and Byrd (2003) in Richter and Walker (2008: 25), students who lived independently from their parents were further developed in terms of an adult identity. Adulthood is often regarded as the point in which one enters into full position in society: examples of this may be sexual relationships, marriage, having children, having full-time jobs, and running one's own household (Abbott et al., 2005: 132) – these conceptions are often culturally based, and the latter list tends to be westernised. Such activities are also predisposed to be gendered in terms of the age at which they occur, and the responsibilities that are associated with those events.

Thus, university for the traditionally aged student is well placed to have an influence on a natural period of growth and maturing. A British student reflecting on his university experience said: " I picked up as much as a person growing up as I did educationally..." (Little, 2006: 64). Chickering (Chickering and Reisser, 1993, Chickering, 1981) developed a set of 'vectors' to understand traditional aged student development. Identity development is important within these vectors (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005: 21). Student development, as described by the vectors, has "direction and magnitude – even though the direction may be expressed more appropriately through a spiral, or by steps than by a straight line" (Chickering, 1981: 8). According to research done by Richter and Walker (2008: 29), student development towards maturity does not happen in a uniform or linear way: "Rather it involves faltering steps towards independence, critical incidents which propel students forward, and a conscious decision by some students to work at becoming independent, by dealing with challenges in particular ways. At other times, students seem to retreat into less adult-like behaviour."

Contemporary parents overseas are reported to be actively caught up in their child's tertiary education – for example, giving advice on career planning and financial management (College Parents of America, 2007: 4). There is little evidence dealing with parental involvement in the South African higher education situation. It may be that there is little

parental involvement as a result of poverty and a minimal exposure to higher education, which may have negative ramifications. On the other hand, one may find that there is significant parental involvement as a function of family effort to move out of poverty through investing in the university student. These are dynamics which would be interesting to examine.

When considering Chickering's (Chickering and Reisser, 1993) seven vectors of student development, over-involved parents could be detrimental to the students' attainment of some of these stages. An example could be the vector 'Developing Competence'. This refers to a development of physical, mental and social skills (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 53). At the physical level, a student develops athletically, as well as in self-discipline, fitness and creativity. At the mental level the student becomes competent at logical, inclusive analysis and acquires knowledge. Students become more sophisticated in their thinking skills, as well as their aesthetic and cultural appreciation (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 62). This would seem to indicate that the student becomes versed in cultural aspects which have a certain status attached: here I am referring to the concept of cultural capital as described by Bourdieu (1997). The classic interpretation of such is that the student would become integrated in a community which appreciates forms of 'high culture' (art and music for example). However there is increasing evidence that the 'high culture' of Bourdieu's France is no longer universally seen as the epitome of class and power. Rather the cultural capital of later modernity, is the ability to move seamlessly through different environments, to approach those in positions of authority and to convert the resources one has to those of value in the context as discussed in the theory section. Of course, as also discussed, the values of the elite remain and are also protected capital. Thus the student / graduate must then master an ability to look at their lives and form opinions based on information available about the world around them. At the social or interpersonal level, the student has to develop the skill to nurture different relationships – through communicating, listening and understanding different people and configurations of people. Such others would include people with different roles, responsibilities and statuses. Also important is the development of student self-esteem as they develop competence (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 38).

The tendency of modern American parents to attempt to smooth the way for their children, even at college age, could undermine the students' developing sense that they can manage problems that they face, as well as their actual capacity to do so. Thus, while life may be easier, their self-confidence and competence could be negatively affected (Taub, 2008: 17). However research findings in the area are mixed – and related to social proficiency – some indicating involvement can set students up for success in interpersonal relations (Kenny and Donaldson, 1991: 484) and others indicating that attachment can decrease a student's social proficiency (Bartle-Haring, 1997 in Taub, 2008: 18). Holmstrom et al. referred to students in their study experiencing strain resulting in the change from being taken care of as they may have been while scholars, and looking after themselves as students (2002: 439). As suggested by Sanford (1962) in Taub (2008: 18), it would seem that the student requires a balance between responsibility and lack of responsibility in order for optimal development to occur. It would be interesting to speculate what the relationship is for South African students who may be first generation students – both in familial and community terms, some whose caregivers are uneducated, and whose families live in serious poverty. The South African student may have different experiences completely – for example, be part of a child-headed household or be supporting family through student grants or other means.

Chickering' s (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 83) second vector is called 'Managing Emotions' where the student needs to become able to manage their feelings – so that negative emotions are coped with and productivity still achieved. Thus, for the student moving through this vector, the experience of negative emotions, the ability to identify these feelings in oneself and their management, are important. Of significance is impulse control and appropriate responses to stimuli. Included in this vector is also the ability to enjoy positive feelings and emotions. Assertiveness and participation have to be balanced for growth to happen in this stage (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005: 22). Having moved through this phase, the student is able to assimilate their emotions with accountability and action (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 38). This is an interesting issue for the South African context, where some students come into higher education from very traditional and isolated rural

communities. The transition into an urban environment of relative amenity and access to convenience could be difficult for students as would the transition from traditional to modern ways of interacting with the world and of dealing with emotion. This vector could also be seen as closely connected with the fourth vector 'Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships' which refers to the student learning to negotiate relationships, both positive and negative.

Chickering and Reissler's (1993: 115) third vector named 'Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence' is where emotional independence (the ability to live without continual support – for example outside approval, affection or encouragement); instrumental independence (the ability to act on meeting one's needs and to solve problems) and interdependence (the recognition that one requires a modicum of interdependence and independence in order to function well), are developed. Here Chickering and Reisser (1993: 122) described the student as separating from parents and moving from their former dependence on parents to eliciting support from their friends and other adults. Parents can support this process by assisting students in their journey to independence as children (ibid.: 123) or by disengaging from the student – however while the latter necessarily develops autonomy, it also creates challenges for the student in this development as they may feel they are not supported (ibid.: 125). In many of these cases, 'devaluation' occurs – sometimes mutual – between students and parents (ibid.) An example of such experience was illustrated by Kapp and Bangeni (2011) through their study of South African students. Competence is finally attained when the student gains independence from these supports as well. The stage also suggests that the student needs to move from dependence, to autonomy, to finally realising that interdependence – a reliance on the self and others, as well as others relying on you – is acceptable. At this point there is a balance between independence and belonging.

Living away from the parental home and at university is regarded by students as a step towards independence (Holmstrom et al., 2002: 446). This can include being responsible for time management, financial management, everyday tasks and chores. The student may

however feel conflict about the move towards independence – both craving the adulthood, but dreading the responsibility (Holmstrom et al., 2002: 450). According to London (1989: 147), young adults usually try to develop individuality and independence (emotionally, socially and intellectually) from their parents. This can happen during late adolescence, earlier, or later, in a gradual or unpredictable way. The separation process is impacted on by both child and parent. Parental approaches can vary from keeping a child closely tied, pushing them away or entrusting them to holding them close through loyalty and obligation. The above dynamics depend on the existing family roles (ibid.).

As discussed above, Chickering and Reisser (1993: 131; 133) suggested that parents can stunt their children's growth in this stage by being too restraining, overbearing, over helpful or unhelpful. For Taub (1995 in 2008: 18), parents' emotional support of female college students negatively affected their attainment of autonomy. Moreover, the lack of problem solving opportunities can prevent students from becoming autonomous. The phenomenon of 'helicopter parents' (Comoletti, 2012) – always available and willing to solve their child's problem whatever the age – would thus disable growth. However, such parenting styles tend to belong to the upper classes (Nelson, 2010). The resulting students were reported to be needier, more anxious, and less communicative than their peers (ibid.). However children of American parents with higher incomes were more likely to attend college than those with less money (ibid.). Moreover, American students with involved parents reported engaging more with academic material and using deep as opposed to surface learning approaches more often – these include approaching teaching staff for discussion, writing and autonomous research (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007: 25). However these same students were shown to have lower marks than those of their counterparts. It is unclear then whether the parental intervention was to support students who were battling, or if parental intervention resulted in poor marks (ibid.).

According to Taub (2008: 19) students can still develop independence ('autonomy') from parents without undergoing a 'break' from parents. A complete separation and independence from parents can be seen as drastic and in some cases difficult. Rather than

rupture from parents, the student needs to become 'differentiated' (Holmstrom et al., 2002: 450). The phenomenon of involved parents is not necessarily negative; it only becomes so if the students are unable to become independent problem solvers.

'Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships' is where the student moves from being unaware of and narrow-minded about diversity to becoming accepting of difference. The student also moves from short term/ unhealthy or no intimate relationships to a "capacity for intimacy which is enduring and nurturing" (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 38). As the authors pointed out, relationships with others are also a tool that teach the student multiple life skills – many related to multiple vectors. Examples of these may be how to articulate and cope with emotions, how to connect deeply with others, how to settle disputes, reconsider initial impressions and how to commit deeply (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 145). As will be explored in section 4.3, making and keeping healthy friendships in the university environment is conducive to a productive and successful academic career.

While all of Chickering and Reisser's vectors concern identity development, one vector specifically concentrates on 'Establishing Identity'(Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 173). It concerns the student's developing sense of self – including being comfortable with their own appearance, cultural identity, social identity, gender identity, sexual identity, self-concept, self-acceptance, self-esteem, self in response to external feedback, stability and integration. "A solid sense of self emerges, and it becomes more apparent that there is an 'I' who coordinates the facets of personality, who 'owns' the house of self and is comfortable in all of its rooms" (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 49). Central to this vector is self-knowledge and awareness. At this point a student could be expected to develop a voice and become able to express their own ideas and identity. The development of this 'voice' occurs as students try to recognise, interrogate and express their identity (Baxter Magolda, 2003: 232). According to identity writers, the family is regarded as an important component in identity formation, including the development of cultural and social identity (Caplan, 1984 in Taub, 2008: 20). Traditionally, separation from the parent was regarded as necessary for the development of identity (Samuolis et al., 2001: 374). However, evidence exists that claims the opposite. For example, for females secure attachment is helpful in identity development

(Samuolis et al., 2001: 382). Moreover, it has been found difficult for certain groups of students – for example, first generation or poor students to express or find their identity, as there is a tendency to conceal their multiple identities in order to be congruent with the stereotyped 'student' (Jehangir, 2009: 39). Jehangir (2009: 42) described students who did not conform to the hegemonic identity as being ashamed of their identity of origin, which creates inner conflict for them.

The sixth vector identified by Chickering called 'Developing Purpose'(Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 209) refers to the student becoming aware of who they are, who they aspire to be and where they hope to go. It refers to a development of the ability of the student to integrate the various parts of their lives – including personal interests, domestic obligations, and career goals. Through identifying and understanding the different roles that they hold, the student is able to identify their purpose. The individual becomes aware of what their purpose in studying is and how to achieve this. Through this they become more decisive. Intense devotion to a principle can assist the student in this developmental path (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 234). Many American parents have been reported to assist with students' career planning and their career choices (College Parents of America, 2007: 4). Parents have an impact on students being either decisive or indecisive (Ferrari and Olivette, 1993: 963) and having purpose and independence (Schultheiss and Blustein, 1994: 253).These findings were linked to the student's gender, the nature of parental interaction and nature of parental relationship with one another. However, if parents become over-involved it may impact negatively on the student attaining this phase (Taub, 2008: 22).

The last vector 'Developing Integrity'(Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 235) refers to the student's central principles and values. In this stage the student would move from an unyielding use of their own beliefs to their more adaptable application (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 39). The student at this point is less likely to take others' values and beliefs on authority alone, but investigates their validity, and integrates them to their own set of emerging norms should they be acceptable. At this point the student also attempts to bring their behaviour into congruence with their beliefs. The authors contend that parents are an

important source of the student's value systems, and that the student's exploration of alternate systems may lead to conflict. Current (American) students have been described as more likely to keep the values that they have been brought up with (Howe and Strauss, 2003: 3). "Adolescents can give weight to voices of friends/ family, and select among values the ones they want for themselves" (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1984: 19). Holmstrom suggested that while students at university experiment with new ways of life, these are not usually comprehensive denials of the lifestyles and values held by the student's family (2002: 450). In the course of "emerging adulthood" (Arnett, 2000: 469), adolescents become 'differentiated' from their families and parents rather than alienated from them. Overseas, 'autonomy and relatedness' in relation to parents are important facets of becoming adult (Arnett, 2000: 475).

4.1.2 Gender
Students, in the process of their personal development, are also working on their respective gender identity and understandings of gender roles. Gender can be regarded as functioning at the level of the individual (as in the characteristics that they may manifest as a result of their either being male or female – biologically, socially and psychologically) and at the level of social structure (Wharton, 2005: 7).

Gender "organises our identities and self-concepts, structures our interactions, and is one basis upon which power and resources are allocated" (ibid.: 9). Gender inequality is a form of social stratification where men are given an unequal share of resources and power (Abbott et al., 2005: 61). Gender is one of the identities that people may hold, and affects how people understand the world around them, view themselves, and how they function (Wharton, 2005: 9). Gender identity is the understanding of the self as either masculine or feminine. The engagement in gender identity and behaviour is increasingly being seen as a function of both socially defined roles and individual agency – in that people are active in the way they translate gender in their lives (Abbott et al., 2005: 8).

Young women are generally recognised as being socialised into conformity and dependence (Astin and Kent, 1983: 309). Femininity is also constructed around women and girls'

appearance – a female should be well groomed, demure and girly looking (Abbott et al., 2005: 131). University needs to assist female students to be able to experience independence and self-esteem in order to be successful in the work environment which emphasises such qualities.

It is often the case that African women are regarded as storehouses of traditional values and are seen negatively if they are too modern or western (Ogundipile-Leslie, 1994: 50). Many African discourses regard control, sexual restraint and compliance as desirable for African women (Cornwall, 2005: 6). Pattman found, in a small qualitative study of Zimbabwean male students, that women students' who were believed to threaten masculinity (often urban based women who dressed in western styles and were able to contribute orally during lectures) were stigmatised as prostitutes (2001: 234). In the same study 'sugar daddy' discourses were used to justify the female rejection of males – the sample were not sugar daddies ('sugar daddies' referred to older more experienced men with resources – in this case academic and financial). The women involved with 'sugar daddies' were represented as wanton, supercilious and calculating. Incongruously, these women were at the same time regarded as submissive dupes. The women were regarded as having abandoned their culture (ibid.: 235). However, the male students behaving 'badly' were not regarded as forsaking their culture (ibid.: 237).

Adolescent women commonly have their sexuality policed by various role players – this occurs over different cultural, social, economic and geographical contexts (Abbott et al., 2005: 126). Traditionally females' bodies and their production (reproductive and productive) are considered to be rightfully under the control of men (Ogundipile-Leslie, 1994: 35). Women are expected to conform to notions of 'romantic love, sexual passivity and monogamy' (Abbott et al., 2005: 129). Women are also regarded as natural carers, whose ultimate role is to be a mother (ibid.: 135). Those tasks conceived of as 'women's work' – caring, domestic tasks, food preparation and so on – are often seen as coming naturally to women and are therefore unrecognised and unappreciated as labour (Ogundipile-Leslie, 1994: 34).

Masculinity is exemplified as being a natural expression of men's power – thus power becomes synonymous with manliness. As such 'hegemonic masculinities' are often constructed in relation to other less powerful identities: for example, blackness, femininity, homosexuality and so on. According to Connell, despite the existence of multiple masculinities, hegemonic masculinities exist in all contexts (2006: 60). A study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with a diverse male student sample, showed that for these students "hegemonic masculinity is a dominant and pervasive form of masculinity" (Kriel, 2003: 86). Another University of KwaZulu- Natal study showed that the male stundet sample were in a position to question traditional gender roles (Shikumo, 2008: 84). However masculinities in general in South Africa are seen as contested due to the country's racialised past and changing political, social and economic situation: "Confusion and uncertainty around the nature of masculinity and male sexuality, and the expectations men have of themselves, each other and women are contested, and in crisis, giving rise to new notions of manhood" (Walker, 2005: 237). Moreover Ogundipile-Leslie (1994: 210) pointed out that constrictive gender roles are disadvantageous to both men and women – for African men, the price is an "incapacity to express tenderness in intimate relationships".

An important component of masculinities is often seen as sexual prowess (Connell, 1995: 77). In Pattman's 2001 study, masculinities were constructed through male students' breaking the rules that they set for women – for example promiscuity, drinking and clubbing (2001: 235). Men are expected to be risk takers and unafraid (Schefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala and Buikema, 2007: 3). Men are coerced to adapt to the dominant masculinity and try to meet those standards (Schefer et al., 2007: 3). Men's self-evaluation of their maleness is judged by their own readiness to engage in risky behaviour, their ability to withstand discomfort or hurt, and the motivation for accumulation, for example wealth, power, sexual partners (Kimmel and Levine, 1992 in Perez-Jimenez, Cunningham, Serrano-Garcia and Oritez-Torrez, 2010: 173). A sample of Botswanan male students connected maleness with hegemonic masculinity – sexual, economic and physical control, but only partly saw these as part of their own characteristics (Pattman, 2005: 233). Lindegger and

Maxwell (2007: 101) in their study of adolescent South African school boys found that the subjects expressed masculinity as being dependable, being providers, being leaders, being respected and being caring. However these characteristics were expressed in patriarchal ways which effectively maintained existing gendered power relations. Giving materially was specified as a masculine behaviour, even in the context of poverty. Moreover, in a South African study, relationships between men and women have often been found to be contractual, in that sexual activity is expected in exchange for gifts from man to woman. This same study showed that men controlled sexual relations once a romantic relationship is formed (Wood and Jewkes, 1997: 42) Also endorsed were numerous sexual partners for males, but the same was not applied to women (Lindegger and Maxwell, 2007: 102).

Thus what Mahalik, Good and Englar-Carlson (2010: 82) term the 'play-boy script', as applied to American male students could be employed for their South African counterparts as well. A sample of American students were further found to establish social status through their ability to interest (multiple) good-looking females (Rhoads, 2005: 266). In the same study, women were represented by the male students in hostile or negative ways – for example referred to as ugly, as sexually promiscuous, or as passive participants with no right or ability to make their own decisions (ibid.).

Also pertinent to this study is the suggestion that American male students, as a function of their masculinity (the strong, silent, stiff upper lip characteristics), do not seek assistance for problems that they may experience (Mahalik et al., 2010: 79). Moreover men are required to repudiate any of their own emotions which may be perceived as feminine or 'weak' (Perez-Jimenez et al., 2010: 173).

4.1.3 Age
Another category of non-traditional student is that of the mature aged student. It is generally understood that students leave secondary school and proceed into higher education. Thus ideally the age range of the typical student is between 18 and 25. However

the South African situation may be different, as in the past many school leavers were of an advanced age, due to parental economic and labour strategies as well as poor schooling leading to an inability to exit easily with a matric. However, at present there is a policy of promotion to limit the age range of school pupils.

Older students could be classified as being over 25. In the overseas context one would often find mature students living off campus – frequently with their own existing homes and roles to fulfil (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 488). Thus this cohort would not experience the intensity of socialisation that may be experienced by those living in university residence. Moreover many such students are part-time, have experienced some sort of societal marginalisation (for example, are poor, female, unable to meet entrance requirements and so on).

As a result of their differences to the students of the mainstream, the mature student may be less integrated, less involved in extra curricular opportunities and thus less receptive to socialisation. They therefore may remain on the margins of university life, while engaging in academic courses.

The mature student may also experience a slower degree path, both due to part-time registration, and also as a result of possible breaks in registration.

4.2 Communities of Practice

'Communities of practice' refer to groups that are constituted around a shared practice or experience. They are further consolidated through mutual customs and empathy which develop within the group (Lawson, 2008: 18). Humans are social beings (Wenger, 2002: 4). People belong to multiple communities of practice at any given time and these are important components of everyday living (Wenger, 2002: 6). Communities of practice can include groups such as the family, work colleagues, friends, support groups and so on. Such groups may be constituted formally or informally. In the context of scholarship the concept "presents a theory of learning which acknowledges networks and groups which are informal and not the same as formal structures" (Barton and Tusting, 2005: 3). Knowledge is mutually

developed – for example, groups discuss and decide on the meanings to assign to concerns (Lea, 2005: 182). Such communities are useful when used in a higher education setting as they provide a supportive environment for learning (Lawson, 2008: 22, Tinto, 1997: 614) and improve student retention and integration (Tinto, 1997: 615). Communities of practice could be closely allied to the concept of 'social capital' which refers to individuals networking with one another, which results in useful outcomes for the participants. Students might interact with other students, or with other members of the university community, for the benefit of their learning (Little, 2006: 57). This leads one to Sociocultural Activity theory which regards learning as both individual and social in nature – here individuals learn together to achieve a common learning goal (Martin, 2005: 143).

Within the community of practice, learning is a social activity (Lea, 2005: 182). However, such groupings need to be egalitarian, as the power imbalances of, for example, lecturer and student "tend to position undergraduate students as permanent novices, never attaining full membership of an academic community of practice"(ibid.: 193). Supportive communities of practice may encourage students in academic, social or practical processes. They may be particularly useful in institutional settings where the student-teacher ratio is high (ibid.: 182). Within the community of practice, learning is not simply for academic purposes, but has reference for daily life, interactions, groups and businesses (Wenger, 2002: 11). Learning communities may also be useful in creating a sense of solidarity and belonging for first generation and low income students (Jehangir, 2009: 34). As such the student actively creates supportive groupings within the microsystem (refer to Bronfenbrenner 1992, in Chapter 3.2 of this dissertation).

According to Wenger (2002: 73), communities of practice operate in three ways. First there are multiple methods of engagement between members ('mutual engagement'). Here relationships among community members are created and sustained as people try to understand new things and parts of themselves. Second there is a shared goal ('joint enterprise'). This goal is negotiated by the group members and owned by them. Connected to the shared nature of the goal, is the recognition that the communities of practice exist

within a wider context – institutional, social, cultural and financial contexts all of which come with particular means and limitations. The goal engenders a sense of shared responsibility for the community of practice. Finally, the group members cultivate and negotiate a set of mutual rituals, for example, ways of interacting and speaking ('shared repertoire') through which attachment to the community of practice is proven. Communities of practice develop shared practices at an explicit and implicit level (Wenger, 2002: 47). Communities of practice can be either productive or distractive, however "as a locus of engagement in action, interpersonal relations, shared knowledge, and negotiation of enterprises, such communities hold the key to real transformation – the kind that has real effects on people's lives" (Wenger, 2002: 85). The learning process is enabled by participation in such groups (ibid.:73).

For Wenger (2002: 125), some of the parameters of a community of practice include:

1. Consistent shared interaction – which could be discordant or agreeable
2. Collective approaches to joint performance
3. The speedy spread of information and development of innovation
4. Lack of opening chit chat, where conversations continue at different times without preamble
5. Speedy construction of issues needing debate
6. Agreement among participants regarding membership of group
7. Awareness of other group members' strengths
8. Communally held characteristics
9. The capacity to evaluate the suitability of strategies
10. Particular symbols used by the group
11. Shared humour and joint stories
12. Shared speech patterns and vocabulary – making communication in the group easy and familiar
13. Shared dress sense/ look proving group affiliation
14. A shared viewpoint and language to show this.

Belonging to a community of practice is not absolute – one can be part of that community as a full or part member (Wenger, 2002: 152). However, full membership might engender self-confidence as well as a reputation for ability. The rules of engagement of the shared community are generally mutually understood and become part of the identity of the group member. Wenger identifies three parts to the community of practice. 'Mutuality of engagement': "We become who we are by being able to play a part in the relations of engagement that constitute our community" (ibid.). In the example of higher education the student needs to become active in relating to the people around them. 'Accountability to an enterprise': participating in an activity makes one 'look at the world in certain ways congruent with the identity of the group. In the higher education case the student needs to believe in the scholarship they undertake. Thirdly 'negotiability of a repertoire' refers to a consistent involvement, ensuring that an individual internalises the history of the group and is able to understand and employ the collection of praxis used by the group.

There may be multiple communities of practice that are related to one another in some way. Although such groupings may not be part of one single community of practice, they may still share a similar interest, history, membership to a larger body or have shared historical roots. These Wenger calls 'constellations of practices' (2002: 127). Such entities are useful to consider within the setting of higher education as they could encompass the different communities of practice existing within the higher education institution, as well as those that the single student might be part of. Examples of these may be study groups, courses and residence groups. As the student may be negotiating multiple memberships, understanding facets of identity as affected by multiple memberships is important. Multiple group membership and the related identity is described by Wenger (2002: 159) as 'nexus' – no one group forms an entirety of an identity. One may behave differently in different communities of practice. Different aspects of identity are constructed and exposed. Individuals with different facets of identity at work in different settings then need to amalgamate those identities. As in the discussion of role earlier, a difficulty may arise when different communities of practice have conflicting requirements. Thus the identity needs to be constructed in a way that allows for such disparity – in a deeper way than simply learning the surface rules of how to behave in what community (Wenger, 2002: 160).

"The single most powerful source of influence on the undergraduate student's academic and personal development is the peer group" (Astin, 1993a: 3) and it has long been understood that adolescents need their peers for self-identity and support (Pahl, 2000: 1). Moreover familial and peer communication and support at a face to face level has been found to be important for a student's academic success (Dennis et al., 2005: 224). Communities of practice in the higher education setting can be natural groupings of individuals (for example, in friendship situations) which are then purposely adapted to become sites of learning (Barton and Tusting, 2005: 2). Mature students (those older than the general student age) may find themselves operating differently, and thus experiencing a separation from mainstream communities of practice. Mature students have commonly been found to experience dissimilarity and disconnectedness from the student body (O'Boyle, 2014: 169).

As discussed in Chapter 3.3.2.2 regards social capital as the munificence which is developed through social relationships, and can be translated into support of various forms in various ways (Adler and Kwon, 2002: 17, Bourdieu, 1986). Social ties of one category can be used in multiple contexts. Thus, for example, friendship can engender material support and so on.

4.3 Peers and Family

The above leads us to the general area of peer interactions between students as an important area of concern. Astin (1993a: 3) pointed to the amount of student interaction as being important to academic success. Research conducted by Richter and Walker (2008: 30) showed that friendships were as important to students moving into adulthood as family. The above 'proximal processes' – these refer to long-term relations in the individual's immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998: 996) – of influence are important as they are widespread and successful student supports (Dennis et al., 2005: 224).

There is a positive relationship between supportive friendship, better marks and persistence in university (Swenson, Hiester and Nordstrom, 2010: 319). This echoes Tinto (2002: 3) who claimed student integration was essential for student success. Chickering and Reisser (1993: 392) suggested that "a student's most important teacher is often another student". Evidence shows that friendships with others and the resultant social solidarity is associated with lower levels of mental health and general health problems (Spencer and Pahl, 2006: 200). Moreover, for human beings generally those who do not feel socially integrated are often lonely and lacking in self-confidence (Lee, Draper and Lee, 2001: 314). Should a student experience themselves as being peripheral as in without peer support, this impacts negatively on their success (Schlossberg, 1989: 6). Thus the imperative is for the individual to believe that they are the recipient of emotional care, and that they are significant beings.

As referred to in the description of Chickering and Reisser's vectors (1993) -see section 4.1, it is shown that individuals in late adolescence and their early twenties need to develop social competence in this time through experimenting with identity in different settings (Pahl, 2000: 112). Also necessary for their development is the existence of a 'close, character making friend' (ibid.). It is also shown that those students whose identity is different from the majority of the student body are more likely to persist if they are able to find friends of a similar description (McKinney, Vacca, Medvedeva and Malak, 2004: 44, Given et al., 2011: 518). Oppidani students whose social focus is away from campus may then not benefit from strong support on an academic level as their peers may not be other students.

Astin (1993b: 385) suggested that certain peer interactions encourage the learning process – including study groups, tutoring others, discussing racial issues, socialising with members of other race groups, participating in student clubs and organisations. Any tensions that might be felt between the social and academic system (for example, the role conflict that could occur between the student and friendship roles) could be ameliorated by friendships with students who have strong motivations to do academically well (Antonio, 2004: 449). According to Astin, the student's peer group is their most influential force of social pressure

(1993b: 398). In a qualitative study of South African students Bangeni and Kapp (2005: 8) discovered that students experienced pressure to fit in with other students: particularly with regard to the dimension of race. This same sample described themselves as being active in their respective churches, and as feeling a sense of belonging in those forums. The extent that a student is linked with other students can have positive ramifications for student success (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 281, Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005: 187, McKinney et al., 2004: 45). In the opinion of Bilecen (2014: 3), modern friendships are defined by doing what friends do, rather than by 'being' a friend. Here the tasks of friendship are made explicit, rather than being innate parts of the relationship. Students who are unable for whatever reason to assume the responsibilities of friendship, then, may not profit from its evidenced advantages. Logic suggests that friendships with those with little academic motivation could then be detrimental. Moreover those with more social connections and a meaningful connection to significant friends in the university environment were able to make a more effective and enduring transition into the university environment (Paul and Brier, 2001: 78).

Secuban found that those students who had engaged in extramural school activities and had good relationships with family and friends, settled into university more easily (2012: 18, Richter and Walker, 2008: 25). Added to this, having parents or siblings who have been to university, or having non-related adult role models as significant supports, were important (Secuban, 2012: 19). As discussed, students may have to relocate, make new friends, their relationships with their families may change, and they may have to become more self-sufficient in organising the practical aspects of their everyday lives (Holmstrom et al., 2002: 438). They also have to contend with both the stresses and pleasures inherent in their independence and in the demands of higher education (Richter and Walker, 2008: 28).

It is suggested that especially strong friendships are made and cemented during times of change and turmoil in individuals' lives and that these friendships are important sources of support (Weeks, 2001: 51 in Lawson, 2008: 18, Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 392). In the university environment most students entering the system are experiencing the same issues: the context is one of change and stress, consequently the environment is ripe for the

formation of meaningful relationships. As a graduate reported: "Friends that I made at university [are] better friends than friends I've known for 17/18 years back home… and I'm closer to them [from university] … got more in common with them even though we came from very different social backgrounds…" (Little, 2006: 64). According to Rust and Uys (2014: 528) students intended to keep close (even when geographically distant) contact with friends from school, while transitioning to university. They then became embedded in new relationships in the setting of the university, and described these connections as more important. Strong new friendships for new students in the university environment have been found to assist with positive adjustment to university, as well as have a knock-on effect in that friendships assist people to make more new friends (Buote et al., 2007: 687, Bowman and Denson, 2014: 137).

Weidman (1989 in Renn and Arnold, 2003: 265) talked about "normative pressure" which refers to the ways in which student relations with others affect university outcomes (these others include contemporaries, family and university staff). This links to the discussion elsewhere in the review showing the ramifications of positive friendships – see section 4.2. He also points out that a student's goals, values, career and daily life are affected by the socialisation the student receives from family, university and non-university groups in which they are involved. This he calls "socialisation outcomes" (Weidman, 1989 in Renn and Arnold, 2003: 265). Integration of the student at a social level is linked to membership in informal groups of peers (for example the communities of practice we have discussed), extramural activities and interaction with university employees (Tinto, 1975: 107). The rate and value of interaction by a student with peers and university staff (considered important socialising agents) have marked effects on student success (Pascarella, 1985: 21). It is suggested by Holdsworth (2006: 515) that students are deliberate in their efforts to make friends, fit in and integrate into the university community. She pointed out that this strategy is facilitated by the student's knowledge of other students' behaviours and the expectations that others may have of them.

Writing on friendships refers to "hidden solidarities" which characterise meaningful friendships which are not immediately visible (Spencer and Pahl, 2006: 191). Thus it may be that even in situations where individuals are seemingly without social support, such support exists, for example through the electronic media. Moreover, many relationships may be of a slight or informal nature. It may be that individuals themselves are not aware of the extent of their social systems as they may be abstract in nature or only visible at special times (ibid.).

While examining the student peer as a source of support and socialisation, one also needs to examine the family. Family background has long been recognised as important to the university experience (Tinto, 1975: 99). It has often been claimed that those students from a background with a lower socio-economic status seem to have a more difficult time adjusting to college (Sewell and Shah, 1968: 208). Parents affect their teenagers' educational achievements and goals (Cohen, 1987: 339). Mothers' education, fathers' education, perceived parental encouragement and students' own intelligence have a positive relationships to college attendance and graduation (Sewell and Shah, 1968: 201, Pritchard and Wilson, 2003: 25). "The effects of parents and other significant people had the biggest influence on the students' expectations and experiences about college" (Secuban, 2012: 21).

Weidman also suggested that the student continues to be influenced by parents during their time at university; thus parental ideas mediate university influence (1984: 448). Additionally, parental influence is a factor in the student's choice of career (Weidman, 1984: 446). Research has shown that a person's occupation is influenced by parental social status, including occupation and education (Hoffman, Hofacker and Goldsmith , 1992: 67). Sociologists refer to an 'occupational inheritance' describing the phenomenon where children choose the same jobs as their parents. This trend carries over to university students as a study of Indonesian students showed (Prasetyo, 2005: 117, Macionis, 1991: 131) . However other research shows that there needs to be a perceived strong relationship between student and parent in order for the occupation choices of the student to be affected by parental influence (Weidman, 1984: 449).

The existence of parental support is an important factor in the adjustment of late adolescence (Meeus, 1996 in Dennis et al., 2005: 225). Overseas, particularly in the United States of America, the present-day student cohort has been described as having particularly close relationships with their parents (Howe and Nadler, 2012: 7). Some students engage in hourly text messages to parents (ibid.). Eighty percent of current students report talking to their parents daily, almost 75% see their parents once a week and half see their parents every day. Of the current generation, 75% report having been financially assisted by their parents in the preceding year (Kohut, Parker, Keeter, Doherty and Dimock, 2007: 18). Thus for this generation of American students, there is a degree of support for the student from their parents. It would be interesting to consider whether the experience of the South African student is similar, and whether the parent has the same sort of influence or responsibility. A "perceived lack of support" from both family and peers has been found to be more important than the lack of support itself, or the amount of support that is thought to be accessible (Dennis et al., 2005: 226).

The role of family support has been extensively discussed but the effect of family responsibility also needs to be investigated. Bean and Metzner (1985: 506) reported that for older students, family responsibilities are a common reason for attrition. This could work in the same ways for students from impoverished and vulnerable families: dropping out may be a necessity, because of the need to actively engage in family support, either financially or with regard to labour. At the same time, the above could also function as a motivator for persistence in that the student may recognise that economic and human hardship in the short term might lead to greater security in the future were the student to graduate.

4.4 First Generation Students

The effects of being a first generation student – that is a student whose parents have no experience of university – are increasingly being recognised (see, for example, Somers et al., 2004, Byrd and Macdonald, 2005, Jehangir, 2009, Bui, 2002, Dennis et al., 2005, Stephens et al., 2012, Terenzini et al., 1996, Heymann and Carolissen, 2011). Such students are not au fait with the higher educational system, and often do not believe themselves to be eligible

for university (see Vargas, 2004: 7). The higher the level of parental schooling, the higher the percentage of university registration. According to Krippendorff (1989: 13) there is an increase of 2.1% registration rates per year of the mother's education levels, and an increase of 3.5% per year related to the father's education levels in South Africa. Within OECD countries in 2012 it was found that parental tertiary education levels had a strong relationship with the completion of a tertiary qualification (OECD, 2014a: 15).This may be due to a variety of factors, including increasing family income and parental education being positively correlated to access to success intellectually (ibid., 16).

First generation students' experiences are important to understand, as the increasing push to involve people in higher education results in more first generation students. This is particularly salient in the South African context where there is a policy of including sectors of the population historically excluded from higher education (Department of Education, 1997a).

"Being a 'student' is promoted as a positive status, accessible yet privileged; a route to future success and independence – but this persona is less available to non-traditional students" (Martin, Spolander, Ali and Maas, 2012: 204). In South Africa first generation students from poor and educationally excluded families are the most likely of all students to drop out (Fish and Jooste, 2011: 15). It is necessary to mention that there are arguments for and against looking at first generation students as a discrete category of student – on the one hand it allows one to understand unique experiences but on the other, may pathologise such students as being problematic (Heymann and Carolissen, 2011 : 1391).

First generation students are often from lower socio-economic positions (Terenzini et al., 1996: 16, Bui, 2002: 9), have a home language that is not English , have lower reasoning skills (ibid.), perform more poorly, have lower retention levels (Dennis et al., 2005: 223, Stephens et al., 2012: 1178). South African first generation students at this time would have grown up in ethnically homogenous communities as a result of historic policies of

segregation. This would imply that many would have little exposure to languages of power (English) or to individuals identified as 'white'. What relationships which would have occurred, would be within the framework of control and submission (Kapp and Bangeni, 2011: 200). The impact would be that first generation students from far flung rural areas or from contained townships would have an undistinguished familiarity to 'otherness' on arrival at university, as described in Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 200). However, while not familiar with the identity of the other in a direct sense, the students would surely have first-hand knowledge of political and social inequalities embedded in the South African consciousness.

In the American and European context first generation students are often from an ethnic minority (Bui, 2002: 9), have lower university goals, take longer to complete their degrees, have less interaction with peers and staff while at school, have less reinforcement from parents while at university than other students (Vargas, 2004) and engage in fewer constructive out of class activities (Terenzini et al., 1996: 16). First generation students also express higher levels of fear of failing than other students, are more concerned about finances and believe that they have to study harder (Bui, 2002: 10).

Of further interest in the context of first generation students, is the suggestion that they experience a cultural mismatch between the values espoused by their families and communities, and those advocated by institutions of higher education   (London, 1989: 166; Stephens et al., 2012: 1186). Stephens et al. (2012) proposed that this is the result of what they call the 'cultural mismatch theory'. Here universities focus on independence which is a pervasive value, forcing students to, for example, work increasingly alone, decide on their own areas of interests and their own standpoints on issues. Many communities from which first generation students are drawn are more traditionally based which may result in an emphasis on interdependence, both in motivation and in problem solving. This mismatch is a contributing factor to first generation students' often relatively poor performance: "In traditional societies intergenerational continuity – in the areas of work, family, religion, and community – encourages the formation of a secure identity. Industrial societies, however,

permit and even require the making of choices in these areas, so that people are less certain of how and where and with whom they will find themselves" (London, 1989: 168). The individualistic values of modern society, while supporting upward mobility, may lead to the loss of secure connections with such communities. The enforced transition caused by the cultural mismatch may lead to "biographical and social dislocation" (ibid.). It is suggested that the well-meaning support of first generation students, to help them make the transition into the foreign world of the university, could have the effect of preserving the status quo, where both the higher education and social system is preserved as it then encounters no challenge (Heymann and Carolissen, 2011 : 1391). Higher Educational Institutions work to support the students to adapt themselves into its structures. There is no question that the structures themselves may be inappropriate. While many South African Higher Education Institutions espouse value in indigenous knowledge and in local languages, the identity of the academy remains rooted in orthodox intellectual values. Thus it is the attributes (or in the eyes of higher education, lack of relevant skills) that the non-traditional students arrive with which are constructed as problematic, and which are seen as needing remediation, rather than the identity of the institution.

In many ways then, the experience of the South African student is expected to follow the rites of passage as described by Van Gennep, 1960 (see section 3.1 in Chapter 3) – as in separation, followed by transition and finally incorporation. In the version for students experiencing cultural mismatch, the experiences would be not be scaffolded by a life of exposure. Here the student experiences separation (from their origins as described above), then transition into new ways of knowing, ways of living and ways of behaving. If these are effectively assimilated the student would graduate into a very different societal group, as opposed to the 'incorporation' into the same society as an adult as described by Van Gennep. Indeed, as suggested by Tinto (1987: 87), the student experiences crisis, becomes removed from their original culture and becomes a member of new groups. These groups are, however, not necessarily congruent with the adult groupings of the communities from which the student has come.

The quest to improve academic proficiency has an effect on the identity of the student in that they become privy to the hegemonic disposition and over the course of their studies become fluent in and eventually part of the prevailing structures. As found by Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 198), this leads to identity struggle within the individual student, as they attempt first to hold onto home identities, often resentful of the identities of 'whiteness' and oppression, over time becoming able to engage in "situational identity" (Renn, 2004: 198) then become outcasts / less able to fit , and eventually are reconciled to their translation into the powerful. The students in the Kapp and Bangeni (2011) sample exhibited conflicting feelings regarding the shifts in self that were experienced. The concept of 'situational identity' is a useful one in that it describes the ability to engage in different identities in different contexts. The 'wearer' of the identity becomes reconciled with the need for multiple selves and is aware of his/her own shifts.

Added to the above, first generation students may experience the "imposter phenomenon" (a feeling of being a pretender amongst individuals who are genuine) due to an external attribution of their success, and the necessity of negotiating multiple identities (Rodgers, 2014: 9). Studies report working class and first generation students as recounting "feelings of inauthenticity" while at university and at the same time encountering resentment and stigma from their communities (Bangeni and Kapp, 2005: 9).

First generation students may also have goals that are qualitatively different from second or third generation students: in part they also affected by their socio-economic position in that they express the desire to assist family and community through graduation (Bui, 2002: 9). They may also belong to cultures of origin that emphasise interdependence rather than independence, thus they have obligations conflicting with their obligations to the university (Tseng, 2004: 980). However, an American study conducted by Dennis et al. (2005: 233) showed that motivation based on personal goals was more likely to lead to college success – which may disadvantage those who come from collectivist positions. As with other students (Astin, 1993b: 3), first generation students invest much importance in the support of their peers: it is shown to be a stronger factor in their success than family support – in this case perhaps due to the familiarity peers have with university systems and the family's

unfamiliarity with those same systems and the academic demands it places on the student (Dennis et al., 2005: 234). However, other research shows that parents – in particular, mothers – have an important role to play in their first generation child's success in college – this in both the role of support and facilitator of university engagement and despite their own inability to engage academically with their children (Mahan, 2010: 234).

It is suggested that first generation, low income students may feel 'survivor guilt' – a compunction at having persisted when others, who seem similarly, if not more commendable, do not (Piorkowski, 1983: 620). The students in Piorkowski's study experienced ridicule and ostracism from their community, as well as guilt at not being able to assist family and peers to improve their situations. These led to the sample experiencing psychological problems which impacted negatively on their academic achievement (Piorkowski, 1983: 621).

Thus first generation students are said to exist on the side lines of the university environment, as they may not entirely fit in with the social, cultural and academic context in which they find themselves. First generation, low income students have to work out the unwritten rules implicit to the university and university life, as well as change themselves to do so (Jehangir, 2009: 34). First generation students "lack first-hand knowledge of the college experience" (through their parents) which creates difficulties for these students (Dennis et al., 2005: 223). These students are more likely to be academically successful when there is a correspondence of the norms and expectations of those different worlds (Somers et al., 2004: 429). The fact that for many of these students this is not the case makes moving between those worlds difficult (ibid.). In the case of the South African sample of Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 3), first generation students began to increasingly distance themselves from their original homes (regardless of geographic location in relation to the university) and relocate themselves, creating new designations of home and identity congruent with their accumulative right of entry into new ways of being, which resulted from their student experience.

However the experience for first generation students, while fraught with difficulties, may also be challenging and invigorating as found by London (1989: 145). The life experiences that first generation students bring to the university were perceived by some students as important to their success (Byrd and Macdonald, 2005: 32). In contrast, other research suggests that first generation students believe that their prior experience and histories are not valuable in academia (Jehangir, 2009; 34). Added to this, first generation students may regard themselves as inadequate for college as a result of their first generation status (ibid.: 33). This compounds a sense of isolation felt by the students (Jehangir, 2009: 34). Indeed first generation students belonging to a learning community felt more authentic and more acknowledged within higher education institutions; they also felt normalised and supported (Jehangir, 2009: 39). Rendon (1992) in Terenzini et al. (1996: 17) suggested that first generation students need to be validated .

While the belief in the corrective effect of higher education has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, there is a suggestion that higher education plays a role in the reproduction of the existing status quo – protecting the interests of the upper middle classes through sets of unwritten rules, norms and values that are difficult for those from groups lower on the social ladder to understand and implement (Stephens et al., 2012: 1178). This would support Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (1990).

4.7 Linguistic Challenge

For the South African student the medium of tuition at many institutions of higher learning is English. This has political and exclusionary ramifications. Alexander (2005) suggested that the languages used within the processes of production are the languages of power. Historically the languages of power in South Africa have been Afrikaans and English. In the post-apartheid era, English has become the lingua franca (Posel and Zeller, 2015: 2). The indigenous African languages in South Africa became official languages after the new dispensation of 1994, but despite plans to the contrary, have not been fully integrated as

educational mediums, or mediums of communication in political or economic arenas. Language becomes deeply ingrained into the fabric of society so as to create a sense of normalcy in the use of powerful lingo for purposes involving the public sphere (Tollefson, 1991: 2). Alexandre (1972: 86)suggested that the language of the coloniser becomes integral to one's levels of cultural capital. Should one not be able to communicate in the language of power, one is then excluded from participation in income generating activities. Languages are not neutral, and are developed through power interests and are also tools supporting the status quo (Alexander, 2005: 2). However for many South Africans, language has been a symbolic site of struggle against exclusion, expressed through the rejection, or appropriation and alteration of English and Afrikaans.

The primacy of English, added to an inadequate education system has seen many enter higher education without fluency in the dominant language of instruction. These individuals are at a profound disadvantage. Not only are they handicapped in terms of comprehension, but academic styles of communication are even more inaccessible. Figures analysed by Luckett and Hunma (2014: 114) suggested that those who describe their home language as English are more likely to graduate. In a sample examined by Bangeni and Kapp (2007) students emerging from 'racially mixed schools' were adept at moving between languages and racial arrangements. Those who came from poorer schools with no racial diversity conflated the English language with 'whiteness'. Also, the analysis of census data by Posel and Zeller (2015) showed that increasingly middle and upper class black Africans describe their children as being taught English in the home and are using English as a 'second home language'. However, in general few students of higher education communicate in English at home (between 6 and 7 % of Bhorat's 2010 sample).

Linguistic styles are also embedded in and indicative of the prevailing culture – thus the ideas of critique, impersonal and passive voice, which are standard academic patois, become even more impenetrable to the other, as found by the sample interviewed by Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 201). Culture and language are inextricable (Kramsch, 1998: 3), and closely related to identity and self-esteem (Alexander, 2005: 4). Many of the forms of

address, the ways of communicating as exemplified through language may be new to students coming from the outside of the existing power structures (Kapp and Bangeni, 2011: 588). Thus for example respect is shown through self-effacing mannerisms and expression rather than challenge and active debate.

The struggle to become proficient translates itself in the students' fluctuation in terms of their appropriation of the dominant discourse, and the isolation and confusion that it brought socially – for instance Kapp and Bangeni (2011: 202) described pressure from peers on campus "to be less black", feelings of disassociation from friends and family of origin as the students become more versed in a new world. For many, the shift in use of language signifies a change in tastes and habits: for example, food, music, dress, leisure pursuits and more. This is congruent with an assimilation of cultural capital, or exposure to new and seductive things – either concrete or experiential.

4.8 Outside the Classroom

> College is [also] about what goes on outside the classroom, among the students with no adults around. College is about being on your own, about autonomy, about freedom from the authority of adults, however benign their intentions. And last but far from least college is about fun, about unique forms of peer-group fun before, in student conceptions, the greyer actualities of adult life in the real world begin to close in on you.(Moffatt, 1991: 46)

Much student time is spent outside the classroom – time which students are able to commit as they see fit (Kuh et al., 1994b: 4). This time can be spent in enhancing educational goals through congruent activities, or in leisure, socialisation or working to support themselves. Many researchers have pointed to the importance of such out of class learning – both to the academic and practical success of the student (Kuh et al., 1991: 7, Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005: 187, 516, Tinto, 2002: 3). Out of class activities that have the most effect are those that demand consistent input, interaction with others from different identity groupings, and are activities congruent to educational goals. Research has found that students participating in extracurricular activities for ten or more hours a week were predisposed to be more

successful in their employment after university (Little, 2006: 62). Non participation in extracurricular and social activities that are part of the university, may inhibit the development of a student's social capital (Little, 2006: 66) and thus stunt future support systems. South African student samples have been found to have low involvement in extracurricular activities with regard to student governance: an 8% involvement in student governance for black African students and 5% of white students reporting involvement in student governance students (Cape Higher Education Consortium, 2013: 8) Research points to the importance of social integration as a predictor of student success – this includes relationships with peers and faculty (Tinto, 2002: 3).

4.9 Poverty, Students and Work

4.9.1 Work

Unfortunately there is a dearth of literature dealing with this topic in the South African context at this time. However international studies can be used to create explore the general issues experienced. According to Metcalf (2003: 315) students who worked during term time were affected by their involvement in the workforce. These students' education is compromised. The study which was based in the United Kingdom showed that female students (particularly those from an ethnic minority) and students whose fathers did not have a degree, had more chance of working while studying. Other studies have also had similar findings: that working students have a lower rate of academic success and are more likely to leave before graduating (see studies cited in Metcalf, 2003: 319). Lecture attendance drops with employment, assignments are negatively affected, less studying happens and the student is under more stress (Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and London South Bank University, 2005: 59, Little, 2006). Paid work seems to have a higher academic price for students with lower social standing (Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and London South Bank University, 2005: 102). It would seem that students with less access to resources are more likely to work, thus entrenching existing class and socio-economic barriers (Metcalf, 2003: 316, Little, 2006: 61).

Moreover, working students reported being tired and lecturers reported that working students were more often tired, sick or depressed (Metcalf, 2003: 319). Lecturers in a study in the United Kingdom reported that working students were more likely to miss lectures and

ask for lecture notes. However many working students reported ensuring submission of their assignments on time (Little, 2006: 60, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and London South Bank University, 2005: 96). These same working students reported that they spent less time socialising, in leisure, extracurricular activities and with family (Little, 2006: 59, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and London South Bank University, 2005: 104). Employment off campus has been found to be detrimental to educational attainment (Kuh et al., 1994b: 17, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and London South Bank University, 2005: 117). The effect of working off campus on a student's cognitive ability has been found to have opposing results – most show that it makes no difference to cognitive ability, some studies show cognitive ability improves, and others show that working for more than 15 hours a week is detrimental to cognitive ability (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005: 197).

Moreover, the work engaged in by students was not usually related to their field of study (Metcalf, 2003: 314). Decisions to work while studying are usually driven by financial need. However the decision may also be influenced by the general value placed on higher education, working, the perceived value or danger of doing both and of leisure time (Metcalf, 2003: 323).

4.9.2 Poverty

According to Letseka and Maile (2008: 8), 60% of South African students drop out of university, and 70% of these non-completers' families are poor. Krippendorff (1989: 14) suggested that it is poverty during an individual's childhood as opposed to merely economic security at point of university entry that is related negatively to university entrance. It is suggested that this is due to the lack of quality schooling, lack of investment in extra educational opportunities and parental education levels (ibid.: 6).

Poverty can be regarded as referring to the inability to achieve a minimal standard of living, seen in terms of rudimentary consumption requirements or the income necessary to satisfy

those requirements (World Bank, 1990: 3). Also regarded as important are the resources which enable one to participate in the customary ways of living and social activities of the community of which one is a part, without which one may be marginalised and rendered invisible (Townsend, 1979: 54). Poverty is increasingly seen as multi-dimensional – that is the result of different and interactive factors, and experienced in different ways. The poor suffer at a micro, meso and macro levels in that their autonomy, their access to basic needs, their relationships and the power structures within which they live, are compromised or compromising (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 989). They are also psychologically compromised. Lack of certainty about financial well-being and the security of residence and registration has been found to correlate negatively with students' persistence (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 502). People who are poor are very conscious of their "lack of voice, power and independence" (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher and Koch-Schulter, 2000: 31). The poor are recognised as having poor opinions of themselves, of seeing themselves as marginalised (Power, 2005: 651). Poor people also report concern about their children's opportunities (ibid.). Indeed poverty affects children negatively in that families are less secure and functional and the child may experience deprivation or mistreatment: "poverty is a severe situational condition to be born into and a key factor causing mental health problems in later life"(Tuason, 2011: 40).

Moreover, the poor suffer as their dealings with others are "tainted by disrespect, shame, exclusion, humiliation, and loss of identity and repression of diversity" (Prilleltensky, 2003 in Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 989). Despite the increasing academic acceptance of the structural nature of poverty, poverty can cause 'internalised stigma' – a concept used by Herek (1999: 1109) to explain the stigma experienced by those with HIV/ Aids, referring in this case to the humiliation poor people experience as they take responsibility for their poverty – which distances them and leads them to accept this distance from the non-poor (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 990).

Financial problems experienced among the country's large pool of poor black students are largely to blame for South Africa's low graduation rates (Fish and Jooste, 2011: 11). Studies

on the experiences of poor students, point to the students using numerous tactics to get into and stay in institutions of higher education – these include accessing grants and scholarships, working while studying and sex work (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 991). Tuason's research into the Filipino poor showed that for the poor, their children's educational success was regarded as a mechanism to escape poverty. The subjects of another study who had escaped poverty had indeed supported their families (Tuason, 2011: 48). According to Firfirey and Carolissen (2010: 991) students tend to hide their poverty – the stigma associated with being poor would result in them humiliating themselves were they to do so. These students "use multiple strategies to disguise their poverty from others" (ibid.: 1001). The South African sample used in the above study described poverty as branding them (ibid.: 997) and described how poverty is negatively related to success and retention – examples given included students having to drop out due to lack of resources, or struggling with academic commitments as a result of this lack (ibid.: 998). It is clear that the need to hide one's economic situation is not conducive to creating a student who is fully integrated into the systems of the university. Lack of such integration is a central component in student attrition as understood by Tinto (1987).

In 2008 the average total annual cost of a South African university registration stood at R43 000. The average annual household income was R29 780 (Krippendorff, 1989: 6). The South African government has put in place a financial aid scheme (National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa: NSFAS) which aims to enable students who do not have the financial resources or means of borrowing such resources for university, to afford university fees and associated costs (National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa, 2012). One of South Africa's goals is to initiate development and to redress past issues of inequality through access to education – including higher education (Krippendorff, 1989: 8). The NFSAS allocation is decided upon using a means test. Interestingly then, as shown by Krippendorff (1989: 7), in South Africa the cost of a university degree increases family income levels. Students whose families earned R110 000 or less per annum in 2010 qualified for this loan (Davids, 2012). In 2010 (the year the study was conducted) students with financial aid were given the following allowance:

	Living in residence (2010)	Off campus – not living at home (2010)	Off campus – living at home (2010)
Books	R 1000	R 1000	R 1000
Meals	R 4847	R 4847	-
Residence/ rent	R 14526	R 5552	-
Tuition	R 21220	R 21220	R 21220
Transport	-	-	R 3048

Table 3: Financial aid loans to students 2010 (Dlamini, 2012)

The book allowance is paid in a once-off amount at the beginning of the year. The students do not need to provide receipts for these purchases and can spend it as they see fit. Students living in residence have their residence fees paid directly to the residence; however those living off campus have their rent money paid to themselves and they need to pay it on to their landlords. The meal allowance is paid to the students in eight instalments over the academic year. It is not paid during the half year or end of year vacation period. Thus the student had R 609 monthly in 2010 over eight months for meals and other expenses. This averaged at R 20 daily in 2010 – the first year the study was conducted.

The above may not always cover a student's living costs, resulting in the student battling to meet their expenses (Fish and Jooste, 2011: 15). For example, the cost of a loaf of brown bread (cheaper than white) in an urban area in October 2010 was R7.17 and a litre of milk R6.66. Maize meal, a South African staple referred to by the participants, cost R22.32 for 5 kilograms (Swart et al., 2011: 4). 2010 figures are examined here, as it was at this time that the participants were students.

While these foods would last a number of days or weeks, one can conclude that it is necessary to budget carefully for one's foodstuffs as a student on financial aid. A study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2012 showed that the average spent on food by financial aid students in 2012 was R16.26 daily (Kassier and Veldman, 2012). These students were found to have very little dietary variation, and to consume less than optimal amounts of dairy and dairy products, fruit and vegetables. The average consumption of fats,

coffee and tea was high (ibid.). Of these students 53% reported being moderately food insecure, and 12.5% reported being food insecure. Food insecurity in this context refers to scarcity of food, experiencing hunger, being unable to afford food, eating an inadequate diet (Labadarios, Davids, Mchiza, Weir-Smith and March, 2009: 10). It has been suggested by a student practitioner that the food allowance is also used to subsidise other living costs: for example the book allowance may be insufficient, they may need to fund travel expenses, stationery, clothing, airtime, and living for those two months where there is no financial aid allocation and so on (Anonymous, 2012). Since these students are drawn from the poorest of the poor, and are unlikely to have other financial means, such expenses would necessarily have to come out of their food allowance. Furthermore cases have been reported where students send a proportion of their monthly allowance home to subsidise families in dire need (ibid.).

Multiple studies show that an inadequate nutritional intake impacts negatively on a student's academic performance. See Taras (2005) for a review of such studies. Undernourishment can lead to reduced academic performance, concentration problems and increased absenteeism (Kassier and Veldman, 2012). Also found to be important to cognitive functioning is adequate nutrition through variation of food choice and quality (Florence, Asbridge and Veugelers, 2008: 213). While many of these studies focus on school children, it could be assumed that the same principles apply to post-secondary students (Munro, Quayle, Simpson and Barnsley, 2012: 4). Munro et al. (2012: 11) found that 11-18% of their sample of University of KwaZulu-Natal undergraduate students 'often' or 'almost always' found themselves having difficulty concentrating as a result of hunger. Of the same sample, 17.3% described 'often' or 'almost always' experiencing hunger at semester end or at exam time – these coincide biannually. There is a strong correlation between the students in the sample who are on financial aid and experiencing food insecurity: a factor seen as unsurprising by Munro et al. (2012: 12) due to the selection process of financial aid favouring those without resources. However the general trend in South Africa as elsewhere is that attending university increases as family income increases – despite the state loan structure (Krippendorff, 1989: 8).

4.9.3 Living Arrangements

Students living on campus have been found to be more successful in their academic endeavour than those who live off campus (Christie, Munro and Rettig,, 2002: 212, Schudde, 2011: 599). They could also be better placed to receive social support and other resources than those living off campus (Schudde, 2011: 582). This is true of South African students (Horn, Jansen and Yu, 2011: 209). Moreover the students living away from home are more able to negotiate the transition between home, community and student life (Holdsworth, 2006: 515) which could be important in the context of 'non-traditional' students whose home and community have little in common with the academic world of higher education. Living on campus makes it possible for immersion and integration at a social and intellectual level. Overseas 'traditional students' are more likely to move away from home and into residence halls, as universities far from home are the norm for this group. However 'non-traditional' students' are tending towards living at home while at university – in part due to financial constraints, and the choosing of local universities (Holdsworth, 2009: 227).

Students living off campus, but away from home are also engaging with their journey of 'emerging adulthood', as they become able to negotiate leases, rentals and upkeep (Christie et al., 2002: 230). However this is still in a protected setting, and is not a permanent commitment.

Students living away from home while at university can be regarded, overseas, as meeting the stereotype of mobility in the 'traditional' students, who leave their place of origin to join the university community. This mobility, the transitory nature of student engagement and the enclave nature of the university, tend to result in the student living in residence not becoming part of the surrounding community, retaining their mobile status and having limited interactions with local people (Holdsworth, 2009: 236).

A study conducted at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University showed that for those living in residence in the South African context there were certain expectations held by the students that were unmet. These included residential services that were not provided timeously, displeasure at the state and equipping of residence kitchens, disappointment at the décor of the residence rooms (Radder and Han, 2009: 115).

4.9.4 Stress and Coping

In the course of university life the student has to learn to think in different ways and (in situations of what Barnett (2007: 71) referred to as 'genuine' higher education) autonomously. This is practically and intellectually demanding as well as stressful. These requirements may be demanding and confusing for the student. As a result Barnett (ibid: 75) suggested that the student needs assistance to protect their 'will to learn'. Moreover "the more students learn, the more value they find in their learning, the more likely they are to stay and graduate" (Tinto, 2002: 3). Research has shown that confidence in a successful outcome, encouragement by lecturers and student interest are related to a feeling of self-efficacy (Hackett, Betz, Casas and Rocha-Singh, 1992: 536). For Barnett (2007: 17) 'will' is a non-rational way of relating to the world which is internal to the person and provides a proclivity towards action. It also concerns the way in which people interact with the world – in this case regarding learning: passive or active; persistent or not; deep or shallow learning. In these ways the 'will to learn' embeds in other parts of life not specific to academia.

Student wellness is a state defined as qualitatively distinct from the absence of illness – physically, socially and psychologically (Ballentine, 2010: 4). There are mixed results regarding the impact of physical wellness on student performance (Ballentine, 2010: 72). As discussed previously Social Support seems to have both negative and positive ramifications for success – the implication being that while integration is positive, too much social involvement creates tension for the student role. At the level of psychological wellness it has been shown that students with mental illness are less likely to integrate on campus, and are less likely to succeed (Salzer, 2011: 5). Moreover, as discussed later, students who are more confident are more likely to succeed at university (Zajacova, Lynch and Espenade, 2005: 697)

As in the wider world, students differ in the ways that they deal with the stresses and demands placed on them at university. Some coping strategies are more successful than others in dealing with these problems and can result in higher or lower success rates (Zajacova et al., 2005: 704). The ways in which negative academic feedback and experiences are dealt with also differ. Some students seem easily discouraged (as also discussed by Barnett, 2007: 67), while others routinely successfully negotiate the above (Struthers et al., 2000: 581). Studies show that students with personality traits such as high self-esteem, extroversion, optimism, and control cope better with upsets (Struthers, Perry and Menec, 2000: 582). Those with better academic coping skills were more able to manage university related stress (ibid.: 589). Moreover in the study conducted by Struthers et al., coping skills were strongly related to motivation (2000: 589). Thus for some, because doing academically well is important, and students are aware that high stress levels impact on doing well, the students learn how to manage this stress effectively. For Barnett (2007: 19) the 'will to learn' is connected to the students' energy to see their course of study to its end despite negative events which may occur, and despite the magnitude of the commitment necessary to propel themselves towards graduation. Indeed commitment towards a defined goal has been found to be important in student success (Willcoxson, Cotter and Joy, 2011: 347, Tinto, 1987: 115)

Academic self-efficacy (the belief that one is capable or incapable of attaining a given goal) has been found to be related to student success at university (Zajacova et al., 2005: 697, Willcoxson et al., 2011: 349). Students believing that they are capable of overcoming obstacles are more likely to succeed. The students' perception of the obstacle is related to their self-efficacy: if the obstacle is regarded as a challenge to be overcome, success is more likely; however if the obstacle is regarded as insurmountable or dreaded, success is less likely. One's coping strategies then are important for academic success. Self-efficacy impacts on the individual's drive and perseverance as well as his/her effective manipulation of existing skills (Bandura, 1993: 144). However high stress levels are found to be counter

indicative of academic success for university students (Pritchard and Wilson, 2003: 24) - it may even decrease self-efficacy (Hackett et al., 1992: 536).

Stress may also result if the student experiences role conflict (Albas and Albas, 1984: 14). This is a situation where trying to fulfil the expectations of one role inevitably results in compromising another role. For students it may be that the role of student (for example, during exam time/ when many assignments are due) clashes with the role of boyfriend/ girlfriend, or child or worker. The resulting stress may be increased by such 'role competition'. Here roles vie for the individual's commitment. This may turn into 'role overload' when the demands of the roles become intolerable, and cannot be reconciled or managed.

Social support can ameliorate stress (Friedlander et al., 2007: 272, Cohen and Hoberman, 1983: 124). Social support is an important protective device for undergraduate students (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger and Pancer, 2000: 138) and impacts positively on their success (Tinto, 2002: 3). The support can come in a variety of forms – both concrete and emotional and be from a variety of different sources (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley, 1988: 36) – examples may be of peers, friends, family and faculty. Academic support (for example in the form of extra instruction, developmental education) has been found to impact positively on student success (Tinto, 2002: 3). Within the study conducted by Zimet et al. (1988: 38), it was found that students who believed that they were supported by family were less likely to experience depression. Oddly however, women in the sample experienced more social support, but also more anxiety and depression, while men reported the converse (ibid.). Albas and Albas (1988: 269) found that students at exam time (a high stress situation for students) tend to cluster with others from the same course – this was explained by the sample as due to familiarity of people sharing the same course being of comfort, the relationships allowing the student to gauge how others are managing, and a sense of solidarity through the shared experience. There is a long history of studies showing that stress is decreased if people are with others sharing the same stress (Wrightsman (1975) and Macdonald (1970) in Albas and Albas, 1984: 16). This should be true for students

undergoing the stressors of student life. Here one could also imagine communities of practice at work to support the student through the difficulty.

The way that students at university perceive events and experiences can affect how well students do, and their motivation to do well. For example, if an experience is regarded as impossible in addition to protracted, students may become demotivated, feel helpless and perform poorly (Ames, 1992: 266, Willcoxson et al., 2011: 349). Moreover they may experience depression and tension (Struthers et al., 2000: 581). These problems cause some students to do badly, while others seem to be able to cope better. It is suggested that students utilise two methods of coping, which may make the difference between successfully and unsuccessfully negotiating stress. These are: 1) Problem-focussed coping – where the individual believes that the stressful event can be managed and employs strategies to do so, including positive thinking, planning and behaving in such a way that an attempt is made to minimise the stress; and 2) Emotion-focussed coping – here the individual attempts to reduce upsetting feelings, used when the individual believes that the stressor has to be tolerated rather than managed (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985: 152). Research has shown that students able to withstand stress better tend to be more outgoing, positive, and higher in self-control and self-confidence (ibid.). Research conducted by Struthers (2000: 589) showed that higher levels of academic stress experienced by students are accompanied by higher usage of problem focussed coping and emotion-focussed coping (also see Carver and Scheier, 1994: 159). Moreover, it was found that coping and motivation are associated, and motivation is positively linked to the student's marks (Struthers et al., 2000: 589). However it is important to note that different stages of the problem are dealt with in different ways by the same individuals (Carver and Scheier, 1994: 159).

4.9.5 Assessment
Within education systems, assessment (often through test, exam or assignment) is given credence. Exams (and by implication tests and assignments) are occasions where the university controls a student's mind and body – by claiming to assess the amount of knowledge a student has gained or not gained (Albas and Albas, 1984: 1). Barnett described

what he calls 'the will to offer' (2007: 79). Here the student gives of her/himself by offering scholarly work. The inner self is part of the intellectual creation. Such scholarly production emanates from internal efforts, which are then made public. Scholarly production occurs in relation to lecturer and other students. It also has to happen within a learning framework, which requires that such work is created within certain guidelines (ibid.: 80). This "pedagogical frame is replete not only with expectations … but is saturated with judgement" (ibid.: 81). Thus the student has much to deal with – at a psychological, social and intellectual level. Being a student in this sense is to risk one's emerging self-confidence and related academic competence. The students' intent to persevere is a strong factor in their graduation (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 490).

Assessment is central to university life and it generally spells success or failure. Assessment times are stressful events requiring the student to engage deeply and risk exposing themselves as achievers/ underachievers, intelligent or not (Barnett, 2007: 83). Moreover assessment can be seen as a test of future success – since university is often regarded as a path to the upper class, success with the university's requirements could be seen as indicators of future success (Albas and Albas, 1984: 5). Interestingly Tinto (2002: 3) pointed to the importance of feedback on assessment for student success: this needs to be speedy and constant and monitor student progress, providing rapid support where necessary.

Exams also express the protestant ethic in society at large: here the relationship between student and lecturer (similar to the relationship between an individual and a god) has to be proven through long and deep exertion (Albas and Albas, 1984: 3). The protestant work ethic is a concept stemming from Sociological theorist Max Weber which suggests that working hard, being disciplined and spending little is believed to bring religious salvation within Western culture (2002). Assessment can be regarded as part of the student's identity – a mechanism by which they prove their worthiness to hold the title of student – legitimising that part of their identity (Albas and Albas, 1984: 4) "To be identified as a 'good' student one must do well at evaluations, which usually consist of exams" (ibid.). Here assessment is central to the students' self-confidence. Older research points to initial student experiences of passing or failing assignments as being encouraging and supportive

of persistence (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 520). Moreover the concept of "studentship" refers to the responsibility that students have towards their own learning, to be actively and critically engaged (Bloomer, 1997: 2) – a stressful idea for many where again the onus is on one to prove oneself.

On a more prosaic level, student success is also based on study abilities, constructive studying routines and commitment to and enjoyment of academic work and attendance at lectures (Bean and Metzner, 1985: 499). Student motivation and their belief that they are registered for the right courses is also a factor as is the strength of their degree planning and their belief in the long term utility of the university degree. Also found to be important is the strength of academic support.

Student priorities shift with the advent of exams – the student role assumes primacy and other roles are given less precedence (Albas and Albas, 1984: 52). These include roles in family and the work force. Others may give the students more leeway in terms of their other roles in order to fulfil the role of student (Albas and Albas, 1984: 53). However students may still have to manage simultaneous roles carefully at this point to meet the demands of assessment.

Many students may attempt to change shifts or take leave at these times. They may also feel guilty in asking for such allowances as they are concerned that they could have avoided the problem had they been better prepared. Superiors at work may also change their behaviour at such times – in order to allow the student flexibility to attain the goals of the student role (Albas and Albas, 1984: 52).

Role hierarchy helps the individual (in this case the student) to legitimise and allocate resources (here time and energy) (Merton, 1957: 111). However problems arise when the activity in question is ranked higher than the student activity. Albas and Albas (1984: 54)

used the comparison with religion and spirituality here, where studying is seen by the student as important, and guilt is experienced when it is not prioritised. However a certain amount of 'role contraction' is accepted and the student is supported by the religious community (through, for example the prayers of other members). Friendship roles also come under strain at these times, especially for students who are not married as friends tend to form a pivotal part of their support system. Relationships are particularly difficult to negotiate with those who are not themselves students and do not have the same priorities (Albas and Albas, 1984: 56).

It is clear that there are multiple factors influencing the student's experience of the higher education institution – not all of which could be examined here. The study in question, through the narratives and biographies of the students involved, uncovered the various areas of interest that were then discussed above. These include the family history of the student, their perceptions of themselves in the university, their self-confidence, their experience of stress and commitment, their experience of support or the lack thereof from peers and family, out of class activities and the development of their independent identity.

4.10 The Graduate

The research participants had all graduated by the time they were re-contacted in 2014. The researcher was interested in their lives including graduation, for some postgraduate study, and general entry into the world outside the university. As described by Perrone and Vickers (2003: 71) "developing the graduate identity is a social process, emergent from the dynamic interaction of the expression of identity aspirations on the part of the individual and the identity attachment of society."

The identity of the graduate and their employability has tended to be conflated (Holmes, 2001: 117). As shall be discussed Boden and Nedeva (2010: 37) suggested that employability with regards to the "performative function" of universities is entrenched in the economic system of the present. However, graduateness cannot only be defined on the basis of the employability of the individual exiting the university. There is more than this. The experience of university leads to differences in ways of experiencing and explaining reality as well as the perception and agreement of others of one's identity (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011: 565). Below, ideas of identity, employability, employment and job seeking are engaged with more fully.

4.10.1 Graduate Identity

Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011: 581) suggested that "graduate identity can be seen as the cultural capital acquired prior to entering an organisation". This indicates that there is more to the graduate than the skills with which they exit – it recognises the ability to translate those skills into social advancement. It may also, however, be conceptualised as an identity which continues to be developed well into working life, as a function of the expectations of graduates held by the self and others in multiple settings, as opposed to only existing prior to entering the workplace as suggested above. The concept of a graduate identity can be regarded as relational. Here it is not the degree per se which is of importance but the social recognition inherent in that degree which impacts on the graduate's identity (Holmes, 2001: 116). This would include the affirmation of significant others, friends, communities, employers and social institutions generally. At this level one can see the resonance of

Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory (as discussed in Chapter 3.2). For Bronfenbrenner, development throughout the life course is the culmination of an actor's (or graduate's) capacity and of the relations they have with the micro and macro contexts within which they operate.

Rutherford Smith and Bauling (2013) have explored the concept of 'graduateness' less theoretically, in terms of the characteristics and outcomes that are envisioned for the graduates of higher education institutions. This varies according to national and global interests, employers and graduates in negotiation with varying degrees of influence. As such the identity in terms of employability takes on increasing significance.

Accordingly mastery in field of study, as well as a competence in knowledge gathering techniques and flexibility as central skills for graduates are listed (Hurst, 2014: 612, Rutherford Smith and Bauling, 2013). Also identified is the ability of the graduate to work in group situations, to adopt professional values appropriate to their chosen profession, to be proficient problem solvers and planners, to be creative, to be good communicators, to have developed basic business and computer skills. The latter are defined as the graduate's ability to think reflexively, to have an internal locus of control and to understand the need to engage in continuous learning and re-evaluation (Hurst, 2014: 613, Su and Zhang, 2015: 2). Some of these competencies and characteristics could develop naturally as a function of personality or maturity, but the suggestion is that Higher Education needs to consciously impart the above as central components of their programmes in order to make higher education relevant.

Many of the above form part of what are seen as the 'employability' of graduates – this is further discussed in section 4.8.2. The idea that attributes as well as skills are components of graduateness reveals a general perception that education is a "transformative and essentially personal journey" (Boden and Nedeva, 2010: 42). The graduate identity can also be regarded as transient as the individual becomes employed, and further develops his/her identity in relation to that employment (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011: 582). However the core aspects of such identity could be argued to remain in the long term. However the graduate

identity unfolds it is clearly influenced by time related change and exposure (as described by Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

Unfortunately South Africa has a high measure of inequality (Keeton, 2014).The Higher Education Act refers to the role of higher education in South Africa in nation building: specifically in assisting people to realise their capacity, to value human dignity, equality, difference, to display tolerance and value liberty (South African Government, 1997: 2). As suggested by the first democratically elected South African President, Nelson Mandela (1997), the outcomes of education can and should contribute to overcoming historical and existing social separations within South Africa (see also Hurst, 2014: 602, Blackstone, 2012: 14).

Here graduates are central actors in the transformation process, having themselves been transformed through their experience as students. As suggested by Barnett (2004: 249), progressing meaningfully through the academe can lead one to prevail over social ills. For transformation to occur in this way, it is important that the values of transformation are authentic and internalised by the student; if not change remains a political concept (Delport, 2009: 102). Indeed Miller (2006: 110) found that the process of completing degree study resulted in different "ideals, morals, values, customs, beliefs, attitudes, speech patterns and thought processes".

The exposure of university students to new ways of thinking, and the integration of such frameworks into existing world views are central to development (Hurst, 2014: 604). In South Africa as elsewhere "Educational attainment is the measure by which people are being sorted into poverty or relative wealth; and the skills distribution in a society – its inclusiveness, or lack thereof – is manifested in the degree of income inequality in the society" (Blackstone, 2012: 14). Unfortunately a rise in the levels of educational attainment (secondary and tertiary) in South Africa has not culminated in a corresponding decrease in inequality (Sikes, 2006: 13). Evidence and ideology points to a significant degree of upward social mobility resulting from higher education. The graduate experiences intense change

and growth which often leads to difficulty and conflict for the graduate – both psychologically and socially (Miller, 2006: 106). This, added to increased financial security can lead to an experience of marginality for the graduate with respect to family and communities of origin (ibid.). Here the application of the understandings of social belonging as described by Tinto (1987, see discussion in Chapter 3) would define the graduate as having weak social attachments.

As already discussed, human nature values the experience of 'belonging' – a social need as identified by Maslow (2013: 30). Many graduates coming from the underclasses find themselves experiencing isolation as described above (Miller, 2006: 121). Here 'underclass' refers to all poverty stricken communities, rather than the looking at primarily the urban poor as in Wilson (1985). However the experiences referred to are similar: joblessness, lack of opportunity and social isolation. Being a member of a community is important to people as it is here they can fulfil social and personal need for acknowledgement, assimilation and camaraderie. This may be lost or renegotiated with regard to family and community of origin, or new groupings formed which meet such needs. Moreover, as understood by Tinto (1987: 103, see Chapter 3.1), individuals without community support, recognition and boundaries are greatly disadvantaged. Specifically, in this context the graduate may experience a sense of anomie in which they have sense of societal order or guidance. Also identified as a human need by Maslow is that of 'esteem'; here the external dimension relies upon positive validation by others (2005: 81). Belonging to a successful group (for example, a university community) is attractive to individuals as it can improve self-image through association (Ishler, 2004: 29). Thus association for graduates as alumni with prestigious universities fulfils both a need for community and status (Born, 2014, Polsky, 2014).

In the case of graduates belonging to an alumni organisation, individuals would associate themselves with the emblem of the institution, act on behalf of the institution, and openly show their affiliation to the institution (Polsky, 2014). A sense of belonging as an alumni, as with many groups, would grow from a mutual (university) culture, shared student traditions

and rituals, common behaviours and values (Patouillet, 2013). For the sense of belonging to become entrenched and self-sustaining, the graduates would need to share exclusive and positive events both as students and later would need encouragement to be in direct communication with the university and other graduates, as well as needing to be aware of positive publicity regarding the institution (Ishler, 2004: 34). Thus for ex-students to regard themselves as part of a university community, on leaving the institution they would need to have experienced an adequate atmosphere of scholarship, be involved in fun and unifying activities (for example, winning sports, student rituals and so on), have common and pleasant memories, and be able to identify themselves with the university without embarrassment, and in the light of a publicised positive relationship (Ishler, 2004: 39). Thus, vital to a strong sense of belonging for graduates is a positive and active organisational identity.

South African universities have experienced dramatic changes in university composition (both at an organisational and demographic level) which has resulted in university identities of instability, without historic and commonly valued rituals of enjoyment. It is then difficult to create the suggested strong alumnus and the forging of new university cultures of a shared nature suggested by Fourie (1999: 285).

4.10.2 Graduate Employability

Internationally, various universities are attempting to ensure that their graduates are employable (Harvey, 2005: 14) with varying degrees of success. "Many graduates lack appropriate skills, attitudes and dispositions, which in turn prevents them from participating effectively in the workplace" (Cumming, 2010: 407). A South African study sampling the employers of engineering graduates found that most of these employers believed that graduates were ill equipped for the workplace (Mtebula, 2014: 85).

Literature shows no uniform definition of the term 'employability', particularly with reference to university graduates (Tymon, 2011: 853). It is suggested that the concept of

graduate 'employability' is based in a dynamic process between employers and graduate employees (Jameson and Holden, 2000: 264). Employability can be understood as the skills that are evidenced by the graduate enabling them to access appropriate employment (Rothwell and Arnold, 2007: 23). For example Griesel and Parker (2009: 11) found that South African bosses and South African alumnae regard proficiency in English as a vital skill. Employers in the same study were shown to expect graduates to be able to engage effectively with tasks and to use knowledge that they had (ibid.: 18). The idea of employability including personal dispositions adds a complexity to the educational outcome model: many of the required attributes could be regarded as innate parts of a person's character rather than arising from university (Tymon, 2011: 853). Examples of such an attribute could be proactive-ness. Such a characteristic could be more easily developed in those who have a natural predisposition towards strategic behaviours which could in turn be enabled through higher education. These dispositions and resulting development would be referred to as 'Developmentally Instigative Characteristics' and 'Structuring Proclivities' by Bronfenbrenner (1993), as outlined in section 3.2 of Chapter 3.

Employability can also be understood as the level of opportunity that is available for the graduate in the prevailing economic and political environment (Morrison, 2013: 488). As such it has less to do with the transfer of skills and cultural capital through higher education than macro forces. It has further been suggested that graduate opportunities (and thereby identities) are being damaged through the massification of higher education (Tomlinson, 2008: 3, Elias and Purcell, 2004: 65). Here the degree qualifications are more common, and thus devalued. Brooks and Everett (2009: 334) who conducted 90 life history interviews with graduates, argued that increasing numbers of graduates have negatively affected the earnings of graduates in the United Kingdom. The graduate then has to rely on activating resources generated by their social, cultural and economic positions in finding employment (Tomlinson, 2008: 3). In consequence, graduates coming from lower class positions experience greater challenges in finding appropriate employment (Morrison, 2013: 502). Such findings suggest that educational capital (in Bourdieuian sense) is not necessarily effectively or easily converted into cultural or economic capital. One may conclude that the lack of other capitals, and the existence of social barriers protecting the status quo continue

to deny entry into upper social economic strata despite the attainment of a degree. However Elias and Purcell (2004: 74) suggested that long-term evidence points to jobs being restructured to accommodate higher graduate numbers, which would then support the position that such capital can be effectively activated for upward mobility.

4.10.3 Graduate Employment

Employment is considered a central outcome of higher education. Thus employment and potential employment impacts on the development of a graduate identity. This facet of the graduate identity is based on 'successful' employment subject to the perception of what is appropriate for the graduate, as well as the process of interpretation and negotiation of such identity between employer and graduate (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011: 582). There is some debate regarding the current situation with regard to 'successful' employment of higher education graduates. Figures and opinions differ dramatically. Some analysts describe high un- and under-employment for graduates. Luckett and Hunma (2014: 108), for example, reported a 32% unemployment rate amongst graduates from seven Cape based higher education institutions and Bangeni and Kapp (2007: 85) reported a 9.5% unemployment rate for graduates (see also Bhorat, 2004: 976). Reports of high graduate unemployment also feature periodically in the popular press.

However others are more optimistic. According to Guba and Lincoln (2005: 3), those who exit with bachelors' degrees or advanced degrees are comparatively likely to find employment (see also Altman, 2009: 5). The conflation of the term 'graduate' to apply to graduates from all types of higher education institutions has led to the suggestion that South Africa has a crisis in graduate employment (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Available data points to those graduates exiting higher education with a university degree or more, as having experienced less than a 5% unemployment rate – as opposed to 16% unemployment rate for those graduating from other higher education institutions, a 29% unemployment rate for those with a matric certificate, and a 42% unemployment rate for those who leave school without a matric (Altbeker and Storme, 2013, Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 2). Moreover, those with a tertiary graduation are more likely to be employed in the formal sector (97.3%) which comes with added security, often benefits such as pensions, medical aid and unemployment insurance (Statistics South Africa, 2013). Congruently Arnett's research into

American graduates suggests that it takes approximately four years to find a long term job (employment lasting for five years and over) (2014: 173). The overall unemployment rate for youth in South Africa stood at 51.8% (OECD, 2014b) and for the general population at 57.8% (OECD, 2014c) in the second quarter of 2014. Of these 32% youth are unemployed, not seeking work and not pursuing education (ibid.). The outlook for the future is not dramatically different to the present in terms of employment, as South Africa does not seem to have the capacity to reach employment targets set out by the 2010 New Development Plan (Bhorat and Tian, 2014: 30).

As evidenced above, the statistics available are collected, compiled and manipulated in different ways with very different results. For example Statistics South Africa's definition of unemployment could under read unemployment figures as in their case unemployment is measured by looking at individuals who have not worked at all during the week of data collection, who are trying to find employment, and who are available to work (Statistics South Africa, 1998:12). Here those employed for short timespans , are reported as employed regardless of skill equivalence, and those who have not looked actively for employment (for whatever reason) are not considered unemployed.

South African graduates with a basic degree in 2005 earned just under R 7000 per month (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 11). Earnings for those with a degree in South Africa are significantly higher : 18 – 25% more (Luckett and Hunma, 2014: 122), than those without a degree doing the same job. For professional graduates the salary evidences even more of a discrepancy: between 59 – 82% more is paid to graduates than to non-graduates (ibid.: 123). Interestingly the payments for white and black African graduates are not dramatically different, however the gender discrepancy between graduate payments is extreme: female graduates earn less than half of their male counterparts, and almost on a par with non-graduates (ibid.: 110). In the United Kingdom, university graduates were found to earn 50% more than non-graduates (Hurst, 2010: 49).

In developed countries those with post school education tend to live in larger centres (Neimeyer, 1993: 561). The choice of those with higher education to live in urban areas both follows the availability of jobs, and circuitously increases economic growth in those areas (ibid.: 562). It is more likely that those who had to move in order to attend university, are more likely to move after university (ibid.: 564). These findings also point to a shift in graduate identity.

The net income for all residents in areas with a high concentration of university graduates is higher (Neimeyer, 1993: 562) than in areas with a low concentration of graduates. High levels of university education within a population can lead to a capable and accommodating labour force, better incomes and better professional prospects (Hurst, 2010: 50). In this case, school leavers' choices to engage in degree study can be regarded as a rational choice in terms of perceived outcome.

The intention to engage in private enterprise is not common amongst South African graduates (Fatoki, 2010: 87). Within South Africa generally 18% of those employed were employed in the informal sector, and 15% of all employed had short -term contracts. Thus the working environment in South Africa can be described as precarious (Mayring, 2000).

Between 1995 and 2011 there has been a significant increase in the annual graduate numbers in South Africa. Relative unemployment for this group has not decreased within that time span (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 4). Between 1995 and 2010 the number of black Africans graduating from an undergraduate degree had risen by 50% (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 11). In the general population the highest level of education per household has also increased (Leibbrandt and Levinsohn, 2011: 4). Within the graduate unemployment cohort only 58% of the work seekers took more than a year to enter employment , with black African graduates taking the longest (Moleke, 2010: 89). There is evidence of disadvantage in entering employment with regard to the university graduated from: previously disadvantaged universities – have less prestige; race – black African graduates have a higher

unemployment rate; degree – humanities based degrees are less employable than science and commerce; and gender – women graduates find it harder to access employment than men (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 16, Bangeni and Kapp, 2007, Hill, Tinker and Catterall, 2010: 87, Luckett and Hunma, 2014: 109).

Despite inequalities however, the figures still support the belief that higher education is valuable to graduates in the long term (Sikes, 2006: 15). Research has shown a positive relationship between graduate achievement and income, occupation and social status, which increases with postgraduate achievement (Kamwangamalu, 2000: 152).

Social researchers also describe what they label a "liminal period" of unemployment and temporary work as common to certain graduates. Here some graduates easily engage in temporary work to earn an income and gain experience while others eschew what they perceive as unworthy occupations in the wait for better opportunities to present (Brooks and Everett, 2009: 345). South African graduate underemployment is not unusual for graduates during their search for appropriate employment (Moleke, 2003: 17). Of South African employed graduates sampled, 30.5% considered themselves underemployed – underemployment here referring to skill mismatch, and underutilisation of working time (Baldry, 2013: 57). Furlong and Cartmel (2005) found that graduates from disadvantaged families in their British study were more likely to experience un-, under- or insecure employment in their initial jobs. As they pointed out, a lower class position has ramifications for one's entry into higher education, progression through higher education and one's employment after higher education (Furlong and Cartmel, 2005: 32). Underemployment could be regarded as unsuccessful employment: employment regarded to be of less relevance or importance, underpaid, or as not utilising the graduate's skills. Examples of such for the graduate might be blue collar or non-professional work.

The selection of any employment over unemployment is thought to be related to economic and social class; those who are at a disadvantage are more ready to take less prestigious work as an interim measure. The proficiency with which a graduate finds employment is

related to their self-esteem, confidence regarding finding a job, and their personal feelings of control over the process of finding employment. These in turn result in effective and active job seeking strategies (Bold, 2012: 345).

4.10.4 Graduate Job Searching

'Employability' and its result of being employed can be regarded as a social process where the individual graduate needs to actively and effectively place themselves in the labour market (Tomlinson, 2010: 73). South African students (using data from a sample of students in the Cape) approach job seeking in a variety of ways. Eighteen percent of students looked for employment by sending their curriculum vitae to companies, and 13% responded to adverts in newspapers (Czerniewicz et al., 2010: 16). Other tactics are related to the 'social capital' available to the student and the socio-economic status of the student's family – here students were asked to apply for particular jobs, or referrals by people known to their families were used. However these strategies were more common with white students (25% of white African found employment in this way) than Black African students – between 6 and 9% of black Africans found work in this way (ibid.). Students who described 'cold calling' – i.e. walking from door to door in the search for work, or going to government employment centres – tended to be black African (ibid.). Further echoing Morrison (2013), Scott et al. (2007: 59) recognised job searching as expensive: it requires access to internet, printing, print media and transport to centres with such technology is not readily available to those without resources, thus the unemployment rates of graduates from poorer socio-economic strata are far higher.

While exiting the university with a mix of optimism and nervousness, the act of job seeking for the graduate is often an experience characterised by anxiety leading in turn to avoidant behaviours, withdrawal and or a decreased sense of self confidence if not quickly leading to successful employment (Perrone and Vickers, 2003: 70). If the period of unemployment is extended, these feelings intensify. At such a point, the positive aspects of graduate identity may be questioned by the individual.

Also controversial is the existence of a burgeoning stratum of graduates demoting the value of a degree and increasing the pressure for school leavers to attain degrees in order to qualify for jobs that were previously available to non-graduates (Hurst, 2010: 51). In the latter understanding the status of the degree is downgraded, and no longer a possible tool of class protection and reproduction, despite the evidence that disadvantaged graduates find it more difficult to become employed (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 5). Here engagement in postgraduate study may become a way of ensuring advantage (Jacobs, 2007: 339).

Postgraduate study can be regarded as a tool to become more competitive in the job market, to improve the quality of their marks, and to engage in out of class activities not previously engaged in (Jacobs, 2007: 342). Graduates were found to have an instrumental attitude towards higher education – rather than engaging in higher education for erudite reasons, the end goal would be profitable and prime employment (Hurst, 2010: 53, Kajee and Balfour, 2011: 386). The graduates also regarded university as part of a natural progression on leaving school, realised the need to optimise extramural activities in order to compete on the job market, and realised the value of the institutional reputation or lack thereof (Jacobs, 2007: 338, Hurst, 2010: 55). All such exo, meso, and macrosystems (as described by Bronfenbrenner in section 3.2 in Chapter 3) have an impact on the personal and social development of the graduate. It is clear that the journey of the student through the university to graduation and employment is a complex one – made all the more so by the expectations of and realities of change and transformation as demanded from the subjects of said journey.

The literature explored in this section looks widely at the possible experiences of the South African student and graduate. Much of this literature has been taken from studies done in first world countries as part of the investigation of the field. At present, with some exceptions, there is a paucity of literature pertaining to the qualitative experiences of South African students or graduates.

5 Findings and Discussion

The data has been analysed thematically. Issues that have been raised by different participants, or multiple times by the same participants have been examined. Individual factors that were conveyed as important by the participants were also considered. Many quotes are included in as full a form as possible to preserve the integrity of the respondents' meaning. This has resulted in a lengthy section; however it is felt that the words of the participants hold an intrinsic meaning as well as demonstrate the freshness of the participants' own perspectives. The analysis has been thematically organised into the following areas: belonging, family, romance, friendship, leisure, work, finances, academics and taste.

The diary entries that are used are verbatim: style, spelling, punctuation and language have been left intact. The data has been organised around the principle of the 'student as becoming' (Barnett, 2007), and the subsequent graduate as 'becoming'. Throughout, their identity is developing through new experiences, through demands and through cognitive and emotional demands. Thus there is much reference to Chickering's vectors which are helpful in understanding the experiences communicated, particularly in the student phase of the respondents' experience. However there is no attempt to categorise the students into any of these phases. It is suggested by Chickering that each student moves through such developments at their own pace, perhaps working through multiple vectors concurrently, and revisiting others (Chickering, 1981: 6).

It is also suggested through the following text that the experience of the African student and graduate differs from their first world counterparts on many levels – in terms of identity, experience and the systems they are involved in. The inputs, the characteristics and the outputs of those systems and the relationships between the systems may differ from the international student and graduate (which is why it is useful to refer to Tinto's model, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory and Bourdieu's ideas on cultural reproduction as frameworks allowing investigation into the students' holistic experience). For these reasons the information garnered from the respondents has been organised to attempt to look at

their pre-university entry experiences, their commitments, their involvement in academics and in formal university activities, as well as their informal activities and relationships that they are involved in off campus as students, in addition to their experiences in the working, social and family arenas as graduates.

5.1 Profiles of Participants (2010 and 2014) and Institution attended as Undergraduate Students (2010)

5.1.1 Institution

The University of KwaZulu-Natal, at which the research was conducted, is a multi-campus South African university. Some of the different campuses were previously separate institutions, which in 2004 merged into one. During apartheid these different campuses were reserved for different racial groups which had implications for the levels of resources each separate campus had at their disposal.

The research in question was initiated on the Pietermaritzburg campus which was part of the University of Natal, originally predominantly for white students, thus relatively well resourced and with a better reputation compared to many other institutions catering for other race groups. The different campuses are also in different towns. The Pietermaritzburg campus is located in Pietermaritzburg, a smaller town about an hour's drive from the administrative hub of the institution in Durban. The town is smaller than the other sites of the institution, and has historically been identified as a 'university town'. Many describe the campus as intimate in nature. The Pietermaritzburg campus has traditionally drawn students with a slightly more rural focus, than its fellow campuses, and was the original site for the institution historically. Distinct from the other campuses it houses the School of Agriculture and was an important site of the School of Education.

As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, the university has as one of its goals to contribute to the building of an inclusive and just society, free from the racial stratification of the past – see Chapter 1, section 4; and Chapter 4, sections 1 and 7.2 for a fuller

discussion. In its pursuit of this goal, several alternative routes to access the university exist (for example, the extended curriculum option) for those who may not meet entrance requirements, and there are also various initiatives for academic and psychological support – for example orientation programmes, counselling and academic support officers. The university also interacts with the state in the provision of a financial aid system which provides loans and bursaries for those who qualify but are unable to access funds, see section 4.7.2 in Chapter 4 for more detail. There are various formal extracurricular activities for students (for example sporting, cultural and political clubs and organisations) sanctioned and organised by the university.

Students at the university as a whole have been known to protest through mass action against various perceived injustices. In the past these incidents were dealt with sympathetically by the university administration. However the recent past has shown a possible change – police have become involved, students have been arrested and disciplinary action has been taken. An investigation into whether this is due to increasing control being exerted by the university or increasingly violent and destructive protests are outside of the scope of this study. The Pietermaritzburg campus has, however, been considered less politicised than the other campuses.

5.1.2 Participants

All names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants. Below is a general description of each participant as described by themselves in 2010 and 2014. These details augment the particulars set out in Figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 2, section 2.3.

Eve

Eve in 2010 was a mature exchange student from the United States. At that point she was in her final year of an undergraduate Sociology degree. She has two grown-up sons and small grandchildren. She still has both parents. She is engaged to be married.

At home, while studying for her undergraduate degree, she worked as a night shift security guard to pay for her fees and living expenses. She described money as 'tight' during that period. She reports having had to work hard and save to enable her trip to South Africa. While in South Africa (2010), she lived in residence and was a fulltime student. Subsequent to the data collection she returned to the United States and graduated as scheduled. She is currently (2014/2015) pursuing a master's degree through a distance medium. Unlike her undergraduate degree and the first year of the masters, she is now studying part-time and working full-time and described feeling burnt out and exhausted. "*The masters is going to be a bit of a run. Full time was getting too much for me. A heavy course load. Gone down to taking one class at a time... Hard*" (Eve interview: 27 October 2014).

She currently lives in her own home after sharing for some years. Eve earned a promotion to supervisor at work, and is now working on the day shift.

Lucy

Lucy's family lives in an informal settlement near Durban. She is one of seven siblings, five of whom are HIV positive. Her mother is the single head of the household. The household contains, variously and at different times, her mother, siblings and their children, aunt and cousins – usually about fifteen at any given time. One of Lucy's sisters is a nurse, and another has a full-time administrative job. These two siblings live away from home and occasionally send remittances. None of her family members had previously attended a university.

In 2010, Lucy described money as scarce, and living conditions as harsh. During vacations (as a student) Lucy has worked at various jobs including waitressing and being a farm hand in order to earn money. Lucy lives in residence while on campus. Lucy has no children of her own. At the time of the first part of the study (2010) Lucy was reliant on financial aid. Lucy was unable to graduate as a result of financial exclusions and left the university in 2010 to return two years later and complete the missing modules. In the interim she performed jobs as a supermarket cashier, cleaner and street vendor while living with her sister, and then in the family home: "*2010: I left. I was excluded out of financial aid (not academically). I went*

to my sister. My sister was still in Danton[1] (a small town in another province), she worked at (a bank). I worked there and worked at SPAR[2]. My barrier was language because they only need Sotho and Afrikaans…. I went back to Durban, did some selling: vetkoeks[3] to school kids and stuff. Started a printing business of CVs…. then I came back and finished. In 2012 I was only left with 380[4]" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Subsequently, Lucy was accepted into an honours programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg but could not initially afford to take it up. After accessing funds from NFSAS, she exited with an honours degree at the end of 2013. She now works as a field officer in a development non-governmental organisation and lives in a small rural KwaZulu-Natal village (2014-2015).

Kirsten

Kirsten was a student (2010) from a major city in Zimbabwe. Kirsten's parents are married, and when at home she lives with them and her brother. Kirsten's mother is a nurse and her father is a self-employed businessman. Kirsten's brother enrolled as a university student at an eastern European university in 2011.

Kirsten worked full-time at a local fast food outlet throughout her undergraduate and postgraduate study. Her fees were paid for by her parents and other financial needs met by herself through working. Kirsten stayed in a residence on campus for the duration of her undergraduate degree. In 2010 Kirsten had a steady boyfriend – also Zimbabwean and a graduate student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Although graduating on schedule there was an administrative problem with Kirsten's degree leading to the understanding that she was not yet degree complete. Her description of failure was poignant when she received a letter to say that she was degree incomplete: *"2010: gosh that's like a long time ago. In third year, I finished my third year. And …. I don't know what happened. Suddenly, a module that I was supposed to do… A missing module came. So I was busy running around trying to*

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[1] Danton name changed: A small town in a neighbouring province, predominantly Afrikaans and Sotho speakers
[2] SPAR: a South African chain of supermarkets
[3] Vetkoek: A South African version of a dumpling which translates directly as 'fat cake' from the Afrikaans
[4] A (name changed) final year course for her undergraduate major

find out, trying to do the course, and then, surprisingly I saw the same student Tilly, she was graduating. It was hard. I didn't know that I was supposed to graduate, so I didn't go to the graduation. Then I got a letter that I had graduated. Got over it. Haaai[5]" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

Kirsten's application to register for a teaching diploma was unsuccessful, thus she completed an honours degree instead. This was financed solely through her continuing work at a local takeaway. The work was full-time, as were her studies. Kirsten broke up with her Zimbabwean boyfriend in the interim between the two sets of interviews and is now romantically involved with a local man. She is still working full time at the takeaway, but is no longer studying (2014/2015).

Tilly
A Zimbabwean from a large border town, Tilly stayed in residence on campus for the period of her undergraduate degree. Tilly, when at home, lived with her mother (who is a single parent and ran her own business). Tilly's mother has her `O' levels, but has no tertiary education. Tilly's mother pays for fees and other costs of being at university. Tilly has a brother who is also a university student at another institution and younger siblings. Tilly had a serious boyfriend in her home town, with whom she attended school. Since the time that this data was collected, Tilly has graduated with her undergraduate degree, returned to Zimbabwe, and married her boyfriend. When she returned for her graduation ceremony in April 2011, she had married her fiancé and was expecting their first child. She now has two children and works with her husband in their business (2014).

Patricia
In 2010 Patricia as a student lived off campus in the home of an older woman from her church. She referred to this woman as her "other mother". At the time of the initial interviews, Patricia worked part-time for her church which gave her an income. Patricia's

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[5] Haai: No

parents live in a large town in the Eastern Cape and are both professionals. Patricia's biological mother was a teacher and died during the time between the two interview sets. Patricia has two younger brothers. While Patricia's mother had attended teachers training college, university was new to the family when Patricia first enrolled. Although Patricia was the recipient of financial aid in 2010, she had been forced to take a year off from her studies (2009, the year prior to the initial research) in order to work and save money to pay both her outstanding fees and the required individual contribution. Patricia has since completed her degree and left the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She returned to the Eastern Cape, lived in her family home and completed an honours degree. She then took a job in a large town some distance away, and is now residing near her work (2014/2015).

Temba

Temba was a full-time student (2010) with albinism. He lived in residence for the period of his studies. He is from a small rural and geographically inaccessible village in northern KwaZulu-Natal. He, his twin sister and two other sisters were brought up by his paternal grandmother, and have not had contact with their mother since they were infants. Temba's mother was an urban woman and not regarded by Temba's father or his family as marriageable. The children were all taken from their mother to live in the paternal family at a year old. Temba's father will not reveal their mother's identity. Temba believes that she is dead.

Temba and his twin sister's disability (albinism) is traditionally something of shame. Albinism is a hereditary condition where the individual lacks the necessary pigment to ensure normal colouring of the skin, eyes and hair. People with Albinism may have pale skin, pale hair, and eyes that range from light brown to blue. Albinism may also cause: photophobia and sun sensitivity, nystagmus[6], strabismus[7], low vision or visual impairment (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, 2001). Temba experiences sun sensitivity, strabismus and low vision.

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[6]Nystagmus: involuntary flickering of the eyes

[7] Strabismus: squinting

Temba's family and community in conflict regarding the Albinism – on the one hand there were other albinos in the family, so they were familiar with the problem and on the other they believed it was shameful, and a physical and mental disability: *"(Interviewer: Did you come across any prejudice because of your disability?) A lot of it, ya[8]… at home a lot of it, at home … With everyone… People don't really understand this things. Hey, you know the skin colour thing, it… you can see that even though people have accepted, but they still, they… due to a lack of understanding thing… they still have those stereotypes. Something like you are not normal mentally…(words omitted)….That's what people thinks, so you know in politics – in family politics, when people are busy shouting at each other and stuff like that this thing keeps on popping …(words omitted)… I mean it is the worst thing, was at home. I mean, anyway, outside my home vele[9] there was a stigma but, I mean it started at home, it started at home and you know that it is why I preferred being away from home, because you know until I went to school I honestly thought that being an albino was… you know ukuthi[10] like it had some negative to a mental capacity … and stuff like that. But when I went to school I saw other kids with albinism –because that was my first time seeing other kids – although the only kids that I knew was I and my sister because my sister is also albinism. So when I went to school I saw all the other kids… (Interviewer: Did your sister come to the special school[11]?) Yes she did so, and the teachers they didn't, they sort of, they treat us like the same… you know you will get the same punishment that a non-albinism person will get basically. So that's when I learnt that, you know, I was normal – I was a person like other people, but at home you get something else. … (words omitted)… Sometimes you know, sometimes you get the sense that 'yes I did this wrong' and then I got this punishment – but I think that, that, was little bit over – you know the punishment was too much for the crime I committed – you know? And sometimes you can sort of get that feeling, that, you know what? This person… you can see the way people look at you and you can tell that eish[12]*

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[8]Ya: yes

[9]Vele: anyway

[10]Ukuthi: that

[11]Special school: the participant refers to a school for the visually impaired

[12]Eish: a conversational pause, meaning variously 'er…', 'oh' or an exclamation of surprise or frustration

man, they have that kind of disgust in their eyes when they look at you and stuff like that.

…(words omitted)…You know they are name calling and stuff like that and you go out of

home it was even worse, out of home it was even worse you will have someone shouting

from a distance saying: 'there is a white man', stuff like that. … That is better than, you

know, some of the names… some of the Zulu names they use to refer to people like me,

(Interviewer: tell me?) eh you know there is a name they say: Isishaywa[13], Isishaywa

basically means a person who was cursed. Ya, a person who was cursed" (Temba interview,
15 April 2010).

Temba's father lives with his wife (who is not Temba or his sister's mother) and their children in close proximity to his grandmother's house. However Temba and his sisters have very little contact with their father or their father's wife, and minimal financial support from them. Temba relied on financial aid during his time as an undergraduate student. Temba has since graduated with his undergraduate degree and has completed his masters degree at the same institution, but on a different campus (2013). In 2014 he was engaged in an internship for a local government department. None of Temba's family has previously attended university, however by 2014 Temba's twin sister had registered as a student.

Temba described the relationship of his disability and the student experience as being one that was in conflict. At different times during the research process he described relations with staff and students both as not affected by his disability and as very deeply affected by his disability. He described his ability to approach others as being influenced by the disability – that he is more formal with new acquaintances and new relationships are an effort. He described other students as variously being fascinated by his skin colour (evidenced by his nickname which for reasons of anonymity cannot be disclosed – it is a word referring to something exotic, rare and attractive), curious and disgusted. He also related having a particularly difficult time in his first year at university as a result of others' reactions to his condition (Temba interview, 15 April 2010). He reported that negative stereotyping by

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[13]Isishaywa: a person who is cursed

others tended to be reversed with familiarity. However he seemed disillusioned as he described peers as 'pretending' acceptance and understanding. Despite the suggestion that university life was not as all-accepting as he had hoped, the impression given to the researcher was that the environment was far more accepting than the one at home – thus in a way the university has been a refuge from the negativity of the past.

Temba described having made a special effort to perform at university in order to disprove any stereotyping that his albino condition may engender, and as a result of the negativity he had experienced at home and in his community of origin – "*I made sure that I made it a point to prove people wrong as I assumed that they expected me not to cope*" (Temba email, 9 November 2012). Thus he always submitted assignments on time and was prepared for tests and exams. He described avoiding asking staff directly for help – preferring to sort things out for himself where possible. However he did not believe university staff behaved negatively towards him. He recalled his postgraduate study as easier as he was more able to access individual attention and was familiar with the system and expectations (Temba, interview, 26 November 2014). Temba referred to the university's disability office as ineffectual and generally of little assistance. This suggests a disconnection between the university's stated goal to support those with disabilities and Temba's experience of that support. His strategy within lectures was to sit on the front of the class to ameliorate his sight issues, and occasionally to approach the lecturer for electronic copies of slides.

Temba's experience was interesting in terms of his developing identity – he had been forced through lack of support to be very independent as a student (however information shared since the study ended shows that he is becoming more comfortable in accepting assistance) which is perhaps congruent with becoming more comfortable with interdependence (cf Chickering and Reisser, 1993). His goals were described as being very firmly set, and he seemed single- minded about their achievement. Temba's continued scholarship suggests that he has been successful – this is congruent with Tinto's (1987) contention that individual student commitment is an important component of that success.

Although involved in extracurricular activity and describing multiple and meaningful friendships, Temba seemed more solitary than the other participants during his undergraduate years. It may be (although this is not necessarily the case) that his disability has set him apart from his peers to some extent. As seen in the excerpt above, Temba described realising that he too was a person like everyone else when going to school – such early discrimination could have left a permanent mark. Also interesting in this case is the fact that his 'pre-entry attributes' as set out by Tinto (1987), in terms of family background and ability, were not optimal for success. However his schooling was comparatively helpful, as was his personal commitment. Moreover the systems (cf Bronfenbrenner, 1992) that Temba was embedded in were not congruent in any way. Interestingly Temba described being far more integrated within the university experience at a postgraduate level as discussed in section 5.3.

Lukas

Lukas comes from a small rural village in Limpopo. His home village is far away in terms of distance and the transport required getting there. He is from a traditional African family made up of his father and his father's three wives (one now deceased), and ten siblings. Lukas's mother is the last wife and thus has less status in the family hierarchy. Lukas's father was a migrant labourer in Johannesburg until his retirement. The family worked on a rotation system, where each wife would spend a year with her husband in Johannesburg. During that time the children of that particular wife would be cared for at the traditional home by the other wives. This led to serial neglect as described by Lukas: *"Every year my father will take one of his wife to Joburg[14] and then one will remain, and what will happen is that the children of the other mother will never enjoy staying with the other mother - ya[15] that's the kind of the thing you know… like I mean she takes care of her children only, nothing else and that… I mean, you have to feel it – that 'no my mother is not around' – you couldn't wash, you had to wash yourself… like I mean you been discriminated against."* (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010).

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[14]Joburg: Johannesburg

[15]Ya: yes

During his working career, Lukas's father would return home once a year. He now resides permanently in his family home. As a child (from ten to sixteen years old) Lukas was a herder of the family cattle, which he in retrospect recognises as part of the family's inequitable resource allocation. The cattle belonged to one of his father's other wives, who was far wealthier than the others, and as a result her own children were exempt from such duties, and had more material resources. *"At home we are divided – we are the impoverished ones and the other family at least they are kind of well off. So that is why he has no say when the children of his elder wife maybe do whatever – I mean especially when they do something that requires money – because he knows that she can afford. But my mother cannot afford anything and he cannot afford anything, so that's why he has no problem – ah I don't know if he does not have a problem but I mean he says nothing if his elder wife decided to do something."* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010). For the period of his studentship Lukas lived in residence and depended on financial aid. Although Lukas's parents had an incomplete schooling, Lukas describes his sister as registering at university shortly after himself. She is now working on a PhD. One of his older brothers also graduated through studying while in the defence force. In all six of the thirteen siblings are now engaged in or have some sort of tertiary education.

Since the first interviews in 2010, Lucas has graduated with a master's degree at the same institution. After graduating he returned to his home village for a time, and then took up an internship at a university in a large city in the Eastern Cape (2014). In this position he was working on curriculum development to facilitate the teaching skills of lecturers in higher education. Although the internship has been completed, he continued working at the same place on a contract basis (2015).

5.1.3 General

In 2010 students in the sample were all studying towards a Social Science degree within the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences. At the time of the initial research in 2010, they were all almost degree complete. As pointed to in Tinto's model (1987) the

students' involvement in the university is transitory. While four of the seven students were following a traditional three-year degree path, three were entrants under the 'augmented curriculum' indicating that they were required to complete a special curriculum in their first year of study. This curriculum enables students who may otherwise not have qualified for admission through academic grounds, to enrol. The system intends to benefit those who have been through an inadequate education system (as a result of the lingering effects of apartheid). A degree of this description is designed to take four years. The four South African students were recipients of financial aid indicating that their families were unable to finance their studies, and that they come from the poorer sectors of society.

By the 2014 data collection phase all the participants had graduated with undergraduate degrees. All but one (Tilly) had continued on to postgraduate study and were complete at either an honours or masters level. They had exited student life completely. This was with the exception of Eve, who was still working towards her masters' degree in 2014. Five of the participants indicated their desire to further their studies in the future (interviews 2014).

5.2 Coming to University

The participants described their arrival at university which was experienced with varying degrees of strangeness. Lukas described his initial exposure to university: *"I had a problem with identity because I thought everyone at varsity was better that I am. I thought… so I usually thought like when you have friends like they are doing you a favour to equip you. I mean, I felt so … what is this word? …. 'inferior'… I want this word … ….ya, I felt inferior. Believe me, and the reason is just, because I mean, I came to varsity I couldn't speak Zulu. (Interviewer: What is your home language?) That is Tshitsonga … Well, I used to spend my time alone and they would be chapping[16] in Zulu, and everyone looked glad …. and I was like: 'damn, I'm not going to cope here'. Until some people get closer and closer and closer and I told them like I felt inferior in those time cause I was like, 'these people are too good', and*

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[16] Chapping: chatting

mina[17], I'm just so terrible thinking of the issues of poverty – everyone seems to afford, like, everything – I couldn't afford anything back then. I mean people could visit me, I couldn't even offer them food; I couldn't even cook that's the worst part of it and they could offer you all this fancy food … and it was like I could not even eat … and those are the kind of experiences I had to adapt … not knowing that when people come they want to impress, that's what they do and impressed me. They over impressed me! So I can say, until I thought kuri[18] mina I was so terrible the whole first term, the whole first term I was just nje[19] miserable. But I just realise though I mean sometimes you have to be yourself rather than just wanting to fit in you just have to be yourself and live your life." (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010).

Kirsten had similar feelings about coming to university alone and not being able to communicate in Zulu, as did Tilly. Kirsten narrates her experience of having to make new friends and adjust to being far away from home: *"Now like when I came, I didn't know anyone so I was really scared of, like talking to them. And it was actually worse; because you can't speak the same language with them, they just look at (you) as if you are something else; or you just feel like you are so alone you don't have any friends or, or they just… like when you get into the kitchen it's just a 'hi', hi and that's it. It's quiet… or at times they will talk about you but then you don't know that they are talking about you … so I tend to like feel so, a bit inferior that this… I just don't belong in this country."* (Kirsten interview, 15 April 2010). Eve described the expectation that she spoke isiZulu, and the discovery that she did not, as an alienating factor (Eve interview, 16 March 2010).

Tilly relates initially being frightened of the South African students' rowdy behaviour and their reputation for xenophobia: "*I think at the middle of the night, or three am., people were drunk … there is a guy who used to stay in the block, they got drunk; and they started,*

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[17] Mina: I

[18] Kuri: 'it means'

[19] Nje: conversational pause meaning variously just/ something not important/ you know

whatever, running around the passages – they even come to my room and started knocking. I was so, so scared you know, ukuthi[20], this is the South Africa that people were talking about now (laughs)… People in South Africa are very violent. You know I feel so scared, you know I think I spend that day, night I was just; you know there no cameras on the doors… you can't, you can't open the door, you can't do anything. I was just frozen you know (laughs) and there was this girl whom I used to stay with, she used to stay, whatever, the opposite door to the boy's room…. I was like: 'I wanted to come to your room but I was so scared'" (Tilly interview, 28 March 2010). The context of Tilly's arrival at university was one in which xenophobia as part of the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) had been widely publicised, and shaped Tilly's initial experience of the university.

For both Kirsten and Tilly the logistics of arriving in a strange place with strange people, strange buildings, geography and language have taken precedence in memory. *"The taxi driver asked this other girl, so that she could help me and then I was like 'OK…' (words omitted)… the girl was able to take me there, and then she left me at housing, and then the people at housing helped me, and then I had to carry my bags, they were so heavy (laughs). I was at student housing and then the lady from student housing, she said you suppose to go to (residence) office. So when I was walking down from housing I met these other guys, and then they greeted me with Zulu. And I was like, OK, maybe they are saying 'hi' and then I said 'hi' in English. And then I ask them, and then they are like, 'no don't worry we will just take you there'. So I was lucky enough the guy who took me there was a mentor, and was like oh so, so, he was now talking to me 'so what degree are you going to be doing?' 'ha no don't worry, I will take you to (your residence) I actually know where your room is' and everything, I was going to be staying in (room number) and he helped me carry my bags and I was like: ha finally! (laughs)."* (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). Tilly found the experience less daunting as, despite nervousness and displacement, she describes coincidentally meeting fellow Zimbabwean students upon arrival who showed her the ropes.

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[20] Ukuthi: that

Despite the abovementioned assistance on arrival Kirsten found it difficult and embarrassing to admit her vulnerability *"Then there was that fear of 'OK even if I want to ask who am I going to ask? Everyone is going to know that I don't know what is happening' "* (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). As a result she also used ingenuity to solve initial problems *"I could hear people saying you know 'let's go, let's go to Checkers – lets go and buy some food'. But then because I like, I couldn't speak the same language with them it was so hard for me – and then later on at around six, I heard some other girl saying 'you know what let's go to the shops we need to go and buy food' and then that's when I said 'these guys are going to the shops it would be a very good idea if I follow them and then I will see where they are going to go', so I went. And then honestly they didn't know that I'm following them so that's when, that's when I was able to know where the shops are"* (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010).

Eve found her initial exposure to this university inhospitable – there was no orientation, no advance warning of things (like a lock for the room) that were needed, no map of the campus provided and so on. She also found people difficult to approach. *"Ya (not) even a map of the Res. I mean I had to battle to find where the laundry room was I had to figure out where that was cause I was like 'do you pay for the laundry'? Ya, ya that has gone very worrying. I have to figure everything out on my own"* (Eve interview, 30 March 2010). She seems not to have had the ready assistance described by Kirsten or Tilly.

Lukas and, to a more limited degree, Temba (who had been to boarding school) recounted an adjustment resulting from the transition from deep rural, poverty stricken living to an urban, relatively resourced and fairly public living (Focus group, 10 March 2010). Lucy too described the stark difference between her home environment (one of urban poverty) and the university lifestyle (Focus group, 10 March 2010). Here the idea of public living is being used to describe a situation where the students found themselves within situations of intimacy of others who were not related in terms of family. For example, Lukas described living in one's own room at university as liberating in terms of personal space (at home he was used to living in close proximity with his siblings) but isolating in that he was inhibited in the need to hide his socio-economic position in the intimacy of residence living.

In summary, for Lukas, Eve, Tilly and Kirsten, there was the barrier of language upon arrival – the majority of the students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal are Zulu speakers, making communication difficult. For Lukas, Tilly, Kirsten and Temba sheer distance seemed to be a complicating factor. Tilly added that she was afraid of South Africans, and Eve of crime. Lucy did not describe her orientation experiences. Temba, Lukas and Lucy were very aware of their lack of economic security. All of the students were isolated at their initial exposure to the university – they did not arrive with friends from their previous schools or communities. The participants all communicated powerful feelings of separation and difference regarding their initial exposure to campus life. This isolation then was experienced on multiple axes: the strangeness and a related discomfort of a new environment – on geographic, social, financial, and experiential levels.

One could liken the participants' initial arrival on campus as one of the rites of separation as described by Van Gennep (1960) in that the students broke from their communities of origin (either through distance, language or experience or all of the former) to begin a transition into becoming members of the university community. The intensity of the experiences could be regarded as deep in that they went further than simply a leaving of the familial environment; it was more of a moving into a completely foreign world. These students described in many ways coming face to face with a new culture – one in which the modes of interaction were unavailable to them (as in Bourdieu, 1997). It could be suggested that the participants lacked the relevant cultural capital on their initial arrival to enable a comfortable transition. The rite of passage described by Von Gennep above may have been in part the attempt to amass such capital.

After the initial settling, the participants did not see the campus in an entirely negative light. For example Lukas (2010) later described preferring residence to home as he identified it as having the amenities that home did not (running water, electricity and appliances) as well as privacy, something that he had never experienced until getting to university: *"I mean I think*

res is cool, unlike home and all those areas … because I just find it difficult to have my own room. Because when… how many we were at home? – I don't… but not less than five; not less than five. I mean from my young age, I grew up sleeping with all my brothers, for all these years… and even at home now, I just sleep with my younger brother and when I came here, I have to have my own room… now I'm so used to this res life, now I cannot share a room with anyone at all –I mean I find it hard to share, I can share a room for one week at least because that's the kind of adjustment. I can't, I mean, I never thought of having privacy before … but these days I'm so concerned about privacy – why? Well I don't know it just maybe is the way I'm suppose to live at res" (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010). Eve in contrast found the amenities distressing – they were in her experience dirty, not working or inadequate. Moreover security was poor. Obviously each had very different frames of reference with which to compare the residence experience. Lukas (as described) came from a deep rural area with no amenities, electricity, running water or flush toilets. While Temba too came from such a situation, he did not describe his transition as so dramatic, which could be as a result of his years at boarding school. Eve by comparison, although describing herself as relatively poor, came from a first world, urban situation.

Lukas, Kirsten, Temba and Tilly talked about the adjustment they had to make in doing their own chores, cooking and budgeting. *"It was quite hectic and scary you know when you are in a different place for the first time you going to be staying maybe for about six months, ya you are so far away from home there is no mum there is no dad there is no the people you are used to. It is different from boarding school because we are home, and like maybe you write a letter, they can come and visit you. But then here it is different, you have to grow up, you have to like stop acting like you are still at home. That's the other thing and then everything, you have to do it on your own. You have to balance how you are going to do it."* (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010). This dimension of self-care is difficult for the student and adds an additional responsibility for the student who in a catered residence could be eased into such responsibilities as a function of their 'emerging adulthood'(as described by Arnett, 2011). Here the students were expected to behave in adult ways with regard to the above upon arrival. The external and internal environment described by Tinto (1987) thus impinges quite directly on the student as they encounter shops, commodity prices,

budgeting, funding, communal residence kitchens, sharing and theft. This self-care may also have gender implications as well as the maturity issues described above. Keeping one's room clean and cooking for one's self may be an extra adjustment for males brought up in traditional households. These issues all point to the influence of micro, meso, exo and macrosystems impacting on the individual in this context.

Kirsten, Lukas (interview, 30 March 2010) and Tilly (interview, 17 March 2010) recalled having more confidence in and a better experience of their initial exposure to academic work than the social dimension: "*But then in terms of school work I wasn't really worried because I knew that OK if it is an assignment or if it is a test I'm suppose to read I'm suppose to prepare myself for the test and assignment. I'm suppose to submit. ...*" (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). Literature suggests that those from a lower socio-economic background have more difficulty at university (Fish and Jooste, 2011). However, while Lukas and Temba were both entrants on the augmented curriculum system, they were of good academic standing, were on target time wise for their degree progression by their third year, and were doing comparatively well (self-assessment). Lucy's academic experience over her degree as a whole followed a pattern of academic difficulty.

Lukas remembered his first exposure to computers: *"This first day I went to the LAN, I was like what going to happen? I could not even log in until a certain Indian girl nje….. decided to show me how to log in which I did. And when this, what is this thing? When the computer opens, I was like it shows this university page - web page - I smiled and I say 'hey I am excellent'. I didn't know that I hadn't done anything yet!"* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010). Technological strangeness was described by both of the participants from South African rural backgrounds. This related not only to electronic equipment, but also to general appliances and modes of communication. The magnitude of the adjustment, both cognitive and emotional, is apparent for these participants.

All the participants had to extend themselves, engage in a difficult and frightening transition to become familiar with the university environment. This follows the "life crisis" suggested by Tinto as part of the student experience on entry into university. The students seemed pleased that they had been able to make that transition and seemed to consider themselves incorporated into the university community at the point of the study (during their third academic year). Their movement could be seen as a rite of passage with relatively common experiences (cf Van Gennep, 1960). It would seem that in the long term the difficulty of the experience and the successful survival could have been positive for their self-esteem. However the experience was not necessarily "socially sanctioned" (Van Gennep, 1960) as a rite of passage for either Lukas or Temba whose families and communities were not committed to their university careers.

The student Lukas talked in 2010 about continuing and unresolved difficulty in adjusting to values that were different to those at home: *"I mean there is a way of referring to, like many people … And when you talk to an elder person you use, you speak to that person as if you are speaking to more than one person – that is to show respect, you don't call older people by names – which is difficult for me. When I came to varsity I had to adjust, talking to lecturers and I couldn't find ways – I mean you could call them by names, you call them and say hey Mrs, Dr – they don't like it. I feel terrible – I can't call them by their names … and that's what they like; lecturers that's what they like…. especially let me say highly educated… let me say.*

 Because most teachers they don't, teachers don't like that. Ya, that's why I find it difficult. Even now, it's hard for … I'm still trying, I'm trying by all means not to call people their name especially elder people because it's just not allowed in my culture and they can even beat you up if you, if you can do that. Really, seriously, they don't allow it – at least use titles, titles is much better even say when you call your brother 'hey boetie[21]' you say 'hey boetie', brother their name, hey sister, their name. That's the way to do it. You call them by name they beat you up and I had to change from that … so that's an adjustment – ya even now I'm

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[21]Boetie: brother

still struggling because I go home I get used to do it the way they do it and I come back here and then I have to change again" (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010).

This is an example of the students' (similar examples were described also by Temba, Patricia and Tilly) struggle with regard to developing one's own identity – in the face of one's own inherited cultural values system, and a new value system which demands different behaviours. With reference to Bourdieu (1986), one could diagnose the participants' embodied cultural capital as under siege – this is no longer appropriate and new forms of such capital have to be adopted. For the participants in this case one can see that the process of adoption is a conscious and difficult one.

The need to reconcile these very different systems was a recurring theme described by the participants in their student phase. The students described a need to behave differently in different situations – as for Lukas above and also Lucy, Tilly and Kirsten when comparing home and university life socially. Temba too described the starkly different rituals and behaviours expected in each space when he went home. Both Lukas and Temba related conversations with childhood peers and family in the vein of interrogations as to the value of their studentship. In all, the evidence suggests that while the participants have transitioned (Van Gennep, 1960), begun to behave in the ways that are approved of by the university, and there is less communication with the participants' communities and peers of origin, these original values are not completely foregone. The participants may be straddling multiple (and perhaps incongruent) norms and values. As suggested by Tinto (1987), the participants have described feelings of loneliness and bewilderment as part of their initial experience on campus, and in congruence with Bourdieu's suggestion they are attempting to adapt to and develop new forms of cultural capital (particularly relevant for those beginning their studies from a point of poverty and difference). This refers at both an immediate level and through their involvement in studentship, in the use of education as a vessel of forms of societal cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The experiences for the participants had not necessarily changed at the point of the second set of interviews (2014).

The descriptions of work and current home versus natal home for Patricia, Lucy, Lukas and Temba were still disconnected entities.

5.3 Qualifications

All but one of the participants were variously occupied with studying during the period between the two research sets. The data describes their experiences in getting their qualifications.

Temba evaluated himself as doing well. He moved to a different campus of the same university, gained student employment and bursaries and exited with a master's degree. Lukas remained on the same campus and continued his studies to exit with a master's degree. Both the male participants described their postgraduate time as one of more enjoyment and sociability: *"At Howard, I had lots of fun. And also in a romantic sense. Lots of girlfriends, I can't even remember….two were serious relationships, the rest were one night stands or flings….Lots of partying, lots of drinking…"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). It seems that they both had a good sense of academic expectations and were confident in their ability to fulfil those expectations (Lucy also described a similar experience). They also both had better access to funds as postgraduate students. These in turn led to a fuller social life.

Patricia followed a different route in her engagement with postgraduate study: while intending to stay at the university and in the same town, tragic personal circumstances dictated her return to her home town. *"I moved back. I had planned to work in PMB[22], get married in PMB and stuff. But it didn't happen that way"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). There she registered at the local university and completed her honours. While registering for and starting a master's degree the next year, she was unable to complete as a result of further family trauma. *"I registered for my masters but then I couldn't continue. My mum passed away. Ya. Ya, ya that was a big, big, big blow. I had a horrible, horrible car*

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[22] PMB: Shortened version of Pietermaritzburg

accident. I nearly died; the passengers they died on Thursday. Then the following Sunday my mom passed away. So it was like a whole lot of things packed together. Then I couldn't, not that I couldn't, I thought that no, I couldn't, not that I... I wanted to. I wanted to push through. But I had to prepare for my mom's funeral. There was the funeral I had to put together, I was the oldest daughter, the oldest child, I had to help my dad. I had to drive him and do things. So I put that on hold..." (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Patricia described a postgraduate phase which was characterised by stopping and starting, change and a predominance of familial responsibility over academic, social or financial independence.

Eve, upon graduation at her university in the United States, went on to register for a postgraduate degree which would set her on a professional track. While still working and studying, the studies became more of a part-time distance learning endeavour. Kirsten too continued to work and study through her honours degree. Kirsten found her postgraduate degree a strain academically – she related the expectation of independent research as being traumatic. In the social sense her life was not significantly different to that of her undergraduate life. Working continued to exert a negative pressure on the student role.

After completing their respective degrees the participants found themselves on different paths: *"When I graduated, I just went home. I just went home. I just decided I would go home. I thought I would just see what happens. It is not one thing. First and foremost I thought I did not want to stay at school forever. Second thing, I think I thought …. well I still think, I had found the woman that I want to marry. And I said, I thought it's not healthy to be away all the time… Maybe something will come up. Maybe financially I will get a job, or… I was thinking of applying at the University of X[23], kind of locally if I don't get a job. I could just look for funding.*

One other thing that motivated me. To be no longer studying at UKZN. For me it was no longer healthy to keep studying at one university. First degree, second degree, third degree and so on. That was one thing that motivated me. Another thing, I can't be a professional

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[23] University closest to participant's village of origin

student anymore. I have to kind of… And another thing… The only thing that kept me at university actually, was that I was scared actually. I was scared to go out. I was like scared. The reason I was scared: I had some bad experience. You remember I told you I spent some two years at home, 2005 /6; doing nothing absolutely nothing. It was even dry. Nothing useful. Well Qinga[24] is usually dry and hot, you can't do anything. I mean with your hands or anything. It was just dry. You couldn't even get a job. Cause If I could get a job it would be fine… I was like, aaah that was terrible. I had a boring life, I don't want to lie. That was why I was staying at university. I was scared. I was like I am not going there; I am not going there again. That is why I kept on staying at university. Then I was like, it's not going to help staying here forever… So I went home." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lukas went home as described above, his separation from the home environment as described as an undergraduate seemed to be overladen with a desire to be part of his childhood community again despite the risks involved. Could this be indicative of a continued search for belonging unfulfilled in the 'new' environment? Or could this be indicative of a new level of maturity? The participant shows extensive reflection regarding his own position, and thought processes thereof. Tilly too went home after completing her undergraduate degree. This move she engaged in with positivity, despite sharing doubts regarding such a decision while she was still studying.

Interestingly the participants (with the exceptions of Kirsten and Patricia) described their postgraduate experiences as being more positive than their undergraduate years. This, for Temba, Lukas and Eve, was described as resulting from an easing of financial worry – and for Eve, the transition to part-time study. Lucy, Lukas and Temba also related feeling more at ease with the academic and social demands of university life. In these cases the participants could be describing a sense of security from being familiar with environments of the university as well as the community therein. It could be that they had the feeling that they were more part of such groups (as described by Bronfenbrenner) and had created social situations and communities of practice in which their student life was supported to a better extent. The participants were also older and more independent as postgraduates, with more

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[24] Qinga: fictitious name of town nearest to village of origin

settled identities (see Chickering and Reisser, 1993) that are better suited to academic life. The uptake of cultural capital (as described by Bourdieu, 1986) considered appropriate to the university environment may also have been more fully complete by this point.

5.4 Belonging

In this section the sense of belonging or lack thereof as described by the participants is investigated**.**

5.4.1 Belonging (2010)

In his first visit home after three years as a student, Temba (2010) described his return to his community as one of separation: he recognised that he had changed and that those around him seem to have remained the same, with the same interests and preoccupations. They also didn't understand his life as a student. *"While in the taxi[25] to home, one of the things that I encounter apart from discomfort is the feeling of loneliness. It is very hard to converse with these people. Not because they don't want to, but because of the nature of differences of mentalities. Me and them, it is like we are from two very different worlds. I find that my thinking that is deeply influenced by academia and city life, clashes with traditional mentalities."* (Temba diary, 27 March 2010). Temba described being discriminated against and separate from his community and family while growing up. His relative recognition at university, the independence it engendered and lengthy break from associations of origin could have brought about his separation from those systems more strongly, and highlighted a seemingly increasing disassociation in his relationships with his family and community of origin. This sense prevailed and was described again in 2014 (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

"Deeply uneducated these people were struggling to get to the idea of being a university student… They asked me a lot about university and listened to my explanation attentively, though without understanding. I make these visits to most relatives throughout the week. Their responses are almost the same. But the common question from them is whether I have

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[25] Taxi: in this context a taxi is a minibus used to transport multiple passengers along fairly set routes

identified a marriageable woman then the common disappointment to my lack of interest thereof. They think it's time but I have other dreams. (Temba diary, 28 March 2010). There are clearly different ways of understanding the world operating for Temba, his family and community. This has led to different priorities and ways of evaluating successes. While there is an attempt at interest from both parties the discussions centre on issues which are out of the context of either experience. The modes of communication have also become different: Temba described repetitiveness characterising the discussions and conversations of relatives that he refers to as an irritation. Lukas also related a similar difference in communication style. For Temba's community of origin, marriage seemed to be regarded as a signifier of adulthood and the associated status. However for Temba this was no longer the case. Interestingly, the other male participant (Lukas) referred to having been married (the relationship had ended before he became a student) while living in his traditional community.

"There was a ceremony at home during this day. Two goats were slaughtered to be feasted on Saturday. I was again exposed as I struggled with removing the goat meat from skin. Some people jokingly said: What do I learn at the university if I can't do that." (Temba diary, 2 April 2010). Here the separation between rural and urban, traditional and modern, western and African, is stark and is again indicative of the difficulty the participant has negotiating separate worlds. Lucy experienced similar separations – while her family were geographically close, their understanding of and respect for of her student life was limited. Examples of such were described by Lucy in 2010, and retrospectively again related in 2014. The separation between Lucy the student and then the graduate and her community increased during the duration of the study. By 2014 she referred to her family and community as "them" and described them as unable to "wait for what they want" as she had as a student (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). As discussed in the literature review (section 4.4), the impermeability of such boundaries and the lack of congruence between the systems make studentship even more challenging for these participants.

In summary, it would seem that support from Temba's, Lukas's and Lucy's family and community for his student project had not been forthcoming. Thus there had been no creation of a positive press towards success as a student. Temba also referred to his childhood friends in 2010 agreeing that university was a waste of time. Interestingly, in light of Temba's irritation with the old ways (also conveyed during the interview of 25 October 2014), he was preoccupied with traditional beliefs, ancestry and his role in those systems (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

Kirsten described the family home and community as a place of holiday and relaxation, rather than as home. This perception seems to have concretised by 2014, when she was searching for work and an adult life far from home. Tilly in 2010 described her mother and boyfriend as being unable to share in or understand her time as a student. While the separation between community and family of the past and present was not as stark as with the three South African participants it is indicated.

Whilst Kirsten shared photographs of a family gathering, the other participants did not provide family as significant images in their photographic representations. Whilst it may have been that some did not see their family during the research period, there may be a deeper meaning in the choice (or lack of) subject matter. This and the narrative descriptions could show a distance that has opened up between the student and their family and community (2010). This seems to be at all levels: experiential, emotional, academic and expectational. Different participants described these feeling with varying levels of intensity, and differently at different times during their student life. Some of the statements made by the participants could be indicative of a sense of arrogance – where the status of variously: student, graduate, soon to be employed person, urban dweller with better prospects has perhaps engendered a sense of superiority. The participants could be engaging in a dominant discourse which favours those who are resourced, educated and westernised. At the same time the position could be indicative of an eschewal of the identity of poverty and inadequacy with which some of the participants grew up. The narratives could also be indicative of a stage in identity development where participants lack the maturity to be able

to communicate or appreciate people with different world views. The accounts (with the exception of those related by Eve) tended to describe a break for the then student between their past and present. This could be part of the student and family break which forms part of the young person becoming adult. It could also link to Barnett's (2007: 68) concept of the student becoming dislocated from themselves in the process of becoming. For example, Temba described new ways of operating and of thinking, which were starkly different to the way that he once was, and different from those with whom he spent his childhood. Temba's emerging identity clashed with the traditional temperaments that he grew up with.

The lack of equivalence between the community, family and university systems – individual characteristics, micro, meso, exo and macrosystems – as theorised by Bronfenbrenner (1992) and indicative of possible cultural mismatch as explored Stephens et al. (2012)inhabited by the participants, could have contributed to a sense of alienation and could add to any difficulties the participants may have experienced academically. However, all the participants were successful in that they graduated and some studied further, despite the incongruence and lack of positive pressure described above.

5.4.2 Belonging (2014)

By the second data collection phase in 2014 the former students described their relationships with 'home' as follows. Tilly and Eve had both returned to their home communities of origin. Eve, while no longer part of the same community as before her trip to South Africa, retained good and enduring relationships with her family and partner. She lives a life similar to that she described previously. Eve currently lives in her own home in a small town about twenty minutes' drive from her place of work (2014, 2015). She lives with her fiancé.

Tilly (since 2011) lives in the town of her childhood, in her own home with her husband and children. Thus she has created independent living of the nuclear arrangement, entrenched in the community in which she grew up. She described no sense of separation or difference.

On the contrary, university life (which she left four years ago) was described as a memory rather than ongoing experience (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014).

Kirsten had separated from the community in which she grew up in a more permanent way. *"And then usually I go home to Zimbabwe once a year. I go home and I breathe. I get to rest"* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Going 'home' as a visitor creates a different relationship with the community and family. Kirsten regarded herself as being held as exempt from onerous responsibilities and supervision by her family. Her preference is to continue to live in South Africa and work in the Pietermaritzburg area – this is both for reasons of independence and economics. Kirsten (2014, 2015) rents a small room in central Pietermaritzburg town. This is simple accommodation with shared kitchen facilities and ablutions. Kirsten described her relationships with her childhood friends as pleasant but faintly stressful in that they are living very different lives – many are engaged in domestic tasks of marriage, housekeeping and childrearing. She reported being comfortable living in her own space, and managing her own time and interactions (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Kirsten's living arrangements, while private, are basic and utilitarian. Kirsten reported two significant friendships, her boyfriend and work as being important structuring factors in her life in 2014.

Patricia is at present (2015) living in a city some distance from the town in which she grew up. While enjoying returning 'home' and being with family, she has no desire to live within the family. She described her feeling of connection but feelings of distrust of the motives of members of those groupings disrupted the joy in that connection with family and her community of origin. Patricia described having felt exploited on financial and practical levels. She also lived some distance from her boyfriend (who does not live in her home town either). She had not found a new church community in which she feels comfortable, and did not describe much enthusiasm about becoming involved in such a group. This may be due to her feeling of transience in her living arrangements – she was neither happy in her work, nor with being so far away from her boyfriend, nor fully comfortable with the physical dimension of her relationship with her boyfriend. Patricia referred to her living space – a

rented garden flat, with delight. In describing her relocation: *"I am on my own. One of the things I was looking forward to when coming to (city of work). I was tired of being daddy's little girl. Living at home; it is a whole other thing. Like having curfews and stuff. Ya, I am renting a garden cottage. It is residential. Everyone has got their own garden round here. I love this place – except for the traffic. Hai[26]! ... It is a middle class white suburb. I stay in a suburb (laughs). Nice, tranquil … I love it. I love it. It is my hideaway. Not a sound outside. No one is blasting their radio. I hardly see pedestrians. On Saturday I hear birds. My aunt was staying here and she was like: 'What is that?' 'Oh, they are birds!' Ha[27]! Birds, she didn't know!"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Patricia was living in (formerly exclusively white and privileged) suburbia, very different from the environment experienced by her family.

Things were different for Lucy. *"I live in an old roman mission. A little place. I need a bigger place, since I am a farmer. I enjoy my livestock. Where I stay now, it is hard for my sheeps to go around. It is still my dream, but it is hard to get there"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). The cottage she referred to is close to her workplace, and is a settlement made up of other aid workers. She describes a sense of autonomy living alone, that she had never experienced before. Lucy also described enjoying the company of the diverse people sharing the mission (interview, 26 October 2014). Lucy has exchanged the urban informal settlement for a rural, multicultural and transient community (the foreign aid workers sharing the mission are not long-term residents).

Lucy told of not having anything in common with the people living in the informal settlement near to her family home. "*I don't see those I grew up with. There is no one from the community that I am close to. It is like they were from a different place…I don't understand how those girls think. They have hair and earrings, they are blond… They talk*

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[26] Hai: no
[27] Ha: sound of exclamation

about how life is so awesome, how can they say that life is so awesome, when their kids are not being fed? They are like… Ghetto!" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

She related having different goals, habits and views on life. She had these same opinions regarding many of her family members: *"My family want instant gratification, but I can wait"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). She now lived close to her work, some hours away from the place in which she grew up. She was attempting to create a sense of home through the planting of a garden and the cultivation of friendships. Describing herself as versatile, she had not entrenched herself in a particular setting.

Temba had separated himself almost entirely from his childhood community. He had no contact with individuals from the village, was estranged from his grandmother, and had little contact with siblings and father. "*There is a disconnect between the people of the village and me"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

Temba was living with an uncle (brother of his father) and family in a local Pietermaritzburg township during 2014. He had no room of his own and slept on a couch in the dining room. However he described the arrangement as convenient and "*I have a sense of belonging there"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). By the beginning of 2015 Temba had moved out and was renting his own living space. This move was prompted by the troubles of his family rather than a need for independent space. Here Temba's move into independence is unlike that described by Chickering, in that he described a comfort and contentment in living with his uncle and aunt. The idea of the emerging adult as described by Arnett, too had unfolded differently in this case; the independence demonstrated throughout Temba's narrative with regard to decision making and finances, was put on hold to go back into a family situation. Here he seemed to be renegotiating his identity with regard to his roots – which has been described fairly negatively when talking about childhood community, father and grandmother.

Temba referred to himself as fairly serious and solitary within the Pietermaritzburg community in which he lives: he has no significant friends or social interests. He has had and has several romantic interests. He described enjoying work, enjoying reading and researching topics of interest.

Lukas, after graduating, decided to return to the small village of his childhood. This was despite the feelings of difference and isolation from that community that he had described in the 2010 interviews. Lukas described very coherently his desire to live in the community in which he came from *"What I was thinking if I could get a job in Limpopo I can move anywhere in Limpopo... Or if I get a job, I could move depending on the nature of the job. But the plan was Limpopo. And it was Qinga[28] my town and Movoto[29] my village, that was my first option"* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Part of this need seemed to be in response to a love interest, part in response to the need to break ties with the habit of student life at one institution, and part to return to the place of his history. It seemed as though he had a strong ambition to integrate and reconcile the parts of identity, experience and capital that he has amassed. Thus after completing his master's degree, he returned, despite misgivings about employment or the lack thereof. *"You see, my life, my life is a local life nje. It's no longer as it was before. That part is… well you see it's hard to be the same. My conversations are local. But my aim is not only to be local, but also to introduce my friends to some things"* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Also of note is Lukas's reminiscing of the feelings of isolation he himself had before he became a student, when spending time with peers who had become students: "*They would even be talking about some cars that I had never seen for that matter, or clothes. Because the shops are just not there in Giyani, even if the shops are there no one has money to buy*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). He also related how no one would allow him to touch their computers or phones, and described feeling foolish and as a failure as a result. This dimension of separation seemed to have

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[28] Qinga: Fictional town name
[29] Mvoto: Fictional village name

heightened Lukas's own awareness upon graduation of his role in friendships in the face of subsequent unequal access to resources on his own graduation.

After some months, he subsequently moved across the country in response to an internship, later work contract. However he retained close contact with boyhood friends and those from home. Lukas now lived (2014, 2015) in a residence facility belonging to the institution of his internship. His present living quarters were transitory – a dormitory room in a township[30]. This he described as unsafe. His concerns about his living arrangements seemed to be primarily based on security and lack of familiarity. This was again different to that of his home community and that of his student years: urban, fast moving and without the shared norms to which he was accustomed. While maintaining contact with old friends and family as described, he was very aware of communicating on a level acceptable to peers as in his words he was concerned about becoming "irrelevant" (Lukas interview, 14 October 2014). He had also been allocated a piece of land in his village of origin, and was currently fencing and farming it – from afar (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

None of the participants described identifying as ex University of KwaZulu-Natal students. While Patricia and Lucy referred to being in contact with her university friends, Lukas described as difficult to retain relationships made during student years, as did Kirsten, Tilly and Eve. Thus a culture of the alumni was not relevant for these participants.

Moreover, the identity of graduate was of contrasting importance – for Lukas, Temba and Patricia it seemed have resonance in their career and economic aspirations. For Lukas, Temba, Patricia and Lucy, the reality of being a graduate had definite ramifications for the experience of belonging in community, in family and in romance. 'Graduateness' was not seen positively in all these examples: for Kirsten, who was underemployed as a waitress there was extreme personal pressure to use the qualification for which she had studied. In congruence with the literature, the disappointment of not finding appropriate employment

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[30] Township: In South Africa 'township' denotes a previously mandatory urban, black African settlement

(see Chapter 4.8.1) has led to alienation, depression and anxiety. Likewise, Patricia and to some extent Lucy, believed themselves to be ostracised by colleagues as a result of the skills from their studies.

Through the above experiences, the use of education as a 'capital' (as described by Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990 – see Chapter 3) in the search of social and economic advancement was varied. Lukas, Lucy and Patricia seemed to have been able to translate education into an exploration of other classes. However Lukas's workplace was in an academic setting, and his living space was not of the upper classes. Lucy worked and lived in the development sector where social broadmindedness was regarded as an essential component at the level of leadership. Likewise, Patricia too found advancement by management, economic wherewithal – living in a 'suburb' and eating foods associated with status. However both women found themselves under severe criticism amongst their professional contemporaries for being too open minded, thinking too critically, and being too vocal.

The participants variously described belonging in the present: when speaking about belonging, we are referring to the emotional perception of the sum of relationships the individual has with significant others and the community around them in general, as well as the feelings of attachment they describe to the spatial artefacts characteristic of the spaces in which they find themselves. Lukas (although in the process of setting roots where already rooted), Temba, Patricia, Kirsten and Lucy seemed to be transient – even at times alienated-in the spaces (social and geographic) that they inhabit. Tilly and Eve described a more enduring sense of home and belonging.

5.5 Family Relationships

5.5.1 Family Relationships (2010)
Family relationships were described in different ways by the participants in 2010. All the participants initially (in 2010) described a sense of distance from their families. Geographically, six of the seven family homes were significantly far away from the site of

the university in terms of travel time and expense. Eve, only at the university for six months, had no expectation of seeing her family during this time. Tilly and Kirsten from Zimbabwe made trips home annually as students (2010). Temba had not returned home for the three years of his degree, and made the first visit during the initial study (2010) which is indicative of his alienation from his community of origin. As a student, Lukas had not returned home *"for a long time, I don't know when"* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010), moreover was unable to return home over the Easter holidays which formed part of the study. Patricia described herself as returning home biannually, in June and December, but it emerged later that she had not been home in the eighteen months prior to the initial research (2010), and did not return until after graduation (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

Lucy went home constantly as a student – home was accessible (less than an hour's travel time away), however she reported that none of her family understood or respected her role as a student. This created an emotional distance, as did the strain of the expectation of financial and practical support by her family. *"In 2010, there was no one. I had to look after them. Rushing there always. I failed three modules like that and no one cared, actually, at home"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). During the interview period in 2010 Lucy's mother was gravely ill and the relationship was mentioned as the cause for many of Lucy's responsibilities.

The reasons for the above were described by five as distance and expense related. Lukas, Temba and Patricia also pointed to family problems as being reasons to stay away. As students, the participants (except Temba and Lukas) described themselves as being in regular contact with at least one of their parents (data collected 2010). For Lukas, while this contact was not regular, it was sustained. Both Tilly and Kirsten described regular telephonic (verbal and SMS) contact with their mothers (2010). This seemed to be weekly or less, and on special occasions. Kirsten's mother initiated contact when she had not heard from her daughter in some time. Kirsten and Tilly were the only participants who described being emotionally supported by their mothers as students. It seemed as though the traditional aged student participants had all experienced a break of some sort from their parents. For

Tilly and Kirsten this break was both in terms of geographic distance and experience (both refer to their parents as not understanding their student way of life or experience, but there was parental interest and the students did try to share some of their situations).

For Lukas and Temba in 2010 the break between family and self was also described as both geographic and experiential – perhaps more the latter than the former –coming from situations of deprivation and isolation from the university made the break between community, family and their present experience even more stark. Lucy's break from her family was neither geographic nor emotional, but was experiential. While two of her sisters were in paying jobs and one of those sisters had a post-secondary education (nursing), none of the rest of the family had been to university or had any experience of higher education or of the amenities offered within that setting. Here the participants' experience at the level of the microsystem (cf Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998) was not necessarily supportive of their position in the university system.

Lukas described contact with his mother in 2010 as less regular, sometimes through SMS, via other family members. His mother was not referred to as initiating contact.

Temba (2010) spoke of having no contact with his grandmother (primary caregiver) or sisters. As a child however: *"We (Temba and grandmother) had a very strong intact bond as a small child, so I didn't think things that were happening were a bad thing… I didn't hear anything, so I didn't know it was bad… thing. One day, I was standing with a bunch of guys… they called her 'ibhunu'[31]; an Afrikaner name . Then I first knew of the negative thoughts: it is a name given out of hatred, fear and spite."* (Temba, interview, 25 October 2014).

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[31] Ibhunu: Zulu from 'boer', an Afrikaans and Dutch word meaning farmer, but which to black South Africans has come to refer to (usually white) oppressors, in this context refers to someone who exploits or oppresses generally, and does not belong in the community,

Both male participants had in 2010, recently been contacted by their fathers, much to their surprise. They described having had very little communication with their fathers in their lives up till then, and reported the conversations as strained, and they were both uncertain as to the motive for the contact. *"I had to be surprised because… I mean that hierarchy relations that we have, like with especially with our father at home; all of us is just that like, eh you are never close to him you don't talk much to him you only greet, nothing else. I mean, so I mean how can you communicate with that person on the phone, when the caller say hey how are you, I'm fine that will be it and you have to thank him. I mean I never until that day in my life receive like a phone call from him."* (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010). Both described their relationships with their fathers as distant. While Temba's father lived close by, they were not in contact for most of his life. *"Yes we do speak, but … the thing is when my father decided that he was choosing his side, eh… we were not really speaking. No, basically he was not speaking to us .Ya,[32] you will find that there were instance where I would … where I or my sisters encounter him, we would look away you know stuff: like hiding so I just learnt to accept that, that is how things were, so when he started to call me because he started to call me, like last year he got my number and he called, I was not really interested."* (Temba interview, 15 April 2010). These contacts were however important enough to discuss repeatedly. It may be that despite the rejection of the emotional value of the contact, both participants were supported by the relative and unexpected recognition. Moreover, although not suggested by the participants, and despite the description of family being non-comprehending of university (Temba and Lukas) and its associated prospects (Temba), it may be that their fathers were beginning to recognise the value of educated sons who may be able to support the family financially one day.

Lukas's father, as a migrant labourer, was also largely absent during his childhood. Moreover both described their fathers as being traditional and authoritarian. *"Ya, is like even now… if he can just come in, I don't what to say … I mean that's the kind of the relationship we had. So this kind, but it's normal, it's normal, I mean you grew up in that kind of family where you have to be scared of your parents. You know like when he comes, even if*

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[32]Ya: yes

like, when you misbehave… they will say I will call your father, and I knew that I will be beaten … I mean that kind of life but for some reason we are used to it." (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010).

Patricia and her mother communicated often (2010); however that communication seemed difficult for Patricia at that time. Patricia's mother required support, emotionally and practically, from Patricia, which was not easy. In fact both Patricia and Tilly were uncomfortable when hearing of their mother's problems as students (for Tilly's mother it was financial, for Patricia's mother it was financial, marital and health related). In 2010, they both described these as being problematic as they diverted their attention from their focus of studying, created stress and uncertainty. It could be suggested that the students both vacillated from wanting independence to wanting to remain in the role of child – being cared for by the parent, rather than the supporter of the parent. Both seemed unable to deal with their parents' problems at that time, particularly as they impacted on themselves.

Patricia had the complicating factor of a close relationship with the woman she was staying with (her "second mother") – more than once this relationship was described as both a difficulty and a gift. Here pressure was created due to the expectations of certain behaviours and chores that were expected within someone's home, as opposed to the anonymity and self-sufficiency of residence. *"Ya I mean it's not nice if you stay with the person in the house, which you come – let's say I come in at 17h00 and I am exhausted and I do want to sleep and I tell myself I'm gonna sleep maybe have supper I'm gonna sleep till maybe 12h00 or something do a bit of school work … and then what about her? It's been… it's quite hectic… I understand Res is ideal for a student, I must say, cause Res, you only have yourself to think about and you can leave your room to be dirty as you (want) it to be for the rest of the week, and decide you gonna clean on Saturday morning. But when you stay with someone … and it's not a commune, it's a home. There are things that come with being in a home. I guess it means you are daughter, you are daughter; student and you are a campus leader."* (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010). Here role strain is evident. The relationship eventually became strained in that the expectations of Patricia's friend were perceived by

Patricia as an expectation that she reject her real mother in favour of the friend. "*The relationship … it got a bit sour, near the end of my, my third year in Pietermaritzburg. Ah well (friend), she was like, she assumed a motherly role in my life, uuuum, which I am eternally grateful for. I mean I attribute some of the characteristics that I have today to her. Uuum... And in that space, I was, not that I was going through some things with my mum, but I was trying to deal with emotions from home and …. It happened, that uuum I mean, it just got… But (friend), there was a point that I felt that she didn't want to allow me to grow out of that mentality of I was helpless, I am young, I need people. Like… And then when I discovered that you know I have a voice, I have an opinion and I can actually stand up and say whatever I want to. I think on my side, I became too assertive too quickly. Which was a bit of a problem for someone who was used to timid and young and naïve and not knowing where she was going with her future. Once I got that breakthrough… I did have a mother, and she (friend) got to a point… whew. Ok, she didn't have children of her own, and she kind of like adopted me as her daughter. Which was good. But I think that she expected too much in terms of my relationship with my own mother. I got the sense, the feeling, that she had thought, and she did once say it, that ok, I was her daughter. Aaah, I don't know how to put it… that that relationship that I had with my mum, that my relationship with her would supersede that*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Here both a defence of family and a transition to adulthood is evident, in that the role of Patricia's mother, despite imperfections was protected. This echoes Chickering's (1993) suggestion that young adults become able to accept the frailty of others within relationships, which no longer become defined by the rigid descriptors of good and bad. Unfortunately in the time between 2010 and 2014 Patricia lost both her mother and grandmother. Patricia described herself as not getting along well with her father in 2010, due to her father's abusive behaviour towards her mother (Patricia interview, 24 May 2010)

Dealing with someone else's moods and needs was also described as stressful and a diversion of Patricia's purpose as a student (2010). Also the control of her own mood and stress were reported as difficult. These experiences can be likened to Chickering's identity development (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 83) where in the second vector, the student grows adept at 'Managing Emotions'. At that time Patricia struggled with her negative

emotions; however she recognised them and was attempting to process with and deal with them.

Lucy (in 2010) described family relationships as centred on trauma, illness and survival. These sentiments were repeated in 2014. In 2010 she reported a strong feeling of responsibility towards her family: financial, practical and emotional, at the expense of her studies and role as a student. As a result she failed the year. There is a portrayal of role reversal (in terms of the conventionally understood roles of parent and child, supporter and supported) in Lucy's narrative: Lucy in 2010 clearly feels a responsibility to contribute to her family's survival. She also conveyed exasperation with familial dependence on her. Their reported lack of savvy and their inaction with respect to their health also created strain and more responsibility for her. This is not congruent with the student role as described in the literature – of one of dependence moving towards independence to interdependence (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 115). Here dependency is reportedly on Lucy. This may be a function of the experience of poverty, where family members mature young, and survival strategies are multiple. Lukas, too, mentioned a similar feeling of responsibility towards ensuring that the children of his parental household were able to eat. It could also be indicative of the insights and knowledge that those with first-hand experience of poverty, resources and education have access to regarding health issues.

Eve maintained regular electronic contact with her children and fiancé during her sojourn as an international student in South Africa in 2010. Much of this communication was described in terms of trying to stay abreast of what was happening at home, and providing emotional support from afar. While she believed her children could manage without her, she was concerned when there were prolonged absences of contact. While mature, and not experiencing the same issues of identity development as the other students, Eve too experienced a break at multiple levels from her familiars, both geographically and experientially. Moreover during her time away she expressed frustration at being unable to fulfil her other roles (fiancé, mother, grandmother and daughter) as she would normally do.

Here her student role was clearly prioritised by her choice to travel in a student exchange; she did however yearn for her other roles.

Relationships with siblings were described as variable in 2010. Lucy, for example, seemed to have a fairly close relationship with one of her sisters and was pleased to be supported by her, for example: *"On Saturday my sister came and surprised me with a laptop, I didn't know I had a laptop and she surprised me with a laptop after like after that long weekend of stress I was so surprised. She just made the day of my life. It was just a pack; it was a laptop, printer, bag and ink you know… I also said why? I was not expecting something like this!"* (Lucy interview, 30 March 2010). In 2014, Lucy described seeing herself in partnership with that same sister in the attempts to keep the family as a whole afloat, and as completely estranged from another sister.

Kirsten and Tilly did not mention contact with their siblings in 2010. Patricia had contact with her younger brother, but could not have him to stay as it clashed with her student commitments. Lukas had ongoing contact with his siblings, particularly the ones with whom he shared a mother.

Lukas described a gift of cash given to him by his sister on the occasion of her first pay check (Lukas diary, 11 May 2010). One of his brothers (from another mother) contacted him during the course of the first research phase trying to organise a family get-together between all the siblings to iron out differences. Temba described getting along with two of his three his sisters from the same mother, the exception being his twin sister – he had not had contact with her for some years (2010). In 2010 he attempted to visit her in Durban, but she was reluctant to communicate with him.

In all these cases family care of a sort existed during the student stage (2010), but was limited through distance, poverty or family dynamics. There seemed to be a move away from family towards other mechanisms of support – for example friends (all), university staff

(Patricia, Lukas, Lucy) and other adults (Lucy, Temba). Face-to-face interactions at the level of the microsystem (cf Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998) had enabled the participants to garner support. The participants could be seen here as having agency and interacting with their environment to their own benefit.

Temba's father and grandmother have reportedly not participated financially or emotionally in his education since primary school. This was explained as more than a problem of poverty and lack of interest, but was also related to Temba's disability. Moreover, both Lukas and Temba described their mother/ grandmother as not wholly understanding or supporting their university education. Temba's father was reported as not seeming to be aware that his son was a student, which if true would negate the observation above suggesting that Temba was to be primed as an economic family resource. Lukas's father advised against further study, suggesting that it was of no value. He suggested that Lukas rather find a manual job like his own. "*What happen this thing what is it poverty identity. Ya. When you say, like you want to do something which like costs money they will never support you, they will just criticise you; 'hey you can't do this and that';' you can find this kind of a job and you can make money'. How can I do a job that cannot give me like even a thousand rand a month? But I was advised to do so, by my father.*" (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010). This was interesting in the context of research on occupational inheritance (as discussed in the literature review). In this case Lukas had rejected that inheritance in favour of an education as the salvation to poverty and disenfranchisement (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 1000). Perhaps following Weidman a lack of closeness assisted Lukas to reject his father's advice (1984: 154). An early development of independence could also possibly have contributed here.

Lukas's mother was also described as being unsophisticated in the ways of the wider world, and was not in any position to advise her son on his university education. While four of the students' parents (Lukas, Temba, Lucy and Tilly) had no tertiary education, two of them (Lukas, Lucy) had siblings who were also/ had been (by 2010) university students. These

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siblings provided them with information on various things, for example, the existence of tertiary institutions, what to expect at university and how to apply.

Although not a graduate (exiting the formal education system with her `O' levels), Tilly's mother seemed more sophisticated than Lucy and Lukas's mothers or Temba's grandmother. However Tilly's mother was described as reluctant to allow her daughter to continue with postgraduate study, considering her duty as done at graduation. Although Kirsten's mother had a post-secondary education, Kirsten was the first member of the family to attend university. However the family were supportive and curious about her life: *"Ya – being the first one to come to university when I like, so like when I go back, I have to explain everything how I do things. How some other students do them… how am I doing it – me as an individual; because both my parents, they never got the opportunity to go to university so they would want to know from me how I do my things. So they even ask me like the first time when I went home they were asking me: 'So how do you like, cook? How do other people cook when you are there?' and 'Do you guys have a fridge?' and I was like explaining that 'No it's like where I stay we have rooms and then there is a kitchen and then there is a stove, microwave and then a fridge' and they were like 'Ha! So don't people steal?' and I was like 'Ha! People do steal. It is one of those things which happens' and they were like 'Ha! No but they are not suppose to do that'. So I explained everything so like: 'How are you holding up you going to work and being at school' and I was like, when it's time for exam I really don't concentrate on work honestly; I give my everything to school because I know why I am here and everything … and well it's fine because since they are not abled, they are really want to know how I'm doing, how I'm holding up, if I have any new friends and how you getting along being in a different country and everything."* (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). Here it would seem that despite the strangeness of their daughter's experience, there was a curiosity and concern for her welfare, and recognition by Kirsten of her family's attempts at support despite their distance and unfamiliarity. As described by Kirsten, her family was very proud of her academic achievements: *"In 2013 my parents were here for my graduation. Mmmmmmm and then um 2013 ya they were so happy to be here. So happy that I have got a degree and everything, and my dad was so happy that I have graduated and proud."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

While Patricia's mother had a degree, she was not reported as being supportive of her daughter's studies or life away from home, practically, emotionally or financially (2010). Lucy reported supporting her mother through various illnesses and crises, but never described being supported by her mother as a student in any way (2010, 2014).

Patricia narrated mixed feelings regarding her independence – she was proud of herself, knew no support would be forthcoming, but desperately wanted support, particularly from her parents (for example, a laptop and car, assistance with fees, emotional encouragement and approval). Temba, too, described the lack of support as distressing: *"… if you finish your exam, someone had to ask you how did you do; even though they are going to give much of an advice … Ya. You know you sort of, even if they are not going to advice you in terms of your studies but I mean to show that they have an interest in your studies. No one asks me anything at home even though I speak to them they don't really ask me anything about my studies. Ya, it's something like that… it's like you are on your own. Basically you're on your own – if you decide not to study, if you decide to drop out, and then you can decide that no one is going to say ukuthi,[33] 'No you need to finish your degree' and stuff like that so, ya, it is tough but I just figured that there are people who have much bigger problems than mine so I just don't pay much attention to the kind of problems that I have because I don't want to spend a lot of my life complaining about what I don't have"* (Temba interview, 15 April 2010). This is perhaps an indication of a natural desire for support and affirmation from others, particularly one's parents.

As students (2010) all the participants (except Temba) described using technology as an aid in keeping in touch with family. However the use of this technology could be a limiting as well as enabling factor, due to poverty and lack of resources, for example, not being able to speak to one another telephonically due to expense. Tilly, for example, considered using SMSs less to cut down on her expenses. Lukas described his mother as usually without a cell

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[33]Ukuthi: that

phone, and relied on others to get messages to her. None of the students referred to letter writing or using traditional post as a mechanism of family communication. This could be due to a reliance on technology, family illiteracy, or the inadequacies of the postal system. By 2014 the participants referred to a more effective use of technology: it was more familiar and accessible financially both for them and family members. Communications with the older generation were restricted to WhatsApp messages and cell phone calls. Communication via Facebook and email was also reported for keeping in touch with siblings. Lucy was the only participant who had used Skype before the interviews of 2014. Lukas, who was interviewed on Skype, had not used it before, but felt that it was something he would use on a social level in the future. Eve, Tilly, Kirsten, Patricia and Temba had not considered using Skype to keep in contact with far flung family and friends.

The phenomenon of 'helicopter parents' as discussed in the literature review (Comoletti, 2012) had certainly not affected the six traditional aged students in the study. In fact four of the students (Lucy, Patricia, Temba and Lukas) received little or no emotional, practical or financial support from their parents. For Patricia and Lucy the opposite occurred: they were supportive *of* their mothers. Lukas was assisted in his initial transport fee to get to his first year registration (R400) by his mother, at a recognised enormous cost to herself. He reported being in the main financially self-sufficient ever since.

In summary it would seem that the participants had varying degrees of parental and family support and insight for and into their roles as students. This had both psychological and financial implications. There was no trusted adult with an obligation to provide support, to ask for advice, ask how they were doing or to provide encouragement. However there seemed to be a certain acceptance by the students that this was the case. While Temba and Patricia recognised that others were praised by their parents for their achievements and mourned that lack for themselves, Lucy and Lukas did not seem to think that their situation was unusual. Indeed for Temba, Lucy and Lukas whose families were surviving in poverty, it did not seem realistic for parental energy to be focussed on their children's experiences at university. Moreover, since only Patricia and Kirsten came from families whose parents had

some experience of higher education, the others' parents (particularly Lucy, Lukas and Temba) were perhaps unable to even imagine life within the parameters of higher education, or felt inferior to the task of supporting their children. Temba explained that his family and community equated being a student with having a job. The experiences of first generation students as described in the literature review would seem to be congruent with the participants in this study: Temba, Lukas, Lucy and Patricia were all first generation students from a lower economic position. Moreover they came from a racial group that in South Africa has historically been denied access to higher education. The student participants thus had very little support in the university environment. The participants' initial exposure to university (as explored elsewhere) was difficult and without recourse to family backing. Moreover (as discussed later) the participants had to negotiate separate worlds without the familial or community support or understanding. The incongruent systems experienced by the students would have possible negative ramifications for their performance as suggested by Tinto's model.

It could also be said that the participants experienced some sense of mismatch (cf Stephens et al., 2012) at the level of the macrosystem (cf Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998) between the cultures of home and university (as, for example, described by Lukas in terms of his difficulty with the expected manners of the two settings). However at the same time the participants seem to have created their own communities within the institution which catered for the possible communal imperative of people with traditional backgrounds when applied to learning as described by Stephens (2012). The university, while espousing a commitment to African scholarship, could also be regarded as still modelled on the western ideas of intellectualism, which as pointed out are often individually based, as are the general westernised notions of success. Unfortunately the climate of the institution in this sense can only be speculated upon as an in-depth analysis is outside the scope of this investigation. Were this the case the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) of the participants contained clashing 'social blueprints'.

5.5.2 Family Relationships (2014)

In 2014 Eve reported maintaining her own home, and position as partner, mother and daughter with less anxiety. In 2014, Lucy and her mother's relationship had developed: "… *Talk to my mum on the phone every day. She calls me in the morning and I call her in the afternoon. So every time I have to have airtime. If I don't, I am in trouble (laughs)…… I think we have been through a huge phase. It's quite different. It's like a new thing. I never used to talk to my mum like we talk now. My mum never used to talk like we do now. She treats me like an adult. There is that part that she treats me like a child. But then she treats me like an adult. It is a huge thing for a black mum to treat you like an adult. It's very huge for us. I think after when she got sick…"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

By 2014, Tilly was living in close proximity to her mother and contact was described as frequent. Tilly referred to her mother's support to herself as a new mother (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014). Kirsten, while still living far away from her parents, described being in regular contact with the family. However: "*I love my family so much but we are distant*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Patricia described her current relationship with her father as more positive than previously: "*In 2010 I had a lot of trouble with my dad. But since my mom got sick, we had to really work together. And right now, that's the place that we are at. Even though I lost my mom, I gained a dad. And the knowledge of knowing that I have a dad. Not just a father. Somebody who I know I can call. Not that it is like those on TV. No. It is not like that. Not all rosy. But he is my dad … He is a traditional African male. I am not a traditional African girl. I don't like to jump, say 'how high'. That is one of the things he is having to accept about me… And there is lots I am learning to live with, with him*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). A difference in expectation and approach to life and role was also evident here, but as with above the participant described a conscious attempt to understand the position of the other, and work with that difference. There was also a maturity inherent in the reflection of the relative positions of the actors in the narrative by the participant. The above could also be seen as an example the relationship between structure and agency (Giddens 1984: 16), as the participant attempts to forge her own patterns of interaction in a structured world.

Lukas and his father remain detached: *"For those years we didn't have much to talk about. For example if I were to call my father now, the longest we could talk would be like 60 seconds. But I do call my mother. My father he does not call, because he is old and he can't operate a phone and stuff like that, he is usually out in the fields"* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). For Lukas and his mother contact in 2014 had become more regular. *"These days we (mum) talk more often. Usually we do talk more often. I think they understand that I am growing. I don't know. Because now when we talk, we talk, about things, she even tells me issues, serious issues that are happening at home and stuff like that. Ya there are things to talk about."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). He had also become a resource of advice and practical help to his mother: "*I am starting to feel like every time I go home, I tell you, I sit there the first day, I don't go anywhere, I sit down, and she will be telling me everything. Everything. Everything. And other stuff. Ok, ok, somehow even if there are problems that I need to sort. Even if she wants money. I… I think how I can solve them… I will somehow contribute. And ok if I can give them some money for groceries or what, I do. I also do that"* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). By 2014 Lukas referred to being in more regular contact with all his siblings. One of his primary concerns during the interview of 31 October 2014 was that those siblings without any tertiary qualification register for studies in a bid to encourage their independence and lessen their future dependence on the working siblings.

Temba described (interview, 25 October 2014) still having very little contact with the family of his childhood, but enjoyed staying with his uncle and aunt in Pietermaritzburg as it gave him a sense of place. As in 2010, Temba's father again made contact with him in September 2014 after three years of no contact at all. His family had also recently contacted him to be part of a cleansing ritual: *"Got a call from my other sister. She stays with the step mother. They have decided to cleanse the homestead of witchcraft, and protect it. We must all go, but they haven't told father about this thing. I don't go. I can't do it, as this is not right…"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). He also reported not having had contact with his twin sister since 2011, despite her living in the same town at present. He explains their estrangement thus: *"My sister was always trailing. I walked first, talked first, they always compared (us). Even if twins are always individuals. They do. My sister passed, but was overshadowed by my marks. It crushed her confidence, and now she is bitter. There is this*

African idea that one twin takes more brain. One takes more looks and…eh…" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). By 2014 Temba had also distanced himself from his grandmother to the point that they no longer communicated at all: *"My grandmother is a witch, so I no longer live with her. The one that deals with darkness, bewitching people to die and stuff like that… I started visiting less, and then as her reputation grew, I felt I had to distance myself from her…"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). In the interview in 2014 Temba suggested he would like a family of his own, but rejected the format of the one he grew up in: *"I would like a family that is not like that one. But it must work. I don't want to relax"* (25 October 2014). Interestingly enough this family seems to be regarded as an entity separate to that being created with his unborn child.

By 2014, Patricia described being under more pressure to contribute to the family financially, but regarded herself as able to resist when necessary, and seemed to have changed her perception of obligation to her natal family from the negative to the positive: *"I do have commitments. I don't like it to be forced upon me. Uuuuuum, I am a person that… I don't know. My dad forces it a bit. And that is sometimes a clash. Because I… He can't manipulate me as he would like to. Ya, but now it has moved beyond the obligation, to something that I want to do. Something that will bring me satisfaction… Not like I have to stop my life for the obligation. It is not like that …"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Part of the rewriting of the narrative seemed to be due to Patricia's own financial health and her father's need of assistance giving her bargaining power, as well as her determination to secure security for herself and the siblings from the same mother, in the face of perceived threat from siblings from different mothers. This indicated an ability to separate from the parent and think logically about the demands being made. She ascribed some of the duties of support as culturally bound: *"Those obligations we can't run away from them. Especially if you are a black child, or whatever. But I am like no! I need to buy my own house. But society prescribes, especially when you are a black child…"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Thus while Patricia understood a duty of support as a cultural pattern with associated pressures, she had also begun to negotiate within those expectations, with reference to different cultural norms – those of independence and individual right of determination. However as a result of her resources and family lack, she described a wariness regarding the

nature of family connections: *"With extended family I am trying to find my feel. You know …
now I work. People are more inclined to be… you know. Family, when you work, have a car
and stuff (laughs). So those are the things I am having to keep a eye on. Like, who wants to
be in my life for me and not what they can get. I love family. But I don't what to be taken for
a ride."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

By 2014 Temba too reported having a decreased sense of responsibility for his family: *"I
don't send money to my grandmother or my father. They (siblings) all have many (babies)
now… at intervals they do request, but I don't now…"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).
Kirsten too had reconceptualised obligation: *"Now I know that I am not supposed to do that
to anyone (*provide support*). I am only supposed to do that to myself. Because now I know
that when I want something, I am able to do that for myself because I am working and…. this
is the kind of money that I am making. It's not a lot, but it's enough. Enough for clothes and
rent and… Ya it's enough for me… And I am not supposed to sacrifice for someone else"*
(Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). However it transpired during the interview that she
did in actual fact contribute financially to her boyfriend's family which she explained thus:
"It's complicated". It may be that she, like Patricia, found joy through sharing and regarded
herself as being in a more powerful position to choose her contributions – the timing,
amount and reason, or it may be that she was unaware of the oblique mechanisms of
benefaction in which she was engaged.

As mentioned, when she was a student Lucy was very involved in the survival of her family.
By 2014 Lucy seemed to have reconceptualised her relationship with and responsibilities to
her family: *"I miss them, but it's good to be away from home. Support is always there from
them to me and me to them… but I can breathe. I can now do things that I want"* (Lucy
interview, 26 October 2014). Lucy communicated a sense of supported autonomy and
separation from her family. During the last interview Lucy indicated that she had changed
the way that she saw her responsibilities to her family. She seemed to have gained some
independence, as well as the ability to refuse to compromise her own standing. She no
longer supported the family home in situations where she did not have the resources. She

also reported visiting home less often as a mechanism of self-protection (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Lucy seems to have consciously tried to disconnect from the family. Apart from the financial independence which here is expressed as the ability to refuse to sponsor the family rather than in the western sense of independence (referring to the ability to take care of oneself), she described evaluating the family's needs before becoming involved. She found that her assessment of those crises and needs was not always congruent with those of the family, and was even able to practise refusal.

At the same time, Lucy described herself as "*Still helping family out. You can't run away from that can you? I have run away from a lot, but can't run away from my family and a mother. They are still the same old people who complain about everything but will never fix anything.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Within the conversation she was very clear that some of the requests for support by her family were manipulative "*I don't think it is a cultural thing. If you say it is culture, you are putting it in a very nice way and it is not.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

While Lucy referred to an obligation to provide support, she did not regard this as culturally entrenched, rather a result of a deficit in the will of the family. She too had become discerning about the ways in which she granted practical support. This development was described as follows: "*Work saved me. What I learned at work changed me; I took it to home and tried it. I have trained myself also to say that I care, but that if I do this it does not mean that I care, it means that I am killing you. I am only obligated to support them if I see it. That I see they need it. Not what they want me to support them with. But that I am not having to buy everything they want. And If I can't I don't. I can't go and take a loan. Once I even had to take a loan to buy groceries for them, and it sucked. I don't want to do that again.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Evidenced through Lucy's conversation was autonomy from her family and an ability to assess their needs to a standard different to her own. She clearly identified relationships of dependence and responsibility, as separate to love and reported having the confidence to communicate these ideas.

The separation between self and family became even clearer when Lucy told of the irritation she experienced when faced with family apathy: *"We have tried our best, to actually educate these people. Me and my sister. Ya… we have been really trying our best … What really got me irritated is that we come home and there are all these things we must fix in the house. And they are just sitting. They have got hands you know to actually fix them. But they are just sitting… So we asked the two that are working the one is 21, the one is 20 that they must pay rent, or buy grocery or add into something. So they are paying rent. But I still want them to move out. I don't want anyone there anymore."* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). She referred to relatives as 'these people' denying any commonality. Moreover she described a need for permanent space: "*I also want a place of my own, so I can't always be looking after 30 year old babies and stuff"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). From having begun by describing support as being mutual, the conversation evolved to describe a different picture. The supportive members remained Lucy's mother and sister, but the rest were not supportive. In fact Lucy described the extended family living in her childhood home as passive, and regarded herself as having contributed to the sense of lethargy through an ingrained and mutual expectation that she (and her sister) would contribute to household survival. The separation from previously dearly felt obligation contributed to Lucy's increasing sense of independence and self-reference. She had also begun to vocalise her feelings of hurt at the family's lack of interest in her (Lucy's) student project and early work life as an endeavour separate from creating the availability of labour (Lucy's caregiving) and income (Lucy's grant and other income generating activities).

Lukas described being involved in systems of support as a student, which seemed more tempered than the experience of Lucy above: *"I was sending money to my sister. Because I knew at home they couldn't send anything. If I was stranded, the highest they could send me was R 100. I even remember I asked my brother for R 200 and he hang up the phone. He was like 'no'. Hang up the phone! I was like 'oh, ok'. I did sometimes send, but I knew the consequences, I would be broke, but I had to do it. I mean you know you won't die. You know you won't die. You know. I knew I wouldn't die you know."* (Lukas interview, 31 October

2014). In 2014 he described visits home thus: "*I think they hide their money away when I arrive, so that I can spend. I think they do that… 'that guy, ok he is coming, let's not buy anything'. So I feel Like an African. 'He is coming' (laughs). They survive when I am not there, but then… I have to feel that I have a role to play in the home. I am glad to feel I have a role to play. Even if sometimes when I get home, I am broke. I am broke. I still go there. I do some justice.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Lukas described a sense of pride and humour in his position as a contributory family member, rather than a feeling of exploitation. He seemed to be able to fulfil the role of supporter describing it as part of an African identity.

Kirsten communicated a conflicting narrative with regard to support and obligation. While her parents were not the recipients of her financial input, her present boyfriend's family is. "*I have no obligations to anyone now. Now I know that I am not obliged, supposed to do that to anyone. I am only supposed to do that to myself. I think that that has also boosted my self-esteem. Cause now I know that I go to work and this is the kind of money that I am making. It's not a lot, but it's enough. Enough for clothes and rent and… Ya it's enough for me… And I am not supposed to sacrifice for someone else.*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

Tilly described a sense of concurrent autonomy from her childhood family (brought about by marriage, home and motherhood) and reliance on her mother as a staple supporter of a new role and new pressures. She was not contributing financially to her natal family at the time of the 2014 interview.

The participants, since leaving the university environment they shared in 2010, seem to have created different sorts of relationships with their families. Lukas had re-established ties and, it would seem, was reconciling his identity as a graduate and budding academic (he dreamed of being a professor at a university) with that of the adult rural African man. Temba had minimal contact with his family and community of birth, and avoided becoming

involved in family affairs. He had however in the interim established strong ties with his paternal uncle and aunt. Patricia has become protector to her younger brothers, and of her own resources, at the same time as negotiating what she regards as her duties as a black African daughter in the light of her own needs. Lucy had found herself in a similar position in that she had developed an adult relationship with her mother, but had also created boundaries between her own needs and those of her family. Tilly and Eve had both established their own nuclear style homes and Kirsten remained separated from her natal family through distance. Thus all the participants (with the exception of Eve, who had already attained adulthood), were moving into an adult phase of their lives, and were increasingly recognised as adults by their families.

5.6 Romantic Relationships

5.6.1 Romance (2010)

The student Lukas described himself as having an 'on again, off again' relationship with a female student, and from interviews and diary entries he reported constantly looking for other conquests. This he described as *"my job"* (Lukas diary, 20 April 2010). For example: *"To my surprise I was blessed with a woman. She had come to visit me and she took my loneliness away. She's not my woman though, but she's the one I sent a message to on Tuesday. I enjoyed sitting and talking to her, holding her in my arms, letting her sleep on my lap(s), brushing her tits, and wooooow – it's getting too far now, CURTAIN CLOSED. She left in the evening and I took her out. I then took a walk around Pelham until it was late. When I came back I went to the university tennis, basketball, and volley ball courts. I had a certain girl to see from (residence X). I told her I'd see her late coz I had to take a shower and cook. I went to (my residence), cooked, took a shower, finished up cleaning the room and went to (residence X). … I found that one of the girls I know was not feeling well. I had to take some time in her room, trying to be a friend, which I really, I am not. I have no woman of my own in (residence X) – just some classmates and some girls I know. I went back to (my residence) with hugs and fake kisses from 'girlfriend(s)' – just for fun"* (Lukas diary, 1 April 2010). Moreover, Lukas was eager to show the researcher pictures of his multiple relationships in the photographs taken as part of the research process. Lukas could be attempting to prove

his masculinity through the communication here – certainly the behaviour itself was congruent with prevailing masculinities.

Lukas described romance as a distraction to studying. Throughout the research period he spoke of grappling with the need to focus on his studies at the expense of relationships or potential relationships. For example: *"I was occupied I mean last term and I'm sure, ukuthi[34] like, I spent much of my time with her so I couldn't do much of the studying that's why I did not perform well. You know I didn't do well last term so that's what I'm trying to do trying to catch up like when we open that tests I want to make sure that I pass them…"* (Lukas interview, 30 March 2010).

Temba in 2010 described himself as being in a relationship that was not defined as such. "*I don't know whether we are friends or she is my girlfriend … You know how people operate hey?… because you know I met her this year and we sort of became close and we started talking dating and she said she was not ready for dating … OK fair enough … And she said apart from that, we are friends… she doesn't think, she told me that we are friends. I didn't even know that we are friends at the time … because I had other intentions … She just play the friendship thing (laughs). So I said no it's fine, fine by me … it's OK. But anyway, as I was still entertaining the 'we are friends' story she decided, she decided … I mean she decided that… I don't know why … for some reason … she decided to spend the night with me. So I don't know because like now she kind of still thinks that we are friends, but things that we do don't suggest that we are friends… so I don't know. Pretty convenient; she says we are friends… Ya. I don't know, so I don't know – and I don't want to ask her, because if I ask her… because I'm sure if I do ask her, what is happening between us, she will say we are friends*. (Interviewer: Friends with perks?) *Ya (laugh). Some people … I don't know why… I still don't understand, but maybe she does not want to obligate herself.*" (Temba interview, 15 April 2010). When probed, he felt that the lack of commitment above did not have any relationship to his albinism; on the contrary, albinism in his experience had sometimes been beneficial at the level of romantic relationships, as he described girls as being curious about the whiteness of his skin, and attracted to that whiteness. Moreover he reported that the

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[34]Ukuthi: that

girl in question was not embarrassed to be seen in public with him in intimate situations. However it could be that he was more tentative in his perusal of a definition for the relationship as a romantic connection due to his albinism, and history of social and family rejection, as well as his point in development.

The discussions on the above subject indicated that Temba was, however, willing to explore the undefined nature of the relationship in a positive light. He was also able, despite his own preference for formality in the matter, to accept his partner's preference for a more fluid relationship. This could be indicative of an increasing maturity (in that things are not necessarily right or wrong/ yes or no; but can rest somewhere in between) and a willingness to experiment with his masculinity in allowing his partner space to define the parameter of the interaction.

In 2014 Temba retrospectively described his romantic life as having improved during his postgraduate years. *"At (another University of KwaZulu-Natal campus) I had lots of fun in a romantic sense… Lots of girlfriends, I can't even remember… two were serious relationships, the rest were one night stands or flings… Lots of partying, lots of drinking…"*(Temba interview, 25 October 2014). This he attributed to having more money, relaxation due to increased financial security and academic confidence: *"There is lots of prestige from being academically smart. You get ladies running after you."* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

Tilly described her even long distance boyfriend as a diversion: *"You know there was this instance, ukuthi even my boyfriend calls me I would say this is not the right time… call me later and he was actually begging: 'Tilly please talk to me'; and I was saying ukuthi I'm trying to think! Here I was (in the) LAN around 01h00 (am). I'm saying I'm trying to think here. Yes I'm trying to think here. You know how you feel ukuthi, you are trying to think about a point and something just came up. And I'm saying I'm trying to think. There is gonna be time for you … this is not the right time … it has been so hectic."* (Tilly interview, 14 May 2010).

Tilly's relationship had progressed to the point where they were considering marriage: *"My boyfriend wants to marry, he wants to pay the lobola[35] things this year and then we arrange for wedding next year … and I am just afraid to tell such kind of thing to my mom … I don't know how I'm going to cross over that bridge. It's really difficult to me … I don't know … I don't know, I just don't know, I don't know, I don't want to know. Ya, and for the guy I think he is just giving me too much pressure about the issue: 'Tilly this is high time we are suppose to do something; we suppose to get married'… and the like. You know I am sick and tired … and the thing is my boyfriend … you know what we have said as policy of our relationship, it was no sex before marriage, and he is actually saying that he can't wait no more if … thus if we fail to marry this year that's the end of it."* (Tilly interview, 28 March 2010). Her concern about her mother's reaction continued throughout the research period in 2010 *"We are still planning, we are still planning. We haven't come to whatever, to a real decision: let's do this and this … but we are still planning, the only person I am afraid of is my mother. My mother she is a hard person. A hard nail to crack"* (Tilly interview, 14 May 2010). This last statement indicated a residual reliance on her mother's good opinion of her actions and the need for her mother's support. She was not completely independent from maternal ties despite the aforesaid 'break' from her home. She also showed a vulnerability to the pressure exerted by her boyfriend. Here a sense of vulnerability and dependence remain, despite Tilly's geographical distance from her mother and boyfriend, and her sense of agency (as per Giddens' 1984 construct of agency) with regard to academics. The possibility that Tilly was using her studentship and her mother's opinion to delay the cultural and masculine expectation of capitulation was interesting. She seemed to feel in conflict between pleasing her boyfriend and meeting her own priorities. After graduation Tilly married the boyfriend upon her return to Zimbabwe. She has since had two children. She described contentment in her role as mother, along with the domestic concerns of running a home, caring for infants and finances (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014).

Kirsten showed that it is not always easy having a boyfriend locally: *"I feel so bored … some things are just falling apart and all my boyfriend has his brother and things are just not well.*

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[35]Lobola: bride price

It's getting on my nerves how could this happen honestly ... it's like I have to support them all the time, and who will take care of me? And the assumption that I always have money. It's just boring, I'm planning my (particular module) and I just want to make sure I do it well unlike last time. It was hell and I couldn't believe it. I got zero for plagiarism ... well it was a learning curve but this time I have to make sure I pass and the test have been good and I actually understand more now, how things change. My boyfriend is here watching TV with his brother and they say I shouldn't be studying coz I'm off, and we should spend time together. Oh finally. They are cooking today, at least! Coz I wasn't going to do it. No ways, I'm hooked to my books at the moment. It takes an hour but anywhere they will be done any moment then we can eat and the day is over, what more can I ask for? I have had a long day and I want to sleep but I have a reading to do. So I have to do it ... with me school comes first, my work first ... two priorities. Time to sleep but as you know a relationship it takes two. So time for quality time with my man just to enjoy the moments we have together."
(Kirsten diary, 30 March 2010).

Kirsten described her long term boyfriend of 2010 variously as supportive of her academic commitments (Kirsten interviews, 30 March 2010, 15 April 2010), demanding of attention (ibid.) and needy of financial support (Kirsten diary, 30 March 2010). She described herself as being firm about her primary purpose (studying): *"… so he gives me the time that indeed if it's my work if I'm going to study for my test I tell him I have a test coming up … he is a student he was doing his postgrad diploma in marketing last year, so he hasn't quite finish. He is just left with his dissertation… So it goes both ways, because usually guys, I think they have a tendency of, like, being pushed with their friend, that you know what? We are suppose to go and see him; we are supposed to this with them; we are supposed to do that. So I usually stand my ground and I say to him: 'you know what? You should take it or leave it, because you are doing a postgrad, I'm still doing my undergrad. At least you have something, I don't have anything at the moment so I can't play, I can't waste the time that I have.'"* (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010). It was interesting that Kirsten seemed mature enough to protect her own goals through not giving in to her boyfriend's demands. This, in an environment where gender roles are potentially patriarchal, revealed an interesting negotiation of respective role.

Kirsten and the above boyfriend had broken up by the end of 2010. Her story showed an expectation of her support which finally culminated in separation: *"Let me say... in 2010, well that's just another chapter in my life. We broke up. I broke up with him. During my third year, I was staying in res, so he decides that he wants his brother to come this side, so his brother can look for work...I was like 'ok, I hear what you are saying, but you can't tell your brother to come when you yourself, don't have a place'... I was like then... He was like, he will ask for his brother to stay with friends... haaai[36]"* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Eventually both brothers illegally stayed in Kirsten's residence room, depending on her for food and expenses. *"I was like, I can't do it now. I was beginning to really find this a strain. I am also supposed to be looking after myself."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

The situation escalated when her boyfriend went into an expensive business venture with their friends, despite her objections, and was unable to carry the deal through resulting in the loss of everyone's money. This was humiliating to Kirsten, and continued the pattern of dependence on her resources, compromising her in terms of residence. It also followed a series of similar incidences related in 2010, albeit the narrative was at that point cast in a more sympathetic light. *"I decided that this was enough. I can't do it anymore. You are taking advantage. You are taking my money, and I am not seeing any advantage. It's like I take you in... The next thing is you always coming back to me... and you are going money, money..."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). As discussed elsewhere Kirsten had initially described the relationship as a supportive one. In a retrospective sense one might identify the ending of the relationship as a point of developing maturity.

Both Tilly and Kirsten seemed to be experiencing difficulty with gendered expectations in a changing world and disparate environment. Kirsten described what could be a typical conflict between having her boyfriend's support and his expectation that she was there for him. Added to her difficulties was the fact that she found herself supporting him financially

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[36] Haai: no

during the study period. Of interest is the vacillation between descriptors of support which almost fulfil the idea of how a partner should behave and frustration at the real situation.

Patricia did not have and had never had a boyfriend at the time of the initial study (2010). She expressed conflict over this – she believed herself to be both ready for a relationship and not able to manage its pressures in terms of time, commitment pressures of physical intimacy. "*But I'm so ready (laughs) … it – OK maybe next semester, maybe end of the year, cause I have so many pressures how can I handle a boyfriend now?"… "Ya I'm growing as a women, I am … but of that growth, how can I use in my own setting… With… Am I a good girl? Cause….. eh but Lord can I do it when I'm outside there and just rely on the holy spirit to keep me from doing xyz type of a thing? So that's where sometimes… I like 'OK I'm not ready'… I'm just saying it. So you got fitted rooms in your mind about what would be correct behaviour with a boyfriend … you know what you would like. I mean can I really practise what I've been taught?"* (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010). It would seem that Patricia was debating with herself the validity of both experiences for herself at this point, with reflective insight.

Lucy was not involved in a long-term relationship at the time of the research in 2010, however she had had a boyfriend the year before, and saw someone for a short time during the research period: "*I'm not in a relationship right now actually I was in a relationship last year and it ended up and it ended and then I was devastated… and ya, I had issues and I said I don't want a relationship right now I just wanted to chill… and then out of the blue – I just wanted to relax no relationships nothing… and out of the blue this guy comes along and we just carry along few weeks ago… ya, a few weeks ago and he keeps on coming back, asking me out and I always tell him: 'no I don't want anything'. I'm not sure if he is playing games but I don't want any longer relationships. I just wanna have fun with perfect friends … I do wanna get married. … Ya it's a wonderful dream if only it can happen… (Interviewer: You have your future ahead of you)… I can't wait to get married."* (Lucy interview, 30 March 2010). Lucy portrayed varied feelings on the matter – an idealised dream of getting married, idealised situation of perfect friends and fun.

Eve, engaged to be married to a man in the United States, described missing her partner during her visit in 2010, and keeping in contact with him via SMS and email. They sent pictures to each other to keep one another abreast of goings on, as well as to keep the romance alive. Eve reported sending pictures of her bedroom, favourite flowers, cute cats she saw and so on. She talks about her partner sending her pictures of gatherings, 'the girl' (his daughter), the garden he was planting for her return. She became concerned if she did not hear from him, and at times felt that he was uncommunicative due to his worry about her. She repeatedly referred to his strength and silence as attractive qualities. Strength and silence as characteristics of the ideal male could be useful descriptors for Eve in preserving certain gendered understandings. She seemed to use these characteristics in her partner as a support despite having made a journey far from home in a very independent manner.

In 2014 she reflected that the trip had been risky in that the relationship referred to above had been very new. They were still together in 2014, but not yet married: *"I have been married twice before. Both were abusive relationships. So … I'm a bit gun shy. I don't really want to get married again. Marriage sort of changes things."* (Eve interview, 27 October 2014). She described work as presently (2014) getting in the way of their seeing one another, as she worked a day shift and her fiancé a night shift.

5.6.2 Romance (2014)

The participants all described being engaged in serious relationships by the time of the data collection in 2014. However the way in which those relationships were structured differed. *"As African males we have a certain mindset to long term relationships, we still look for other fishes in the sea. And those who are married still roam around. Even those who are western educated. Especially those ones. It is unacceptable but accepted and tolerated."* (Themba interview, 25 October 2014).

Like Temba, Lukas had not rejected multiple sexual relationships; however he found that his own age and economic situation had become a problem in the negotiation of these: "*I tried to associate myself with women and stuff like that; I tried, believe me I did! But I realised that the women they come to you and say they say: nnnnno no, no, no, no, let's go to this club … they want to go to clubs. Which I did, I did once. (But) Just to realise, that you know what, I can't be wasting my money here. Not like this … So I decided to run away.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). He also described being unwilling to engage in all the expected behaviours due to his age and commitments

Lukas was engaged to be married to a woman from the city nearest his home village (2014). She was a student at a local college. "*Did I tell you I am 28 this year? Ya I am 28 this year. And you know, it makes sense that I get married this year. To me it makes sense. Because I mean you know you grow older, and you do need someone around… You actually do need… So…*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). However, an obstacle to the marriage was the need for money to pay lobola[37]. This was described as a significant amount, requiring a better job. Moreover Lukas felt that he required a certain financial standard to marry in comfort and create a stable home. This cannot be attained on a year to year contract. The suggestion that marriage has to be accompanied by a flat or house where both parties live permanently, a car and a stable income is perhaps an indication of a need to ensure stability after poverty, or to engage in an ideal representation of nuclear family, as presented as preferable within western cultures.

Lukas described his partner as being very different from himself: "*For example I am critical of the church. Of many things in the church. I even criticise the church. She is a believer. A hard-core believer. Even those things that don't make sense. She won't ask. I will go to church. But everything the pastor asks us to do, they are illogical so I won't do it… End of discussion, no games, no compromise… But I am trying; because if I do too much, I will be irrelevant soon (long pause). I think we are different … but I am getting there. I try. For*

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[37] Lobola: bride price

example I want to share some stuff around Marx and money and the church … for example. So I can't talk about Marx, but I can share in practical examples. Even yesterday, I was talking to her about these things. For example, humans using God to rip people of their money, then she understands if I put it like that… But if I talk about aaaah – George Simmels' 'Philosophy of Money' … ya, ya. She won't understand you know. So I try to be careful." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lukas described his age (28) as being a time when one needs a life partner. However the formality of marriage was problematic due to traditional cultural expectations: "*So I wanted to get married. But as I said, I can't until I get paid some money. You can't get married legally and formally … Because they charge, they charge a lot now. They won't charge you less than R30 000. They won't. Well they won't. I know. It is difficult. The parents they will charge you.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). While Lukas himself described rejecting such practices, he feared that to do so in practice would lead to his fiancé leaving him and or the loss of parental and familial support of the marriage "*the reality is that even the woman you love will hate you if you don't pay lobola*" Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). In 2014 Lukas and his fiancé were conducting a long-term relationship.

By 2014 Temba also described being involved in a serious relationship with the mother of his unborn child. However he was planning on breaking off the relationship as he was not happy: "*But I want to be part of the child. I want to be visible. I will try to keep the relationship (with girlfriend) afloat, at least until the baby is old.*" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). He had also become involved with a new girlfriend, but doubted that the relationship was going to be meaningful: "*I have met another lady. But she has two kids so our relationship won't be long. It is our mind-set that you don't settle with a woman who has babies… Especially when you are young. You have a good time, but you don't settle.*" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). In this conversation Temba identified himself easily with the prevailing masculinity of what he identified as traditional African values. The confidence in this identity could reflect a maturity in the positioning of his own identity within a prevailing

value system. He also described a sense of acceptable dichotomy in value systems for the African man – even for those who are 'westernised'.

Tilly by 2014 had married her boyfriend from high school. Tilly described living with her husband and two children in a conventional nuclear arrangement. Eve, still engaged to the same man as in 2010, described the relationship as stable but in no need of rushing towards marriage itself. Kirsten, Lucy and Patricia were all in serious relationships by 2014. Lucy could see her boyfriend's home from her own. This led to the intimacy of domestic chore sharing. Lucy described her mother as being unable to accept the seriousness of the relationship. This Lucy believes to be due to the mother's fear that Lucy as an investment will be less valuable if she becomes committed to a new family. Kirsten also had a serious boyfriend, but in her case the family was eagerly awaiting news of marriage. Patricia was conducting a long-term relationship. The relationship has taken on a seriousness that has led Patricia to question her religious and moral beliefs regarding abstinence. In the process she described an identity shift for herself.

By 2014 Kirsten had become involved with a local man, a student at a neighbouring technical college. They had dreams of travelling together upon his graduation. She described this man as far more dependable: "*At least now I don't have to worry, about someone all of a sudden coming over and… He stays in Durban. Now he is preparing for exams and has got stuff to do.*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). She described the relationship as supportive and open: "*Aaaa, we talk about everything. Like what's happening in life, what we want to do. At least we both say that we don't want to have kids at the moment. But we both agree. We both want to travel. We want to see the world. But he is studying. Now you have to study, you can't just… You can't just say now I will see what I can do, what will I find. You have to… I see a future together. And it looks promising and interesting, and…Ya, Moya, he is there when I need him. And like, he is supporting when we decide I have to do something.*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

Kirsten reported that her family was expecting her to marry this man (she is now 26 years old). *"Ok I don't mind being married, but I don't want to get married now. Now, I am working at (the take away). I don't see it as a permanent job for myself. I don't want to settle down while I am at (take away). I want to settle down when I have something. Not when I have nothing. What if the person decides to end it, then I have nothing."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Here the idea of permanence exists; however the feeling is that such a move would be better taken from a place of professional security, as well as one of vulnerability – as in being left, not the individual doing the leaving.

In 2014 Lucy described a boyfriend who worked in (and originates from) the same rural village in which she works. She told of a previous boyfriend (in the interim between 2010 and 2014) who expected her to behave *"like a wife – do laundry, goes and buys grocery with him and stuff … This one. He is chilled .This one in Riverdon[38] believes that I am going to be his wife. He actually believes that we will last a long time. But he doesn't force anything… so…"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). *"In terms of understanding…I think his educational background is… is the worst. The only thing he understands when you are talking the bible. And I don't mean this in a bad way but… He doesn't understand my sense of humour. That's the worst thing ever. That's one thing that I hate. That is one thing that will break us up… (laughs). He struggles to understand my sense of humour… Like when I say I need wine, he didn't understand… He would say that 'why would you need wine? There is cool-drink, there is juice and stuff'… And I literally need wine. Like when I am doing my work, at night I need wine. Specially at night. If I say that I am going out to dinner, like when Matt and Jean[39] were still there. We were supposed to go together with them, he thought it was just it was not for us … talking about the white people. That is not for us: going out for dinner, even wine it is not for us. It is for them. For him … He is not that much educated. That is what I struggle with him. If I say I am going overseas, he doesn't understand. He doesn't open his mind that much."* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). The gap in experience related by Lucy could be referring to the outcome of Lucy having assimilated cultural capital (as theorised by

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[38] Riverdon: Fictional name of the village in which the participant works. It has good infrastructure by village standards, as it is the centre used by local communities and commercial farmers.

[39] Matt and Jean:, foreign aid workers (names changed)

Bourdieu, 1986), and becoming proficient in social interactions which for her boyfriend remained alien and inappropriate, thereby creating a difficulty with regard to the sharing of activities.

"If he is going to change, if he is going to adapt to some of the things I don't know… He has adapted to some of the things. Like wine he has adapted. But he will never drink it… When he is there (at her cottage), he is doing laundry, washing dishes, cleaning and stuff. I was like …if this is how it is happening it is fine for me. It's hard to get someone like that. I wasn't expecting to get someone so soft, so quiet here in a rural area… In a way he bores me sometimes. But then at the same time I am enjoying his company, he won't ask you a lot of questions. And he is very sweet… he fetches me from home (Durban) at 12:00 at night." (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). The participant again described some ambivalence; while recognising the lack of intellectual fit, she appreciated other qualities. The lack of connection on this level led the participant to describe a feeling of isolation with regard to perceptions, expectations and paradigms for understanding the world.

By 2014 Patricia had become seriously involved on a romantic level: *"I think I am in LOVE… I don't know. I think so. Somebody I know. It's been awhile. I think I am falling deeper and deeper into this thing, but anywhoo, that's the way life goes."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Her boyfriend is eight years older, a black African male who works on a car assembly line in a town two hours' drive away. He does not have a tertiary education *"He is in, like, production, he's not an academic. They make parts for cars, and stuff"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). The latter description was made spontaneously by the participant. It could refer to the recognition of a sense of difference between her partner and herself, or could have been made for the benefit of the researcher, an 'academic'. *"He is always like "no… baby you are brilliant" … he has extreme confidence in my intellectual ability. I don't know how, because we have never sat in the same class we have never had major discussions or anything… he has got that belief I think"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Here she, like Lucy, described divergence.

Patricia's relationship (2014) had resulted in serious questioning of her beliefs and her self-image: *"Just this morning I was talking to myself… Cause I had prolonged this whole sex part. Because I was waiting for my husband, Moya. But I fell. (Interviewer: Perhaps it is not so much falling as a different path?) It is a different path. I like the way you put it. It is a different path, and I don't know where it will lead me. But I pray to God that it will be good towards me. And so… In terms of that, and putting it all together, and the doctrines I have gone through. In my mind I was the world's biggest sinner. Not shattered, but…"* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). At this point one has the sense that the lines between right and wrong that might have been clearly delineated before, had become more blurred. This was congruent with the suggestion that a move into adulthood is accompanied by the understanding that rigid categorisations and judgements thereof are not always applicable (for example, Chickering's vector (1993) concerning the ability to develop mature interpersonal relationships where all is not clear cut and simple holds resonance). She considered marriage and children as a choice to be deferred until she has found a more rewarding employment and stable environment.

Lukas, Lucy and Patricia all described relating to the world around them in very different ways to that of their partners. This led to certain tensions resulting in the negotiation of world view: *"For example I am critical of the church … She is a believer. A hard-core believer. Even for those things that don't make sense. She won't ask [questions]. I mean I will go to church. But everything the pastor asks us to do, if they are illogical I won't do it … End of discussion, no games, no compromise. But I am trying because if I do too much, I will be irrelevant soon."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Lucy described her partner as different to herself and her friends: *"I don't know if he will understand my friends. But most of my friends are from campus … From varsity: even if you grew up in a rural area, your mindset sometimes grows and changes … can adapt to something else. If you have been to varsity your mind set changes … I am accommodating him and his mind set, so …"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

5.6.3 Romantic Relationships Overall

The narratives show the participants as students and graduates at differing points in their relationships and their own identity development. Within Chickering's vector, 'Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships', the student becomes able to engage in meaningful committed relationships (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 38). The participants were also shown to be negotiating approved social structures in order to create spaces for relationships which were acceptable to them. Lukas and Temba were still experimenting with romance – multiple partners and flirtations were common for them. These could also be a function of the prevailing versions of masculinity, both for the young male student and the young African male. The prospect of parenthood for Temba has not changed his approach to short-term partnerships, nor has Lukas's engagement – what seemed to impact on these for Lukas was the increasing age and experience gap between him and the women he was meeting.

Tilly and Kirsten (2010) were growing within the vector ('Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships') through the nature of their relationships and the negotiation required therein, being both part of a unit and still emerging individuals. Tilly, Kirsten, Lucy and Patricia in 2010 all seemed to indicate that romantic relationships could compromise their studies – this is interesting in a gendered environment, where womanhood is often defined by one's relationships with men. It could be that the engagement in university has led to a hiatus where those roles could be negotiated (as in the ideas of emerging adulthood being protected by the institution). There also seemed to be a tentative recognition that heterosexual partnerships for the female participants might bring onerous gendered responsibilities, but were however acceptable within prevailing social structures.

Moreover the egalitarian nature of many of the goals of the university could have filtered down to the students' gendered selves to some extent. Added to that, the participants had all been sociology students – the sociology curriculum emphasises sections on gender issues. It could also be in this context that the male participants felt it appropriate to explain their choices in terms of acceptable African behaviours for men. This in both cases was

presented as matter of fact, without apology or reference to the researcher's different background. Interesting too was that Lukas also described romantic relationships as compromising his academic career – and he saw his increasing maturity as indicated through his ability to manage these conflicts of interest. Lukas's idea of masculinities did not seem to be affected by academic growth – women are still fairly passive in his descriptions, and submit to domestic roles for him (for example, cooking). Both Lukas and Temba spontaneously communicated their rejection of the custom of lobola[40], but for Lukas the necessity of paying lobola was regarded as inevitable. "*I always say that things change, but we REALLY don't want to change. People don't change. Really don't want to change … Back in the day, and where I come from, if a woman does not cook for her husband, or she is not cooking every day, or she is not in the mood to cook that day … she will be beaten. She wouldn't report to her parents, can't even complain to her parents, she will be beaten by them even more. Because they will say that this man has paid lobola for you, so you need to cook for him, you have to wash for him clean for him, bear children for him … because this guy has paid lobola for you … But now things have changed. Now she has rights she won't be doing all those things. So what are you paying for? So now you will be moving to your own household. Just the two of you. Not the extended family anymore. Where she would be a slave for the whole family. Now it is just the nuclear family … (long pause)But I think I will do it … because the reality is that even the woman you love will hate you if you don't pay lobola. We are running away from the fact that it is a transaction – for business purposes. If you don't pay, you are not serious…*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Also noteworthy was the explanation that lobola was both a tradition of the past and the present in Lukas's village of origin.

All the students in 2010 described situations in which they were learning multiple skills – for example role juggling, negotiation and compromise.   None of the students (with the exception of Eve whose children were grown up and independent) were parents at the point of the study, and none referred to children or the need to have children.

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[40] Lobola: bride price

By 2014 Tilly had entered a conventional marriage, Lukas was contemplating marriage, and Temba was an expectant father. All the participants referred to marriage and parenthood as featuring in their lives in some way: in terms of their own or others' expectations or rejection of such expectations. All had considered or experienced Chickering's (1993) idea of a mature interpersonal relationship at this point. The need for compromise and the recognition of memberships of different communities and holding of different levels of cultural and educational capital had been spontaneously considered by Lukas, Patricia and Lucy in terms of their current romantic relationships.

The participants by 2014 also reported having explored the idea of having children. Tilly was already the mother of two and Temba was expecting his first child: *"It is sad. I realise that my child might be subject to the same fate as me, of not living with both parents … and a child who is alienated from its parents …"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). In 2010 he had talked about not wanting to continue the pattern of his own upbringing, but now envisioned a similar situation. Lukas also described similar sentiments: "*No children, not even one … Ya. I am not a father, at the moment. I don't think I will have kids until I get married. I am not considering it at the moment. I did consider it at some point but then I am like no no no no … I mean you don't want to be far away. I mean I used to see my father, I mean once a year, back in the day. Because, I mean, he was never there. He was in Johannesburg. It was expensive to come back. I think that is why we don't have a relationship to this day. And thirteen kids. So I want to be around, like every day, I want to be around. I want to be around. I would be happy, but the situation at the moment is not ok. If I could get a three year contract, I wouldn't mind."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Both Lukas and Temba rejected their fathers' parenting styles. Here identity development seemed to be occurring through the repudiation of cultural and family norms. The participants engagement with the structures around them were particularly powerful at this point.

Both Lucy and Patricia's boyfriends had suggested that they have children. Both had declined. Lucy, like Temba and Lukas, would prefer a different life for her children: "*They won't live life like I did*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Kirsten's parents were eager for her to produce grandchildren (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). It would seem that the former students (with the exception of the mature student, Eve) had reached an age where children are expected.

5.7 Friends

5.7.1 Friends and University

The traditional aged students all referred to multiple and supportive friendships on campus in 2010. This support is at an intellectual and practical, social and emotional level. At a micro level (cf Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998) in terms of friendship, the participants seemed well integrated by their final undergraduate year. As already explored however upon arrival at the university all had been on their own without previous cohesive friendship groups or bonds.

These were referred to as emotionally supportive: "*I usually talk about a lot of things like ya[41], ya talk to like … my friend M we talk about all this different things*" (Lukas interview, 29 May 2010). Lukas's friendship with M is often referred to and would seem to be a good friendship that could be described as a "strong character forming friendship" as described by Pahl (2000: 112). Kirsten: "*Most, it's I have Zimbabwean friends and then like South Africans I can't say, ya we are friends … because when maybe we used to stay in the same res so when we meet each other we say 'hi'. And then there are some close friends that like when we have school work we actually discuss about school work and its personal issues that we are able to talk about them so it's just it's different. It's just depend with how well you know the person … but then most of them is a 'hi how are doing, it's been a long time since I have seen you'… and then you just pass each other, you see each other tomorrow, it's the same thing but then at least you are able to greet each other and ya, life goes on.*" (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010). Kirsten was clearly involved in social systems – some of

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[41]Ya: yes

her relationships may have been slight in nature, but were still for her, worthy of mention (Spencer and Pahl, 2006: 191). Tilly too, related being well integrated – having made friends both with others from Zimbabwe, and students who were as devoted to their studies as herself. Patricia described a good friend: *"We have been with each other for a while and whenever we happen to meet its like 'ha[42]! I haven't seen you for months and we just pick up from where we left off and I was like … she still tells me something that I would laugh."* (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010).

Lukas described asking people to help when ill: *"I was sick – not feeling well actually. I couldn't make it to class. I called someone (anonymous) to cook for us. Guess what? She burned the pots, but we ate anyway"* (Lukas diary, 19 March 2010). The students all described sharing meals and funds as well as resources such as cell phones and residence rooms when needed. An example of this would be Lukas's friend P who regularly slept over and made use of the amenities as well as Lukas's laptop, as he had nowhere to stay on a long-term basis. Kirsten's boyfriend used the same strategy, staying with Kirsten or other friends. Eve also described paying for a fellow exchange student's meals once her money ran out.

Eve described a hiatus when she first arrived on the campus (2010), where she felt that no one was friendly or offering friendship. Her friendships with the other exchange students were on a motherly basis where she was the protector and advisor, and these friendships slowly seemed to wane, except for one, as the visit progressed. However as this occurred local students and fellow churchgoers became friendlier, and offered her outings, visits and company. For Eve, the problem of being foreign, not being able to speak a local language and being older, created a barrier to easy friendships: *"And then I would get issues because I was American. When they found out I was American, and some of them didn't like Americans. So I would get that. And some of the Americans thought I was coloured not African. And I was looked down on from some of the Indians because I was beneath them."*

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[42] Ha: A conversational pause denoting exclamation or surprise

(Eve interview, 27 October 2014). She was particularly disappointed as she had expected that there would have been a level of solidarity since her racial identity was the same as the majority of the students.

Lucy narrated being friends with a variety of people on campus – these ranged from peers whom she described as "rich" to those who she saw as more like herself. She also seemed to develop strong ties of support with classmates who tried to assist her in very practical ways while her mother was ill (Lucy diary, 12 May 2010). "*So I finish reading so I go to someone who is going to explain for me so Lukas is going to explain or Tilly … Lukas or Tilly are just… I don't where did I get them but they are always there they just explain everything and ya it makes it easier to write.*" (Lucy interview, 30 March 2010). They also encouraged her: *"Tilly does her school work she forces me to do my school work she calls me and tells me that: 'Lucy, if you don't want to do your school work, you know that you won't graduate'. She was forcing me to do the (particular module) thing I didn't I was sleeping I was crying the whole day and then she is like 'OK'. She is like 'do your school work; you know that you think a lot. I know it's wrong, what's happening is just unfair, but at least if you have your school work done you know that you going somewhere and you will face what's going on'"* (Lucy interview, 4 June 2010).

Reference by all of the respondents was made to friends and classmates helping them and being helped by them in their intellectual pursuit. Examples of this included taking one another to the library, collecting one another on the way to lectures, accompanying one another to check marks and working together in the computer LANs. This was more pronounced for the six participants living on campus, and mentioned only once by the participant (Patricia), living off campus. In terms of photo voice, all of the participants chose to take pictures of their friends and of social occasions and present them to the researcher as important facets of their daily lives.

Interestingly Lukas, Tilly, Kirsten and Lucy as students referred to one another often within the interviews, diaries and photographs. In the year of the study they shared their two majors (and had shared the same classes of those subjects for the preceding two years). One of the majors required extensive field trips away from campus. They were all living in residence (albeit different ones). They also seemed to engage in a lot of group work together – as formal groups constituted in their courses and informal study groups. Working together at study provided comradery and a sense of expertise: *"I tried to sleep you know … but you know, I just say that let me go and study with the others … so we left the library at around 12 and then from the library we went to the whatever... we went to (a lecture hall) and the people were saying 'Tilly please you are the one who supposed to lead this discussion we have been reading'… so I had to look for chalks down and underneath there. I started teaching (laughs) until past one."* (Tilly interview, 4 June 2010).

Tilly and Lukas in particular seemed to engage in friendly rivalry with regard to marks. *"Tilly invited me to the library to look for (a subject) books for the essay"* (Lukas diary, 20 April 2010). These relationships seemed to help them to function academically as well as personally. The academic support appeared to keep the participants focussed and encouraged. Moreover the friends seemed to share congruent goals and experiences so, for example, battling with adjustments, living in incongruent systems, needing to succeed and regarding themselves as responsible for that success. Here the social and academic integration as described by Tinto (2006) seemed to be integrated and supportive, rather than separate and incongruent.

Lucy appeared to be on the periphery of this group; perhaps due to the time she spent at home away from campus and the fact that unlike the others she could not be a full member of any community of practice. She was battling to attain proficiency academically with being absent. *"I know, it has been very hectic hey it's a I was struggling I was actually doing very well when I was usually with Tilly, but I haven't been seeing Tilly lately – from the time that I was speaking with you, we did almost all my work with her. When I do work with Tilly I feel very comfortable because I know I pass and usually the most thoroughly, and she calls me*

sometimes … like 'don't you have anything to do? Let's go do the assignments and stuff …' *and most of the time lately when she called me, she actually gave up because I will be at* *home."* (Lucy interview, 4 June 2010). Nevertheless the data showed strong supportive bonds between these individuals with particular reference to academic study. While it was clear that other people belonged to these groups and networks, one another's names were consistently mentioned, and there seemed to be similar understandings about each other's roles (and strengths) in the web of support. These students also seemed to use similar vocabulary indicating a shared community of practice; however it is not definitive, as it is not clear whether this use of language is special to these students or widespread in the student community.

Thus friendships and the need for friendships were described as important emotional, intellectual, social and practical resources. These friendships were at different levels of intimacy and the relationships (and in some cases communities of practice) existed to fulfil different needs. In all these cases, one could see the students experimenting with interdependence, as in Chickering and Reisser's vector: 'Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence' (1993: 115). In some of the cases independence was not the result of a natural progression within emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), but an issue of necessity – survival in a harsh environment. As shown in the literature review, emerging adulthood is a period where those moving towards full-blown maturity are given the space to become independent on multiple levels in a protected environment (particularly in the case of higher education students). As discussed, university was regarded as a buffer between the cushioned nature of the parental home and the wide world, with its attendant responsibilities. In our case emerging adulthood on the practical level seems to have been bypassed for the South African students as the families were unable to cushion the students' experiences largely due to their own poverty. Despite the university and government attempts through the financial aid system to improve access to university, the students' experiences of higher education as a protected environment may be romanticised.

The participants seemed to have strong goals and commitments, which as suggested by Tinto (1987) could be productive factors for their persistence. Lucy's family responsibilities however compromised her academic commitment as evidenced over time with her continuing struggle to graduate.

The friendships described, and the familiarity they engendered seemed to form a sense of community or solidarity between friends within the boundaries of the university. Emotional needs were often met, and a practice of survival was shared. The traditional aged students seemed to be in the process of making their own friends, new friends independent of familial or childhood ties. These friends were sometimes similar to the participants themselves (as described by Kirsten above) and at other times were described as different (as shown by Lucy, who described having to overcome the barrier of poverty, as many of her friends were from wealthier backgrounds – interview 26 March 2010). Temba reported interacting with friends on a social level, but this did not seem as extensively emphasised as it was with the other participants. His ability to develop friendships could have been somewhat constrained by his prior experience as described previously. He described enduring friendships although many of his primary friends had already graduated. He also described an informal network of support between the few people on campus with Albinism (Temba interview, 11 April 2010).

None of the participants used the university's counselling services as a mechanism of emotional support. The participants (with perhaps the exception of Eve) all seemed to be integrated into the informal social life allied to the university. All were members of active friendship networks with similar values. Tinto (1987) advocated social belonging as important to a student's persistence. Interestingly in these cases networks seemed to be created by the participants themselves (with the exception of the Student membership evidenced by Temba), and were not formally enabled by the University (for example, through clubs, orientation activities and so on).

5.7.2 Friends as Graduates

Kirsten described remoteness (albeit affectionately) from the friends of her childhood due to different experiences and geographic distance: *"When I go home we are still in contact with old school friends. When I go home we still plan to get together, and it is interesting. Most, ya, they are married. Some they have kids. It is a little bit difficult. Most of the time I am in South Africa, and most of the time they are with their families, going to church and me I am still single. They don't, they don't have degrees; it's a little bit difficult … So ya, it's like, it's a bit hard. And the day before we meet, you are like nervous. It's like … aaah … what are we going to talk about? How are you going to think of me? They have lots of questions: why? Why are you not yet married? What's holding you? So yaaa, because, now, at times it makes it hard. Because at times you really want to get together with your friends, find out what been happening, how they've been doing, but it is those small personal things."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). She had formed two close friendships in Pietermaritzburg both as a result of her work. She described friendships as generally transient and scarce: *"I do have friends. Not many though it's because uuuum I don't know. Maybe it's because I have never really understood what friends are for. No umm ya, seriously, one moment there is someone who is my friend, then just disappears."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). She also found that the hours of work at the takeaway interfered with social activity – the hours were long and tiring, during normal leisure time. This was a factor interfering with the generation of social activity.

Patricia described remaining close to friends from her school days: *"In high school I was in hostel. Get to build different and deeper relationships that could be life-long. Yet you don't communicate on a regular basis, but when you do … they are still my people."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). In her present situation she claimed to have made no close friends, describing her stay in (a city) as temporary. However she told of social outings of dancing, eating and fun. *"There are few people I made contact with. We talk at work. Friends but not bosom friends ... I can laugh and eat meat with them but not go and cry with. Not those kind of friendships in (city where she is currently living)."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Here a lack of intimacy seemed to underlie Patricia's notion of transience in her present position, as well as her feeling of poorly fitting into her workplace.

By 2014 all the participants described having lost touch with some of the friends who had been important to them in 2010. Eve had not had contact with any of the exchange students she had met on her trip to South Africa, nor had she had contact with the friendships from the church she had been involved in. Kirsten had not seen or communicated with her best (university) friend since she moved away for work. Patricia had remained in cyber contact with many of her peers from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, but not directly, as was the case with Tilly. Temba reported still being in close contact with significant friends from his postgraduate studies, and with two friends who went to boarding school with him (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

Lucy however remained in close contact with friends from her student days, as did Lukas. Lucy also described interacting with and becoming friends with new people, and people very different from herself in multiple narratives: "*We became friends. So she was talking. She opened my mind. Afterwards I became friends with people who read.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). These friendships seem to endure over time and space. At work and in some social interactions, Lucy related having to negotiate her position with care as a result of her self-described ability to form relationships within diversity (interview, October 2014). Echoing her experience as a student she found herself facing criticism as a result of having friends of all races, and at all points in the managerial ladder. This is further discussed in section 5.9.2 of this chapter. However suffice to say here, the issue seemed to have narrowed Lucy's pool of social contacts within familiar social strata, and in many ways enforced her friendship making activities with other groups. As discussed in section 5.4.2 of this chapter, Lucy was no longer close to the children she grew up with as they had developed different life views as well as priorities: "*It's like every time, if I were to ask them why you didn't finish matric; they would point at Miss X, Miss Y, Mrs Z. Because they are white, because they are Afrikaners and stuff.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

Tilly had reconnected with friends of her youth, who lived in the same town and were engaged in mothering. She described these relationships as meaningful and supportive (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014).

Lukas related having thought about the issue of friendship deeply. He described attempting to keep in contact with all his male friends from childhood through to university and beyond. Nevertheless some of these friendships have not been reciprocated and have waned: *"I think that maybe we were friends for convenience sake. Just because we were there. Because I was close. I think sometimes one is friends not because you are friends but because you are there. Because I am available for the moment. Then you don't want to move on. You want to keep on honouring people. Then you want to keep on being friends, it was just because you were there. You keep on complaining: Aaaah. That this guy is not my friend, but he was your friend when he was on campus … I think if you don't really share the same space with people sometimes you don't have much in common. That's the case. I think that. So I just think they feel: ha! Well let's just get rid of this guy. That's what I think. Because I haven't really tried to get rid of anyone."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lukas reported making a particular effort to remain friends with those of his childhood despite intervening differences: *"Because I remember this guy, we were close, close, close. This guy, we were close we were together every day. Monday to Sunday. He would come home during the holidays. Because he was studying at the University of Venda at that time. But he wouldn't come to see me. He would call me on the phone. In the holiday. It would be like: 'I am here. Chief, I am here. I am here so … Like … Uuh come and see me'. I was like ok; I will go because he is my friend. After years … I thought this is not working, this is just bad. Why am I just going to see him and he never comes. And when I go there, we don't really have anything to talk about … That I noticed. That was the second year that I noticed. We don't really have anything to talk about. And even some other friends they disappeared like that. You would meet but … Some we would meet as a group and they would talk, I would be the only one that wasn't studying … ok fine. Talking about stuff I had never seen: 'did you pass?' Aaah … and I wouldn't know what they talk about: they would talk about a 'module': I*

was like, 'what is a module?'… 'a sup'….. 'What is a sup?'… uuuh, you know? They would talk about lecturers that I don't know … if you spend the day with friends and you have nothing to talk about, you begin to feel stupid. There is no doubt about that. And you start hating yourself. And I have had that experience of people talking about stuff that doesn't relate to you, so I don't really do that … of feeling irrelevant so I try not to." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lukas described not having made proper friends in the town where he was working: "*At the beginning I did feel lonely. But now I am very fine. I think that I am used to spending time alone in the room, and stuff like that. I don't see any problem with it. But I am cool … I made a conscious decision not to make friends as yet. I will be here for only one year. Also this is a township. And they are drinking and get drunk. This year I am not drinking like that. Ya.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). He justified his decision as being due to concentrating on work, being able to commit time to studiousness and safety concerns, both in socialising outside of the dormitory and within it. However despite the lack of deep friendships or socialising during his internship, there was plentiful description in the data of socialising during that time, including dormitory braais, shared drinks and outings with work colleagues.

In summary, in 2014 the participants described their social lives and social support systems in different ways: Kirsten described having few friends, with work constricting socialising. Temba also reported having a few close friends and keeping close to home. Lukas, through conversation, described a very active social life as did Lucy. Patricia described those that she saw on a regular basis as fun to be around, but not as confidantes. Tilly described her friendships as being arranged around the needs and spaces created by children and family. Eve reported a constricted social life as a result of no longer having strong ties to the church, being on a different timetable to her fiancé, and a heavy study load.

The immediate social relationships of some of the participants during the interviews of 2014 could be regarded as transitory: Temba, Lukas and Patricia had not settled, and described

holding back from investing in the relationships that presented themselves. Lucy, while seeing new friendships positively, lived in a community of foreign aid workers – also resulting in many fleeting encounters. In addition, the participants (Patricia, Lucy, Temba, Lukas, Kirsten) described various barriers to their friendships, both those from the past and present. In summary, these were due to their transitory position as described above and the experiential gap.

5.8 Leisure

5.8.1 Leisure as Students

Lukas regularly referred to going to the university gym where he lifted weights: *"(Cell phone rings) … This guy was just calling, he wanted us to go to the gym …. (Interviewer: oh?) I went there in the morning … ya. Because I mean I woke up early today because we usually, we spend like more than two hours … like three hours at the gym … ah I mean most of the time we just like doing fun stuff – not like gymming itself, because after gym we play snooker … I can say so because I mean when we go there we will spend three hours and many people will come there … I mean it's kind of like a place where we have fun…"* (Lukas interview, 29 May 2010). As discussed previously he also talked about chatting up girls, visiting girls and having girls visit him. He mentioned residence and house parties as well as hanging out with male friends, preparing and sharing meals with them or getting take-aways and sharing them with friends.

Also important to Lukas was to watch *Generations*[43] on television daily – which he did consistently and in the company of several of the same friends. In addition Lukas watched many movies in his room on his laptop. Here technology has become an important component of leisure time. Lukas talked about occasionally drinking with his friends. While Lukas had no problem with going to parties himself (although he distinguished between parties and clubbing – he was not enamoured with the latter), it seemed as though this attitude did not extend to his girlfriend: *"I was not going to the party but I went to SU to call*

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[43] *Generations*: A long standing South African soap opera aired daily on a national television station

this woman of mine. Everyone was dancing and drinking no wonder what she was doing there – since she's a churchgoer. [His residence] was noisy. I had to listen to other people's music because my speakers were, and are still gone. However I had someone to keep me busy." (Lukas diary, 17 April 2010). Here the gendered expectation that the African woman behaves in a circumspect manner was expressed.

Temba did not discuss leisure as much as Lukas, however he did talk about girls (in moderation) and hanging out with male friends. *"My life at the university this year revolves around attending (as well as studying) and watching movies in my PC. I keep to myself most of times because most of the people I was close to left last year. I also stopped drinking which is obviously a major blow to my social life."* (Temba diary, 5 April 2012) and *"It's evening and I'm reading soccer, Laduma newspaper to catch up with soccer news. That is the only newspaper that I buy … Now it's night and I'm watching movies non-stop. When I'm tired of movies, I'll go to my friend's place to converse about girls. This is what we mostly speak about when we meet."* (Temba diary, 7 April 2012). Temba was a member of a large prominent student organisation that engaged in community development. It was based on campus and some of the members go on an overseas conference annually as a result of their involvement. He was disappointed to narrowly miss being elected as president, but was on the executive. Here the opportunity for him to engage directly in student leadership was provided. However he did point out that in his opinion, those engaging in such activities often compromise their academic performance. This may well be the case in a context where academics require particular commitment to overcome language and cultural barriers. Nevertheless his descriptions of interactions in the organisation could lead one to conclude that Temba was an active and successful mediator and leader. It could be said that the organisation was an ecological niche (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, Bronfenbrenner, 1993) which facilitated the development of such talents.

Kirsten specifically referred to not having much leisure time as a result of the work and study combination. When she had free time she spent it with her boyfriend. On rare occasions she went to a movie or did window shopping. She was not interested in parties:

"I'm not really an expert in partying because I don't go for parties. I get a lot of invitations: 'Kirsten let's go' … 'let's do this'… but then I … it's because when I was growing up my parents had that perceptions that you … if I go … if you are going to be partying: Who are you going to be going with, what are you going to be doing…? And then they will ask me a lot of questions, like: Why are you going? Who are you going with? What time are going to come back? … And so it just grows out of me … And then when I came to university, some say it's freedom at last … I thought that maybe OK fine … Ah OK fine – since I'm not at home and they are not going to see me … I'm going to go … But then I didn't – that thing just came back again and then I didn't see the purpose. Because like when I see it, you know, people go and they come back drunk and they are making noise in Res and everything. And then I was like OK fine so what was the point of going to the party … You are drunk. And then you will see them. They will come to you 'Kirsten can I borrow some money?' 'Kirsten can you help me with this?' 'Kirsten I haven't got any food'… you know because most of their money they spent it partying … and then I was like: 'OK so what's the point?' Because it's going to make a hole in my pocket because I overspend … And when will I get the time to like rest from the party, from going to work? That's the other thing because usually people go out on Friday night and Thursday so, me Thursday? Thursday I will be working. So if I am going to the party after work obviously I'm going to come back three or four … Tomorrow I am attending. I have to rest … and by the way I have an assignment to submit or I'm suppose to have a tut[44] so when will I do all those things?" (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010). Kirsten may also have been responding to the activities with a gendered eye, in that she has been socialised to regard drinking (particularly in public) and going out as inappropriate for young girls.

However Kirsten did refer to enjoying a night of drinking with her boyfriend as a stress release*: "On Friday night I was drinking in my room I was so stressed and I was so tired, I can't say I was stressed but then I just decided to drink because I was with my boyfriend so I was like, 'Ok, you know what: let's just drink tonight' and then we just drank and then I was …. everything was dark (laughs) but then it helped me to … because I'm not, I don't drink every day, or every weekend – it just depends on the mood that I'm in. It's, so I was like, in*

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[44] Tut: tutorial

my diary I was explaining why I was into it, because the week had been hectic" (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010). While accepting the need for leisure and describing the binge as a stress relief, she also bemoaned the fact that the above behaviour led to days of reduced productivity. It could also be that she was testing her maturity through couple related behaviour rather than partying with a group of friends. It may further have indicated that she felt supported in the above activity on a gendered level as she has her boyfriend's buy-in and approval. Moreover the event happened in the private arena (her residence room) and was thus not open to public judgement.

Tilly talked about spending time with friends as leisure time – either just chatting or partying. This she felt was severely constrained in third year due to academic pressure. She also perceived herself as having very little social life; however this was not borne out over the course of the research. Interestingly she describes herself as being cut off from friends as a result of the aforementioned lack. *"That's the only party that I went to. (Interviewer: No movies? No going to Braai and Bake[45]?) No. At times I would survive the life as if I'm broke or something because I don't have time to go to the ATM to collect the money. Just imagine. Just to collect the money from the ATM."* (Tilly interview, 14 May 2010). Moreover: *"So I just got invitation late and I just … should I go or should I … you know I had the money – it was only for R 20.00 to get inside the party, but what worries me at that time I wasn't prepared. I had nothing to wear, you know I can't just take the clothes that I … The ones that I, the one that I put on whilst I go to lectures; and then take them to the party. (Interviewer: You can't wear those?) Ya, it's so embarrassing. (Interviewer: What do people wear?) You know… party clothes – it's more like something, like as flashy sexy, you know … Ya so I can't just grab that kind of shirt and think (laughs) … I will be feeling so embarrassed. (Interviewer: So did you go?) No. (Interviewer: How did you feel about that?) That very night I never thought anything about it but the next day when people come, were saying 'Why did you not come? That party was moving', I was like, I should have just go. To go out just to keep away from stress and everything – ya, last year we used to and this week I guess I will. I'm just waiting for my friends to come back. Wednesday is my birthday so I don't have anyone to celebrate*

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[45] Braai and Bake: A local bakery/ coffee shop frequented by students

with around. I am the only one left … Ya so I think I will wait for them on Saturday … Then we can go out or something. I think during birthdays we do support each other… I think we will go to Golden Horse[46], Golden Horse is much better than … I think that's the best club that I have find so far in Pietermaritzburg you know one we can afford, something that is affordable for us students you know and when it comes to … even to whatever, the cocktails it's R15 something, something that we can afford … Going out late and the like, I think for me it's fine ... But these things I don't tell my family – I don't tell my mother where I am; that I am not at my room at 01:00. It will be something else (Interviewer: why?) You know I told ukuthi[47] they were … Could I say, what I discover about South Africa going to a club there is nothing to do with your identity; your dignity or something; you just go out there for fun. But when it comes to Zimbabwe, if you go to a club … go out whatever – if somebody hears that I'm clubbing they just ascribe me to prostitution – you know of which I will be just going there for fun. She has got that mentality ya and it is hard to change that mentality …" (Tilly interview, 28 March 2010). Similar to Kirsten, Tilly recognised the traditional gendered values that her mother ascribed to were no longer entirely her own. At the same time she needed to prevent her mother from knowing about some of her behavioural changes. This too would seem indicative of a movement towards one's own identity and beliefs, but at the same time there was still the need for parental approval. Here Tilly would seem to be engaged in 'establishing identity' (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 173) as well as 'moving through autonomy towards interdependence' (ibid.: 115). However at the same time as showing that she engaged in behaviours not condoned by her parents, she was careful to qualify that they happened in an 'acceptable' way – i.e. with only girlfriends, in safe establishments, and being transported in a safe and private manner. In 2010, all the female participants described an acute awareness of safety issues as they related to social plans: these included ensuring trustworthy transport, not getting too inebriated, taking along a sober friend for protection, and not moving around too much at night.

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[46] *Golden Horse*: A local casino complex, with clubs, pubs and restaurants within easy walking distance of campus

[47]Ukuthi: that

Both Tilly and Kirsten expressed concern regarding the financial and reputational expense of going to clubs as a leisure activity. Moreover both expressed a sense of isolation due to their perceived separation from such activities – despite the social activities that they did mention, and the learning and other activities which occurred in a group. It could be that there is an epitome of a social life to which these students were comparing their own experience which they found somehow lacking.

As students Tilly, Kirsten and Lukas all described feeling some social pressure to go out with friends. They described this as conflicting with their academic goals and though they were able to withstand the pressure, they still seemed to wish they could partake of the social activity. There is here a clash between the social and the academic systems as was evidenced as a concern by Tinto (1987), however the participants described overcoming that pressure in favour of their academic goals.

Lucy also talked about having a party for her birthday: *"My friend called me because they had a surprise party for me … we were just going out, we were slouched[48] (laughs). We were very slouched. It was my day it was actually my day that day and it was very nice."* (Lucy interview, 30 March 2010). She also described enjoying taking walks: *"I love long walks it makes you catch up on stuff you know like if you walk with a friend would end up finding things you didn't know about your friend, most of my friends there most of my friends are just rich, uh you had assume they just these rich spoiled brats but most of them are not. Like this other time I was walking with this other one she is kind of my best friend (laughs). Ya, and I didn't know she didn't have a mother for 16 years now and she just she kept it away for so long she didn't tell us for so long. She told me like all the things that her aunts sometimes do. In fact they call her for every problem at home they call her because they know that her dad is rich."* She also described going to clubs and pubs in the following way*: "Oh gosh, today we are going out … OK … to Frankie Bananas[49] – you know, cause we*

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[48] Slouched: slang for inebriated

[49] Frankie Bananas: a local cocktail bar

usually go there … or we go to (inaudible). And my friends think that I'm a nut, cause I always force them to go with me … So they wanna go and see another place called 'Skidoo'… I grew up knowing those places, but I have never went there, they wanted us to go to this clean … and so scary (pub) in Sobantu[50] I think. I have never been there, … (but) the way they were explaining the place I know places like that back at home, and I will never even want to go to a place like that … and what I hate about, I know that I am black … but I know when there are only black people around something wrong has always happen. Like someone either gets hurt, someone wants to fight, someone ends up going to jail." (Lucy interview, 30 March 2010). Interesting here is Lucy's statement of her ethnic identity as black, but her repudiation of experiences she regarded as being a negative component of that group identity. Here she seems to be separating herself from part of that identity to form something new.

Significant in Tilly and Lucy's unsolicited mention, of their birthday celebrations as well as the photographs thereof, were their creation of new and supportive communities – in the absence of family and childhood support systems, new ones have been formed that were able to assist in the celebration of intimate and special occasions. They also served to make the individual feel valued.

Patricia was very involved in church activities, apart from her paid work at the church. She was part of their band, was in the campus ministry and was one of the praise and worship leaders. She also visited friends and friends visited her. Watching television was also mentioned. For Eve, apart from her close (maternal style) friendship with a younger exchange student, involvement at the church she joined unfolded during the study (which took up the duration of her stay) as a major site of socialising – opening up opportunities for outings, sightseeing, dinner invitations and friendships. From an analysis and discussion of images chosen by Eve, it seemed relaxation was found in looking at the newness of her surroundings- for example flowers, plants, buildings and so on.

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[50]Sobantu: a former so called 'township' in Pietermaritzburg

All the respondents, except Eve, talked about sleeping (taking naps or sleeping longer than deemed necessary) as a leisure activity. All the respondents discussed going to church as an important out of class activity, particularly the females. This was not only limited to Sunday church services, but included weekly church meetings, bible study and so on. Interestingly both male respondents talked about missing church, while this was not mentioned by the females.

At the beginning of Eve's visit she expressed disappointment about people's lack of friendliness and openness towards her. Even surface connections as described in Spencer and Pahl (2006) seemed lacking. Those 'hidden solidarities' were not in existence. There was a definite sense of separation at all levels: experiential, age, nationality and language based. This began to change in the fourth month of her stay and steadily improved. While no particular friendships were formed with the general student population, acquaintances were made as familiarity developed. She described a burglary she suffered as assisting this process due to the resultant interest from other students. The burglary seemed to break the ice socially.

None of the students were involved in extracurricular university activities: any team sports (the only physical activity mentioned was Lukas in the gym and Lucy's walks), any organisations (with the exception of Temba) or voluntary activities. The wealth of information suggesting that out of class experience benefits students is of interest here – only Temba could possibly have been a beneficiary! It may be that working (Kirsten and Patricia), home commitments (Lucy), church activities (all the females) as well as heavy academic commitments prevented involvement in such activities. It may also be that activities such as church commitments and informal study groups benefit the students in the same way through the nurturing of social relationships. Tinto's suggestion that involvement in university groups as a mechanism for student integration (1987) is interesting here – he suggested that groupings in the university hold relatively different 'gravitational forces' dependent on their status, therefore impacting on the student members' commitment. The

students in this sample had perhaps found effective integration through other means, which has supported their studentship.

5.8.2 Leisure as Graduates

The participants described their leisure time as postgraduates and working people in interesting ways. Both Eve and Lucy informed the researcher that they enjoyed gardening and growing things in their spare time. Patricia, Lukas, Tilly and Kirsten all described going shopping as an enjoyable leisure pursuit (interviews 2014). Patricia, Lukas, Kirsten and Lucy all referred to going out with friends as part of their leisure plans: "*Fuuuuuun. I am flexible. I just fit in. I love to go out. I love being around people. I don't mind what we do. I really don't. At home I visit a lot of people. I like going to the beach. I like to eat out. I like doing things with people. In good company. I am not a clubber, but I am a mingler. Having wine, I like the atmosphere you know. I do want to dance but it's not my everyday kind of thing…*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

Patricia and Tilly spoke of watching television to relax; Patricia seemed more focussed on news programmes however. Lukas described no longer watching TV as he could not keep a television in his current accommodation. Lukas did however report enjoying watching movies however, as did Patricia and Kirsten. Lukas described enjoying movies that 'get into your brain' and referred to watching movies as being a current solitary occupation: "*You don't want to be telling someone about the movie, and that's it. There is no interest…. You want someone to be understanding that movie….. It's not like on campus where you are all watching the same movie.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Kirsten found she generally watched movies alone, as she was so often tired.

Temba reported "*I don't want to relax, I don't play sport now. I am introverted now. Serious now.*" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). He described reading political texts indoors during his leisure time. Lukas, Lucy and Patricia also referred to reading voluntarily during their time off. Lukas preferred reading non-fiction– political or self-help books; Patricia said

she enjoyed fiction– historical or situated stories with some basis in fact. However Patricia admitted that reading was not necessarily enjoyable *"I am trying to read books, to become a reader. I feel guilty if I don't read a book. It is an effort I don't want to lie. I have to read. It is that there is this thing that leaders read. So I have this thing that I must read. Also I am not a pretty girl. I like to know things. So when I am around people, I like to be in the know. It is my ticket."* (interview, 4 November 2014).

Lucy in contrast described consciously journeying through different genres of literature with increasing pleasure. For example: "*I am surprised that now that I do reading. I used to hate reading. There was a foreign student, I was working for her collecting data. We became friends … She opened my mind. Because for me studying was like… I was studying because people tell you to study … I knew what I wanted … You come up with solutions … But the way she was talking, I don't know how to explain it, she opened my mind. She was one of the inspirations that made me start reading. She gave me this one book. I read it for almost a year because like, I didn't want to read it. It wasn't like a boring book but ... Now I understand. It was like philosophers all talking about the same thing. The same sort of inspiration. In different words. Surprising how words can change the way you think. And … Then afterwards I read Shakespeare. It was about understanding the meaning of the words. I learnt that from her. Because I was like: this means the same to me It means nothing! But she made me analyse a poem by Shakespeare … It's a famous one … She had it in one of her books. I was like 'Why do you even have it?!' … She just sat down and made me read it. It was a love poem. At that time I didn't understand anything. It just didn't make sense, and I started yapping and yapping and we got through it … It was like what does he mean when he talks about the sun; and talking about beard and all that stuff … It really didn't … You know how Shakespeare writes his poetry, it was so brutal. But then I read more Shakespeare. After her … Afterwards I became friends with people who read.*" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). She also described becoming increasingly discerning about reading material: for example, rejecting the formulaic nature of the romance novel (interview, 26 October 2014). In Lucy's case it would seem that the social capital she had created allowed a form of leisure that was previously not attractive to her. Lukas also referred to discussing the books he reads with colleagues at work rather than at home: "*When I talk to my girlfriend about*

books, we won't have a nice conversation, because she is not a book person. And if she does, for her, she is into those prescribed for high school type of books. I think they make more sense to her, and even movies. But I am not watching movies or reading about the American, the 17-year olds starting to date, you know. I think I am past that stage." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Kirsten reported not reading as a hobby: "*Reading … When was the last time that I did that? That was a long time ago, but now I really miss it, I miss it. I love reading. I miss it. It is that excitement. That when I have done my work, I am going to be reading this … Maybe it is because I don't know what to read. I do enjoy it, but then there is the forgetting of real life, then I wish it would just stay like that. If only it would stay like that. I have to say 'now come back to reality'.*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Tilly did not mention reading as a leisure pursuit, but did talk about seeing people and spending time with her family as central to her enjoyment. Eve commented that she read the bible if she had time; she also wrote her own inspirational verses *"but sometimes my brain just gets tired"* (Eve interview, 27 October 2014). Only Lukas referred to occasionally going to the gym and engaging in physical exercise as a leisure activity.

Lukas also described new experiences such as going to the theatre as a leisure and social outing: *"Now I am even going to new places, like for example the theatre and stuff like that. As I am going tonight. It's a play by this guy called John Kani. He wrote something called 'Nothing Like the Truth'. There is a play that has been going on since Tuesday till tomorrow. There is a colleague of mine. We will organise transport and go together."* (interview, 31 October 2014). Lukas referred to transport and safety problems as curtailing experiences such as the latter.

For some of the participants leisure activities seemed to be intertwined with knowledge creation and self-extension (as reported by Lucy, Lukas, Temba and Patricia). In other instances leisure was described as both a social activity (Lucy, Lukas, Kirsten, Patricia, Tilly)

and a solitary one (Kirsten, Eve, Lucy, Lukas, Patricia, Temba). The activities that the respondents described were qualitatively different from those described as students, and those they described engaging in before they became students – perhaps due to a loosening of financial concerns, residing and being in contact with others in adult roles, and being themselves a few years older.

Interestingly while Lucy and Lukas remained friends, and Lukas and Patricia have rekindled their university friendship, none of the participants referred to any sense of solidarity with other graduates from the same university. With the exceptions described above, contacts between the participants and university acquaintances were sparse, and none referred to being proud alumni, as also discussed in section 5.4.2. Thus it would seem that for these participants, the shared space and institutional environment did not provide a lasting sense of community or common reference point.

5.9 Work

5.9.1 Work as Students (2010)
Two of the students (Kirsten and Patricia) worked continuously during term time in 2010. Patricia's work was a part-time position, of approximately twelve hours a week working as an administrator at her church (situated adjacent to the campus). Kirsten worked at a fast food outlet near to campus. Her position was a full-time position (forty hours a week) and shift based. Lukas and Lucy engaged in some part-time work during their undergraduate degrees.

While at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the foreign exchange student, Eve did not work. However she worked at home while studying for her undergraduate degree (2010). She worked as a full time night shift security guard. Eve felt that as jobs go this was not the worst job she could have done as a student, as it allowed her to study during the night and attend lectures during the day. It was however difficult, as she had to manage time carefully in order to balance sleep and lecture attendance. "*But sleep deprivation was a big thing,*

because I am a day time person."(Eve interview, 27 October 2014). She too expressed financial concern: *"My vacation is over and I need to buckle down budget wise. I want to make what I have last, so I don't have to ask for money from USA."* (Eve diary, 29 March 2010).

Kirsten was able to organise her shifts so that they did not interfere with lecture attendance, many shifts being in the evening or over weekends. "*I work every day, but it's not every day, I get two days off during the week … and then I'm able to catch up on my school work, and do my assignments … that's how I do it and then hm …. Ya[51], I like, I chose to go to work it's because it's – I use it for my own, I buy groceries, I buy clothes maybe if I want to go out I'm able to go out. But then it's not for my school fees, because my parents pay for my school fees … ya … Ya they do both the school fees and the Res and then I just do my pocket money – OK if they are able to send me some it's up to them but then I'll be mostly covered during the month ya.*" (Kirsten interview, 30 March 2010).

Kirsten described the difficulties inherent in working during term time*: "It's my experience being at school and going to work. It's been a very different experience and it's been a very tough one if I can say so … most people they say: 'Ha Kirsten you are going to work!' and I said 'Ya[52] you guys I have to go to work' … but then at times I feel so bad because they are working (studying) and then no! I'm working and then they are at school and they get more time to study. But then I always tell myself that I know the purpose why I'm working … so that means when it comes to school work I have to put extra effort so that the two might balance."* (Kirsten interview, 15 May 2010). Kirsten felt that working set her apart from other students: *"Most students won't be able to do it because it's really a tough thing to do."* (interview, 3 June 2010).

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[51]Ya: yes

[52]Ya: yes

Kirsten had considered giving up working as she has recognised the difficulty: *"There was actually a time last year when I thought I can't do this anymore … I think I should resign from working but then I kept on going on … then last semester I was doing five modules and passed. I was like 'ha[53]! I'm not going to stop working' so the whole idea of me stopping to work, I just put it aside and I said I should just continue."* (interview, 15 May 2010).

"I work for our church. I'm the admin lady OK. In fact I should be spending twelve hours a week. Ya, it's like four mornings a week or it's like two afternoons and one morning but I can work around it – ya I can work around it. It's what I need to do I mean I don't have an option of not doing it … ya but it's not something I hate doing or I'm forced to do no – eish[54]! I like doing it but sometimes the time factor, ya, just wanting to do your assignments." (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010). While Patricia had financial aid during the year that the study was conducted, she had not had it until that point. Although her father had paid some of her fees, she found herself in debt to the university and had been excluded for the previous year. Patricia (diary, no day, May 2010): *"It's been long since you've heard from me it's been quite hectic I must say. Things have just not been working out for me but I've bounced back again. I've been up to my eyeballs with school work and I've been bad @ handling everything. I don't know really, half the time I just feel that I'm going to die with the amount of pressure on my head that I wake up in the middle of the night. The thing is that I just feel like I just took on too much, well it's not a feeling it's true. I mean I just got back to varsity + I should have just concentrated on my work. I feel as though this semester was just bad. At the beginning of the year I had such high hopes and just the pressure got a hold of me. Well must run, have work to do. I don't know how I going to get through this (a module) stuff. Does it have to be soooo much?"* Here Patricia evidences some distress, pressure, but also resilience. This could be related to the vector 'Managing Emotions' (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 83).

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[53] Ha: conversational pause denoting exclamation or surprise

[54]Eish: conversational pause meaning variously 'er…'; 'oh' or exclamation of surprise or frustration

Lukas described the problems with working for money as a student (interview, 11 May 2010): *"My sister use to work, not to work as such, but she use to work like at varsity because she was a tutor; she was even doing this thing … I don't know … but they got this AIDS thing: she even had an office; she used to mark papers for some lecturers – well they were paying her, she used to do research and they were paying her but she was not doing it because she liked to do those things … and she braids hair. She use to braid for money and people will be coming every time whether you are studying or what, they will be coming 'hey can you do my hair?' Some people, I mean it happens that you find well, of people they don't even wash their clothes; they get other students: 'hey can you wash my clothes? I will give you this amount', you wash: R 20, you iron: R 50 … you see, I cannot do those things. I better go hungry."* The students all described informal menial or service jobs as commonly undertaken by other students in order to earn money. These tasks seemed to be based in traditional gender roles.

Whilst neither chose to photograph their work place, themselves at work or their colleagues, the above quotes show that the two students (Patricia and Kirsten) regarded working as both positive in terms of engendering independence and financial survival. Eve described a similar feeling; however hers differed in the sense that she did not consider any alternative but to work due to her age and stage in life. During her undergraduate degree Eve too worked in an environment that favoured her studies as much as possible: *"Night is so much easier as far as the job goes. Few are there at night and there are no deliveries'. That's when I was doing a lot of school work. When I was working nights I could get a lot of school work done AT work. … Reason why I stayed there so long. But now can't get any school work done at work. Now have to get my energy up when I get home so that I can do my school work."* (Eve interview, 27 October 2014).

Both Kirsten and Patricia described a sense of pride in their ability to support themselves as students, thus increasing their independence from their parents. They also recognised that they had made a significant achievement. They described having a sense of autonomy in making various spending decisions. However, at the same time they both also felt conflict –

Patricia, for example, described wanting to be supported financially and felt that it would end all her troubles. It would also in her eyes normalise her relations with her parents if they supported her financially. Kirsten considered giving up work throughout her student years, but did not: *"I was taking a big risk working when I was studying. At times I think why didn't I just ask to work weekends? But haai, I made it."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

At the same time (and here Lukas concurred) the three all felt that their involvement in paid work was detrimental to their studies. This follows the findings of Metcalf (2003: 315) who pointed to the detrimental effect of working on the student. All three were working in jobs that were unrelated to their career aspirations (security, administrative and waitressing) which then could not directly support their academic work or the job search after graduation.

It is evident that working put the students under a great deal of strain. The above experiences echoed the discussion in the literature review. However the respondents did not talk about missing lectures as a result of working. Moreover, it is clear that while they experienced role strain between their working selves and student selves, they attempted to manage and reconcile these roles (this follows the points made by Albas and Albas, 1984). Kirsten, for example, was able to negotiate her shifts around lectures, assessments and exams. Patricia was able to work flexibly around these issues too. Eve described exhaustion as a result of the multiple and stringent demands made of a working and studying person. She made the decision to slow down: *"I was burning myself out. So I took summer term off. Now I only do one course at a time."* (Eve interview, 27 October 2014).

Lukas found it too difficult to work and study as an undergraduate student, noticing a deterioration of his marks when he attempted paid work. He also described feeling upset by working, saying that it reminded him of his poverty, more so it would seem than actually struggling to make ends meet. *"I used to get jobs I got them but I decided not to work*

because I find out that whenever I get a job I don't perform OK. I'm kind of a slow learner these days so I have to make sure that most of my time I have to be studying and doing some school work. I once got a job as … not a researcher but a data collector. I got it, I worked for four days and decided to quit because I was not getting enough time to study, got a job at Pick 'n Pay[55] I did not last, I got a job in the library it didn't last – because for me it is disturbing I know some people can make do with a job but I just cannot do, I do wish to and when I am working is like I feel depressed in terms … because I thought kuri[56] if whenever I remember that I'm doing something because of poverty, believe me I feel like crying if I think … when I am working, is like I feel depressed in terms … because I thought kuri, if whenever I remember that I'm doing something because of poverty, believe me, I feel like crying if I think because of my situation I have to make sure I work. I have to do this only because I don't have this and that or because I need money because I am poor – I feel bad." (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010).

Interesting here was Lukas's realisation that working could be detrimental to his academic commitment – he prioritised the student role over any other. Moreover he felt wretched as a result of poverty –working, although it would ameliorate the lack of resources, would remind him of his poverty and possibly the associated feeling of inferiority (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010). He also regarded some of the survival work engaged in by students as humiliating – washing and ironing, for example. Ideas about masculinity and poverty may have had an influence here. During the study period he seemed more accepting of his economic position than at his arrival at university, though he was still clearly concerned by it. He was not at a point where his poverty could be publicly shared; rather he wanted it to be hidden, and various obligations needed to be fulfilled (for example making sure that 'his woman' looked acceptable in the eyes of his peers).

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[55] Pick 'n Pay: Supermarket chain store

[56] Kuri: 'it means'

This sort of work also impinged on the student role in that one's ability to organise one's own time is compromised. It also followed the experiences described by Firfirey and Carolissen (2010), where the participants attempted to disguise their poverty – in Lukas's case this may have been effected through *not* working. Moreover Lukas's experiences of feeling inferior when arriving at university stemmed only in part from expressed language differences (as described by Bangeni and Kapp, 2007), but were also attributed to a lack of resources to engage in social activity with other students (relative poverty) as well as the feeling of being exposed as poor if one couldn't attain the same standard of entertaining (again similar to the findings of Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010). Lucy had also alluded to a similar emotion when she talked about realising that her wealthy friends were just like her – with troubles and crises as serious albeit different. Prior to that realisation she described feeling constrained within those relationships due to her poverty.

Lucy as a student did piece work when she could to contribute to family survival: *"At this moment there is a Mrs X that I met, and she used to be my teacher in primary school, and she stays next to Howard College. I went to her … I knew that she has money so I went to her and told her that if she let me and maybe my nephew clean her garden, everything, wash her car and her husband car and my … there is this other niece of mine she is kind of older now so she cleans most of the kitchen work; they just do anything that she wants. Ya[57] and she can just pay whatever amount she want to pay us. So she asked how much do I want – I needed a thousand for my nephew in boarding school 'cause he had two thousand but he needed one thousand, so she gave us one thousand."* (Lucy interview, 4 June 2010). Here work was based on existing relationships and family need. These jobs generally don't support academic aspirations being fairly menial in nature. However Lucy did describe engaging with employers extensively, which could impact positively on her sense of self and her problem solving strategies.

[57]Ya: yes

Eve continued to work while being registered for her master's degree: *"Working is a challenge though. If I could just not go to work and go to school full time, and just knock it out, then I could get a masters from (a local university). But the schedule just doesn't work out"* (Eve interview, 27 October 2014). By 2014 Eve had attained a promotion into a managerial position and worked during the day. In order to accommodate the demands of working life, she had reduced her study load. For Kirsten, at a postgraduate level, working full time, supporting and looking after herself as well as studying, became too much. *"After, that's when I decided that I can't keep up, I can't work, I can't stay in town and study. I had a friend at work. I asked her if I could stay at her house. No rent. I didn't have to worry about anything. I decided not to stay in res for my honours because of that thing in third year[58]. She agreed, so I was staying with her. She stays with her family. It was better now 'cause I could go to school, go to work come home ... I was only helping them with the groceries. That was 2012."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Note that the work and study commitment if anything had increased during after her undergraduate experience; however Kirsten had put herself in a position where she had emotional and practical support in terms of her living arrangements.

In contrast, work inside the university structures at a postgraduate level was seen in a positive light by both Temba and Lukas, rather than as interfering with study. *"At (another campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal), I was making money tutoring and mentoring. Also I worked in academic monitoring and support, and as a RA[59]. I worked for disability. I got bursaries for postgraduate study. I got NRF[60] scholarship – it was R 60 000 in pocket. Made more than R100 000, and it came easy. It relaxed me in a big way…"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). Lukas described similar financial success. The accommodating relationship between university and work may be due to several factors. The nature of the work itself may be in line with the requirements of their own study – for example, tutoring may assist the student with understanding concepts at a deeper level. Work within the academic institution where the student is based may follow the same timetables and

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[58] An incident where she was found to be flouting university residence rules allowing her boyfriend to stay in her room whilst she was away on vacation
[59] RA: Residence Assistant
[60] NRF: National Research Foundation

seasonal demands that the student is accustomed to and able to work around (i.e. study periods and exam times are frequently also down time for student assistants). Moreover, working within the environment where their own studentship is understood and valued provides a platform for negotiation, and positive press for the student project (as described within Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, 1998). Working as described above could also be less obviously about alleviating poverty than about contributing towards the curriculum vitae. Moreover the more skilled nature of the work did not cause feelings of inferiority.

Added to the above the students above were older and perhaps more experienced in terms of their ability to self-regulate and discipline, making the negotiation between different demands more successful (similar to the phase of 'Developing Competence' outlined by Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

5.9.2 Work after Graduation (2014)
The thread of un- and under-employment for graduates appeared strongly in the narratives collected. Temba's girlfriend was unemployed: *"She is an honours graduate, but has never worked. She can't find a job, it is very hard"* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). Lukas spent eight months unemployed between finishing his studies and finding an internship. Kirsten and Eve were underemployed. Eve worked in security and Kirsten, despite her postgraduate qualification, still worked at the counter of a local take-away: "*I wouldn't mind doing something I went to school for because like it's so long that I have been at (the takeaway). I am just doing it because of the situation. It's too long now…"* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Tilly worked with her husband in their company in a managerial position. Despite high levels of responsibility, she described the tasks as administrative and logistical, requiring planning and problem solving, all of which could be seen as supported by a tertiary education. However she also pointed out that her work was very different from her rural development training at university.

Looking for a professional job had proved difficult for Kirsten: "*So … then comes the part about after you finish honours. You are supposed to apply for jobs and everything. And you start applying, haai, nothing comes up and you get discouraged nothing, and you pick yourself up and you say what am I supposed to do now. So still I keep applying …they don't respond. You keep going. That's now 2013*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). The length of time of underemployment is concerning on a tactical level: "*Because now I am really worried, because its taking time for me to find a job, and when it comes time for me to take a job they are going to ask me what have you been doing since you got your honours. If I do my masters then it is not so obvious. Also it is better to do it now when you are young…*" (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). Kirsten faced the additional difficulty in looking for a job in South Africa as a foreign national: *"No I don't want a job at home. When I came here in 2012 I told myself I just want a job here, I am happy just going home to visit my friends and everything"* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). She explained her preference as a result of the economic position of her home country, and the freedom of being independent from the family home. She was attempting to negotiate bureaucracy in the application of a work permit (Kirsten interview, 16 January 2015). This was causing further anxiety and uncertainty for her.

Patricia had a permanent job in a government department, but described herself as underemployed – she felt she was working as a glorified estate agent under the auspices of community development. "*For me I am just getting up and going to work. I don't know whose life I am touching. I want direct input. That's who I am. That's where my heart is … I want my work to be my ministry, my vocation. Not just my job I go to every day. Now I am just doing a job. I want to get to a point where it becomes my lifestyle and my job all together.*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

While she is unhappy in her work, she is relieved to be earning a living. "*This job is not for me. But you know what I get to pay my bills, and live my life in a certain manner. I am not living as a car guard or whatever. You know I was looking at a girl my age and I just thought I am grateful that I am not living as a car guard. I count my blessings. I am coming home*

with R14 500. I earn about R19 000… After groceries and toiletries and stuff … oh my gosh! For R100 you only get one thing. It's quite hectic. Life goes on I guess." (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

In 2014 Lukas was doing an internship and described being fulfilled and well paid in his work: *"The job is exciting and invigorating… Ya,[61] ya, ya, I feel like wow. Nothing is shocking. And you read the things you like adding. And I don't hate, like going to work. And I want to be in an academic field. Ya, I am happy, ya, I am quite happy. Yes I have come very far. Actually very far. But I am happy. I hope that I will continue like this … As in this month, in November, I will be happy to get a job as a researcher. Well I want to be a researcher. This job I am doing it is in the field that I want. It is in the exact field."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Temba was completing a year-long internship (2014) with a local government department, and also reported experiencing work positively.

Lucy also found her job rewarding: *"So that's what I do now. I am enjoying my work so much … It's just, ya …I am happy; I mean I am getting paid. But it's just I wish I could get better. I am working hard to get better. I am getting so many benefits I can't lie about that. I am getting …The exposure I am getting it is actually surprising. I never thought I would have people to like me at work you know. Because when you are at school you always have advices from people telling you that work is terrible, you will never have people to like you at work, um blah, blah, you know … The benefits I am getting they are great."* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). *"If I could tell you the places that I have gone for my work it is … Well for you it might not be big, but for me … Even now in January, well it is not certain, but I think I might go to France. Ya, even going to JHB. Presenting … "* (Lucy interview, 5 November 2014).

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[61] Ya: yes

A concern for both Lukas and Temba in 2014 was the possibility of their respective contracts coming to an end. Both indicated similar feelings about security, continuity and an ability to plan for the future: "*But I mean everyone else is waiting. Because it is one year; one year; one year. We will see how many can stay. And what project can actually continue. But if there is no funding, people have to leave. It is stressful. I don't want to lie; at this time of year, everyone is stressed. But for me I mean I have only been here one year … Myself I am not stressful. Scary, that you don't really have the hard future that you can't buy a phone contract. It's difficult. You can't commit to anything. Uhhu. Even you can't get married if you want to get married. Cause like, eish, you normally have to pay when we get married. And it is hard to maintain a bigger household. And it becomes stressful for both of you. And you don't really want that stress.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Moreover Lukas's internship was far from home: "*So I thought let me go. It was a challenge because I was going to get very little and it was a long, long way. But, sometimes. I can't guarantee that I will get a job in the province. I thought of it as a challenge to leave my home. Particularly with the amount of money I was going to get…*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Lukas was fortunate enough to secure a renewal of his contract (as a worker rather than intern). Temba's contract was not extended into 2015; he was unemployed at the time of writing (March 2015, per email) but had high hopes for imminent employment.

Eve, Lukas, Lucy, Temba, Patricia and Tilly all described themselves as relating actively to their work and some of their colleagues. This generally brought a sense of fulfilment expressed by all of the above except Patricia, who felt she was too far removed from making an impact on people's lives. For Tilly and Eve it seemed to be the managerial nature of their work that was fulfilling, Lucy found working with communities central to her feeling of reward, Lukas described being fulfilled as a consequence of the academic nature of his work and Temba enjoyed his internships as a result of his political orientation.

Both Lucy and Patricia described incidences where gendered and racial stereotypes affected them negatively: *"(At work) I am the only one who went to a multi-racial school type thing.*

There was this incident; I made a comment in our staff meeting that things should go this way. It seemed like no one was listening. Except for the one who was chairing the meeting. It seemed like: 'Oh whatever…' Then in the next meeting it was, like this thing was said. And I was like, hey those were my ideas! People were making as if they were coming from them. So I think in my work, my colleagues, I don't get full support. Maybe, because of an intimidation type thing. Because my ideas are different. People just want to be in my business. They want to know. They want to have a contribution negatively. It's like I am still on probation." (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Lucy described similar pressures on racial grounds: her position was to socialise with everyone at work – regardless of racial, gender or positional differences. Her colleagues had accused her of trying to be 'white', and of trying to be 'white' in order to garner a promotion, whilst she regarded herself as enlightened.

For Lucy the situation in the office became so pressured that every coffee break and lunch hour as well as meeting became stressful. She felt that she was being judged according to who she sat next to, chatted to and so on. "*I was relaxed when I moved to (satellite office) … Because in the main office I was suffocating. Every day I would get worried. Every day I had to choose. Like am I going to lunch with the blacks or to lunch with (white female colleague)? Am I going to have coffee with (white male boss) or with the others … There is a separation, because apparently, like if you are a field officer, you are black. That means that you are treated in a like, you know, backward way, in an oppressed way and stuff. If you are something more than a field officer that means that you are white or something else. Now if you are a field officer and then you go to coffee there, they (the field officers) say that you are trying to be friends with these people to get position. A better job and stuff … And this other colleague would say that they would never give me anything, even if I try my best, was to show them my teeth and everything … speak good English. So for me it was a relief to go to Riverdon[62]."* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014).

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[62] Riverdon: Small village in which the organisation for which Lucy works has a country satellite office

On a gendered level Patricia described having to work hard to be taken seriously at work as a young black woman (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Lucy reported her interactions within the office as sexualised; in particular her interactions with her boss were being watched by her colleagues for signs of sexual interactions. She also described work in the field as having to be organised around traditional gender roles – in that as an African woman she had to be aware of traditional expectations in order to communicate successfully with the communities in which she operated (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). For both Lucy and Patricia it was clear that the identities that they had developed were no longer congruent with others. This was reported to cause considerable stress and misery for both.

In summary, of the seven participants, Eve, Kirsten and Tilly were employed in fields unrelated to their degrees. Both Eve and Kirsten planned on working in environments more congruent with their higher education. Patricia and Lucy who are employed in positions that could be seen as related to their degrees, were looking for new jobs. For Lucy the negative office environment was improved by her move into a rural setting. Patricia felt that her qualifications and talents were not well used. Both experienced a sense of isolation in the workplace. Lukas was employed in an area in which he felt rewarded and challenged; moreover his contract had been renewed, and he felt that the salary was adequate. While Temba saw himself as employed in an appropriate post, with an appropriate salary, his internship was not renewed. Thus the transition into full-time 'careered' employment had not been straightforward for the participants – their experiences varied in time from un- or under-employed to temporary positions – both within their fields and unrelated, which may or may not lead to long-term career trajectories. For those within fields allied to their degrees, this may contribute towards the building of a social capital for the purposes of finding better employment which was not available to those from poorer backgrounds (Czerniewitz et al., 2010, Furlong and Cartmel, 2005). The same could be said for foreign individuals searching for meaningful employment in a local environment. Also interesting was that five of the participants' experiences were congruent with Neimeyer's (1993) suggestion that students who moved to study would also work far from home.

5.10 Finance

5.10.1 Poverty

The student participants described various levels of resources at their home of origin during the 2010 interviews. Tilly, Kirsten, Patricia and Eve could be described as middle class. Excluding Eve (whose parental status was not known and who as a fully functioning adult seemed to be entirely responsible for herself), these students' parents were earning, and employed outside of the home – as teachers, nurses, government employees and self-employed business people with a certain level of success. Nevertheless all described financial concerns as central to their university lives.

Temba, Lukas and Lucy came from impoverished backgrounds. Temba's father was a rural man practising small-scale agriculture as was his grandmother (with whom Temba had lived as a child). Temba described financial problems throughout his life, primarily with regard to paying his school fees (interviews 2010 and 2014). His father was unable to pay for his secondary education. Registration and uniform were initially subsidised by a good Samaritan, a stranger in a local department store whom Temba approached with his problems hoping for employment. As he was too young to work, a donation was made. Thereafter the school social worker and principal assisted him to continue at the school. He described a school career of *'ducking'* (Temba interview, 15 April 2010) with regard to fees: *"In 2001, when my father pronounced in writing that he would no longer pay school fees, I went with my grandmother to the primary school. The headmaster said no (no school without paying fees). As we left, a teacher came running. I thought she was to chase us, but she said: 'Go to hostel anyway'."* (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). Once he was old enough (grade 10, about fifteen years old), he paid for his own fees by getting a part-time job: *"I worked after school and during weekends so I was able to pay my fees, but that put a strain on my school work. Because you know, I needed time to play but I had to work, then I had to do school work. My marks dropped, like drastically, and I have never been the same since then. But I was able to finish, nonetheless I was able to finish."* (Temba interview, 15 April 2010).

Part of Temba's financial problems stemmed from the fact that his father was reluctant as well as unable to support him: *"He (father) was in the picture you know until such time where his wife forces him to choose, between – I have three sisters so it is four of us from the same mother and father – but so, my father – he had to choose between that group of kids and his wife, with another group of kids so basically he choose his wife. So he was not supporting us and stuff like that. Ya[63] it was (hard for me), it was my year of going to, graduating to high school that my father decided that you know what he just said he does not have money to educate us."* (Temba interview, 15 April 2010). Temba attended a boarding school for children with sight problems which was far from his home and was thus more expensive than the schools of his siblings, but also provided some security in that basic needs were cared for and teachers were interested. He described the standard of the education he and his twin received as superior as a result.

Lukas's father has retired, but he was a migrant labourer who engaged in manual work. Lukas's family of origin was a traditionally organised one, and meagre resources had to be shared amongst many. In 2010 Lukas described his mother's part of the household as having minimal money, which worried him when he saw them and was reminded of their poverty: *"Because sometimes when I'm here I don't know what's happening at home … I don't know what they are eating, how they eating, so well, I don't have problem … but when I go home and find that no! No, they are not eating, they don't have food, I have to; because there are kids – I'm only worried about the kids … I am sure, kuri[64] I'm owing I don't know how much, because … I can't see a little child eating like, all this dried vegetables. No I have to make sure that I get them whatever it is."* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010).

Retrospectively Lukas described money as having powerful implications in terms of one's future chances, and the difficulty in getting out of the cycle of poverty: *"When I was filling those two years (before going to university. People would say you need to apply. You are good enough to apply. I always wanted to apply, but I didn't even have a maybe 50c to make a copy. I would ask my mother and she would swear "where will I get this money…" It was*

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[63]Ya: yes

[64]Kuri: it means

*like oh my goodness! … Sometimes when you give people advice, you don't know what people are facing at home. Offering advice … ok. But sometimes it needs maybe a little bit of cash to implement it … Need, like R 100. Speaking about apply and apply, but you are not speaking to their financial problems. Even myself I had that problem. They are giving you forms but you can't (*fill them in and submit them*) because you haven't got any money. You are like: I don't have money. I can't talk to anyone at home; I can't talk to my friends … So you just say 'yes I have applied' "* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Lucy, Temba and Lukas described the problems inherent in being poor – the need to camouflage poverty, the resulting isolation and the lack of understanding of its paralysing effect. Lukas's sentiments below echoed those of others who describe the non-poor as engaging in a general anti-poverty discourse – often behaving judgementally as a result (Patterson, 2003, Dasandi, 2015, Komlik, 2015): "*There was this teacher who said 'you know what you are not serious'; and I cried, I actually cried. Ya. Because I was going, was … was going up and down for these piece jobs and these one day jobs. Trying to get some money to apply* (to university)*, but I couldn't, I couldn't. I don't want to … I know that sometimes you do need to advise people, but sometimes … it can wound you"* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lucy described her life in an informal settlement in a home where the head of household (mother) was unemployed, and often ill. Her sisters occasionally sent remittances home to assist in the care of the children in the household. In 2010 she reported returning home often, and trying to assist financially with her university allowance and with money from odd jobs and from '*hustling*'. She described this as convincing people to part with small amounts of money by any means, or by stealing it. She laughingly described much of the family survival during her childhood years as being due to 'hustling'. She also described assisting practically by going home to care for the children during her mother's long stints in hospital. Indeed such an incident occurred during the research period and had negative implications for Lucy's academic results.

Interestingly Lucy and Lukas (to a lesser degree) both described having a responsibility to others in their family. Thus they had developed further than independence or interdependence into *responsibility*. This could be a facet of development characterising

those who experience serious poverty and early responsibility. It could also be that 'emerging adulthood' has a different profile for such individuals. In some ways they are far more capable than their contemporaries from well-resourced backgrounds in terms of survival. However, it could be that emotionally and academically they were developing along the same path (for example, Patricia and Temba's wistful reference to the lack of interest and support from family). As discussed elsewhere by 2014 this sense of responsibility seemed to have become mediated by distance, new perspective and a valuing of own needs.

Three of the six traditional aged students (all South African) were from poverty-stricken backgrounds (indicated by their descriptions of home life and their reliance on financial aid). Interestingly however, these were not the same three students who worked in formal term time jobs to supplement their/ their family income. Rather those consistently working during term time described their home lives as better off financially.

Moreover the two male participants did not engage in vacation work either. The fourth, Patricia did not describe her background as poverty-stricken, but she was on financial aid. It was surmised that her family income was at the top end of the NSFAS[65] means test. An added requirement of financial aid is that there is a student portion that needs to be met. Patricia worked as a student to supplement her budget and pay off her debt. It may be that backgrounds of poverty have resulted in less advantaged educations, thus the students believe they have more to make up on the academic front. Or like for Lukas, working showed up poverty. Adding credence to the latter suggestion is the lack of photographic images provided by the students' to the researcher representing what they didn't have, or the ways in which they had to survive on little.

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[65]NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa

Thus the university and government's goal of providing access to higher education for the disenfranchised seems to be partially supportive of the student's goal. The provision of funds is both conducive and constraining: it allows the aforementioned students to be at university, but it is difficult for them to meet all their needs using that budget, leading to stress. Here Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998) exosystem (structures in which the participants are not directly involved) can be seen to be influential to their university experience.

Eve described money as influencing her exchange experience: *"There were money problems. I had to show up with cash and pay myself in the office and pay everything as I went along … Didn't know how much I would need, I managed to make it to the end. I wouldn't have made it if I had gone on some of those excursions."* (interview, 27 October 2015).

In 2014 Lukas described his attitude to money: "*I realise that money is not the answer. But you need money to keep things going. I realise that you need money to keep your life going. Well … like in 2005/6 I had some girlfriends, but by the end of 2005 I had lost them all. You can love each other, but if you don't have money that love can't last. When you have nothing else, you don't really stay together. You can have a girlfriend, she doesn't have money, I don't have money. You are just stuck. You can't help each other's problems. You have this problem, you are in it together, but you don't have a solution. You are stuck. You can't move forward, you can't have anything to talk about. There is only the things you have done in the [past. There is nothing you can do; only what you have done. You can do nothing. The future is not there. The only other thing you can talk about is your current situation and complain.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Thus Lukas took the internship position despite his initial desire to work and live in his own province post-graduation. He also described the inappropriateness of being supported at his age and stage in his life: "*Well my sister, she is working, she has a job, and well she has two 2 kids, and she is supporting her kids and she is supporting our mother and my there is this younger brother of mine. And then I am there, and I am old. And I need money, Can you imagine that I ask my sister for some, I can't ask*

her for some R50 a day for example. It is not fair. People get tired, I mean that that is natural you know... So that's one of the things that motivated me to leave home. Sometimes you have to carry your own self, do your own things." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Responsibility as part of independence was central to the narratives of the participants (Lukas, Temba, Lucy, Tilly and Kirsten) in the 2014 interviews. There was no longer a sense of injustice or inappropriateness in the financial independence of the participants as had been communicated by them as students. This could be an indication of growing independence in an emotional sense and the loss of the expectations of care held in youth, and emerging adulthood.

5.10.2 Finances as Students

As students, the participants had various strategies for survival. As discussed above two of the students in the study worked during term time, one to supplement financial aid and pay off her debt, the other to cover her living expenses. Lucy worked during holidays, reportedly using her earnings for family subsistence.

Financial aid was a major source of funding for the South African members of the sample: both male participants relied solely on financial aid. The two female South Africans also relied on financial aid to differing degrees. For Lucy it was her only income during term time. Patricia supplemented it with her administrative job at her church.

Financial aid as discussed in the literature review is a funding scheme put in place by the government of South Africa. The students in the sample expressed anxiety as a function of their reliance on financial aid for two reasons: the reported irregularity of financial aid pay-outs which made budgeting and planning difficult, and the inadequacy of the financial aid budget.

The students on financial aid described difficulty in budgeting their expenses and lasting until the next pay-out: *"NB: I should have received the meal allowance from 'financial aid'*

this weekend but those people from finance decided not to give it to me and all other students, hence I'm broke and ran out of food" (Lukas diary, 4 April 2010). Moreover the amount allocated was described as insufficient: *"… but what I can say is that as they say, kuri[66] that is the meal allowance. It really is meal allowance; if you take R6.99 and buy a toothpaste you will be short of bread one day I believe … you will be short. Just for one day. So what if I take maybe R20 and buy KFC[67] which we do sometimes, which we do. I mean what if I take someone?, what if someone demands KFC? and then I buy … it means then that I will suffer more than a week. And it's now we are used to that. And that's the week where people steal that last week; because maybe you took money and buy like six pack of Savanna[68] you can used that money for bread all week, ya so I have to make sure that if it's meals allowance: not snacks but meals."* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010). The respondents all described the NFSAS allowance as being tight.

In 2014 Lukas retrospectively described a public stigma associated with the NFSAS grant, due to the extensive queues (where one is visible to passers-by), the need to visit the financial aid office and the uncertainty of payment: "*When you are on financial aid, they know, because every day you are broke. And on the day they pay the money, these guys are buying groceries, so all of you will be going to Checkers[69] that day. And they know the date – they put it on the board … And you will not be seen buying groceries for the rest of the month."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Again this describes a feeling of alienation and difference on the basis of poverty, perhaps as a result of entrenched anti-poverty discourses, or the mechanism discussed in Firfirey and Carollison (2010) of the shaming and humiliation which engenders a wish to hide one's poorness as though it were a personal failure. However Lukas also added that it was also a point of commonality with many other students and a forum of support*: "And sometimes you do talk about it – because when it is all of you, you do talk about it. But I did feel I was on financial aid."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

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[66]Kuri: it means

[67] KFC: Kentucky Fried Chicken, a fast food outlet
[68]Savanna: a South African cider
[69] Checkers: A local supermarket chain, with a store very near to the university grounds

As referred to in the literature review, poverty is multidimensional and relative. As discussed above Lukas, Temba and Lucy described having feelings of inferiority due to their poverty. These three participants came from particularly poor backgrounds. All the financial aid participants described insecurity as a function of their poverty despite their financial aid allowance. Interestingly Patricia, also a financial aid recipient, did not refer to inferiority or insecurity at all- her only problem with the grant is that it did not cover all expenses. This could be due to the fact that Patricia's family were not as poor as the other participants. The former accounts echo the experiences described by the student sample in Firfirey and Carolissen (2010) who were vulnerable as a result of their poverty.

The participants alluded to needs not taken care of by financial aid, such as books, socialising and toiletries. Lukas described it as difficult to meet the needs of his social role as a male and a boyfriend on the income available. The participants' needs were defined by themselves as more than physical – they were also social. As explored elsewhere in the text, technology was a way of keeping in touch with significant others although it was difficult to afford. Moreover the inadequacy of funds was mentioned in the context of its constraining nature – contributing to preventing going to social events and participating in the activities of peers. Here one can understand the relative nature of poverty; while there is an attempt to cater for basic needs, the students have other needs which they experience pressure to fulfil. Moreover in terms of their identity development they may need to experiment with different experiences which could be costly.

For those coming from backgrounds of poverty there was the added pressure of attempting to fit in socially, the inability to do so resulting in isolation. For example, providing food for visitors (Lukas) and wearing the correct clothing (Tilly). In section 5.2 of this chapter there is reference to Lukas's experiences on first coming to university, where he felt that he could not provide for friends what they were providing in terms of food and snacks – he felt cut off as a result. As the participants grew more familiar with the environment and matured,

there was a general realisation that many were in the same situation, and were trying to fit in as well. Again, this is similar to the sample referred to in Firfirey and Carolissen (2010) who tried to mask their poverty. In Lukas's case there was recognition of the stigmatising nature of poverty and a need to disguise it. Lucy too described similar emotions when comparing herself to her 'rich friends'. Both these students however seemed to talk of these feelings in retrospect, as though they had come to accept these parts of their identity without as much shame. Perhaps too, with graduation in sight, they were also looking forward to hopes of a future where poverty was not so much a part of their lives.

Apart from the NFSAS grant the student participants described working (as discussed previously), either at formal jobs as the three (Kirsten, Patricia and Eve) in this sample, or informal jobs, for example reports of other students braiding hair, doing other students' laundry, holiday work, own businesses, as described by Lucy, and Lukas with reference to his sister. Lucy tried a variety of options, for example providing telephonic services to neighbours at home, as well as CV writing, selling sweets and small household necessities. She also appealed to a personal contact from her past to pay her for domestic and garden work. These activities, while entrepreneurial, also seemed to distract Lucy from her studentship. Patricia was sponsored a significant amount of money for fees and registration: *"Professor X from (a faculty at the university), she gave me some money … Ya she gave me some money and I put it towards the fees. 'Cause she was … eh beginning of last year … she was trying to get me registered. Ya 'cause I went to Y and then Y got me with her … Y is one of the coordinators of (an academic department) staff OK? And then she was trying to get me registered, but then I was just nowhere – I needed how much?... ah know I needed to pay everything before I could register and she could only give me R8000 and she gave it to me."* (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010). Here Patricia made contact with other adults and was able to elicit significant support from them (her 'other mother' included). Patricia also referred to the financial and practical support she received from 'strangers' during the period of her financial exclusion as an undergraduate student (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010).

Lucy too reported having called on Mrs P. (a teacher from primary school) for financial help. Lukas referred to a relationship (although not financially supportive) he had developed with Mrs Q, who was the coordinator of an academic support programme. He visited her often and felt distress when she left. Also significant was the participants' (Lucy, Lukas, Temba and Patricia particularly) active approach as well as the creation of new supports – such as Temba approaching a stranger in a supermarket for school fees (Temba interview, 23 March 2010). As shown, many of the relationships predated the participants' time as students.

Moreover while not financially related in any way, all the participants referred to an emerging relationship with the researcher as positive, as discussed in the methodology section. Within these relationships the students were engaged in 'Developing Competence' (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 53) as well as 'Moving through Autonomy towards Interdependence' (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 38). The participants were engaging with adults outside of their family and through such relationships were creating structures of support, financial, emotional and other. At another level the students' involvement in relationships of support with individual university staff members could be a mechanism of the integration prioritised by Tinto (1987: 103). These relationships seemed important to the participants as they were consistently described and made them feel recognised as individuals worthy of such attention. These relationships may also be indicative of what Bronfenbrenner called 'developmentally integrative characteristics' (1993: 10), where the student's "directive belief systems about the relation of the self to the environment" enabled such relationships to develop.

Also described by all the participants was a strategy of sharing amongst friends and others in the residences – for example, Lukas told of numerous occasions where friends fed him and he fed friends. This seemed to be helpful on multiple levels: financially, socially and in terms of the labour required to prepare food (for example, Lukas diary, 3 April 2010, 4 April 2010, 5 April, 21 April). Here one could imagine an informal community of practice being formed around food, and the existence of a social capital based on reciprocity and survival. For Kirsten however, the situation became one where she was exploited and was unable to

identify any return. Four of the student participants also repeatedly described using the occasional university function as mechanisms of being fed by 'gate crashing' catered events or attending catered evening workshops and residence parties.

On such occasions the students described eating well, taking food for later, and for friends who weren't there. While this could not be relied upon as a strategy for survival, it occurred often enough to be frequently mentioned. The participants also described eating cheaper foods, and buying these in bulk as a strategy to ensure food availability. "*I used to eat traditional stuff. (In res) We used to cook every single day. The only reason was that was the only thing we could afford. I don't want to lie to you. It was the only thing we could afford. It was ok. The basic things. Well … I don't know if it was healthy. I think it was healthy.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Tilly reported having to ask her mother for money as 'embarrassing', and her mother's difficulty in providing for her as awkward (Tilly diary, 20 March 2010), suggesting that she felt conflict about her mother's role in supporting her. This would seem to be an example of emerging adulthood, where the participant was experiencing an emergent independence, but also was not quite ready for complete independence.

Patricia also related conflictual feelings about her financial independence and her perception of her parent's obligations towards her in this regard (Patricia diary, 2 April 2010). She described a need to be supported and being forced through necessity to be financially independent. Lukas referred to having to borrow money from his mother when broke – from her meagre monthly household budget of R 230 – which fed and supported his mother, siblings, nieces and nephews. He felt guilty and helpless about this (Lukas interview, 4 May 2010). He also described how pleased he was with a once-off monetary gift from his sister*: "I was pleased, I was because I mean when did someone give me some money I don't know when not even last year, I usually don't receive money from people so there is something I mean something different from what I have been experiencing from the past*

years." (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010). These emotions followed those laid out by Chickering and Reisser's third vector: 'Moving through Autonomy towards Interdependence'. In this case financial independence was referred to, and independence had been forced through circumstance rather than choice. Moreover both Patricia and Lukas indicated that they would like the support of parents if possible. For Patricia this was particularly strong.

Four participants (Lukas, Lucy, Tilly and Kirsten) described other students as using theft as a survival strategy – particularly at the end of the month or semester. *"If you choose to buy beers you can buy beers and you will be broke and you will be stealing and I remember last time somebody decided to steal our meat because they drank all their money and then they were broke and they had to steal to us and that's how they have to live for the rest of the months and it means we have to be extra careful … if there is no party is kind of cool you know is kind of cool no one will, ya, they don't drink much if there is no parties so they don't steal much; they only steal like on the last week before everyone receives the financial aid money that's when they steal."* (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010). Lukas, Lucy and Tilly seemed fairly understanding about such thefts, seeing them as a responsibility to ensure you looked after your own belongings. All three felt that it was a moral dilemma to report such issues, as the perpetrators were in difficult circumstances and their futures would suffer through being caught. The participants did not seem to consider such student theft as indicative of an inherent immorality – merely a response to a situation where the perpetrators had perhaps been foolish in their budgeting. There was also a recognition that poverty is a powerful force in shaping behaviour. Here the students had moved into a situation where right and wrong were contested categories, rather than mutually exclusive.

Eve however, also discussing theft (she was victim to a theft of her belongings) reported outrage and insecurity as a result of the incident. While older, she perhaps did not share the life experiences of the other students nor was she familiar with the ways of functioning of the residence.

It would seem that participating traditional aged students used multiple strategies for financial survival – and referred to others doing the same. The South African students, all of whom were on financial aid, came from the poorest sectors of the South African society, and were less likely to be reliant on their parents for financial input, and seemed to have wider survival networks. Interesting here was the concurrent congruence and incongruence with Chickering and Reisser's themes of developing competence and becoming interdependent. I would argue that while the students, particularly those two who were more middle class – Tilly and Kirsten – found their experiences fitted fairly well within those vectors; the experiences of Lukas, Lucy, Patricia and Temba were somewhat different. They had been independent in many ways for some time before entrance into university – taking on responsibilities for their own survival and progression far beyond their chronological and 'developmental' ages. Moreover they did not seem to have had to develop towards moving away from autonomy into a situation of interdependence: this had been a necessity of poverty and a strategy of survival (both Lucy and Temba described approaching other adults at an early age for assistance). All realised that any assistance was welcome. There was no suggestion that there was any honour in surviving on one's own. Moreover as mentioned elsewhere in the text, there was a ready use of friendship networks amongst the students as a mechanism of survival (other than the relationships with adults as described above). The multiple strategies of survival echo writing on poverty, where the poor are experts at survival and use numerous tactics for that survival.

5.10.3 Finances after Graduation

Both Temba and Lukas described their internships as well paying. Lukas, Temba and Patricia all earned in the region of R20 000 a month. Lukas initially thought that the internship would pay very little, and moved to the site of the position on the strength of its perceived usefulness in terms of experience and immediate financial support. He was pleasantly surprised to be met with a series of raises that increased the allowance. However neither intern was the recipient of benefits such as medical aids or pensions. This Lukas identified as something that would create some support for him: "*I think security is important. If I can get a proper job for a few more years, and then I can get married. I need some security …*

Pension and those things would be a bonus, I don't want to lie." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Patricia regarded herself as being comfortable: "*I have got choices and I am comfortable. As long as I don't do unplanned purchases; which I do all the time. I am enjoying being on my own and being young."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Lucy however was battling on her salary: "A s*alary of R8 000 kind of killing my dream"* (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). She was frustrated that she couldn't afford to buy a car or have a bigger plot for her gardening and animal projects. The salary problem had created ambivalence about her work – on the one hand she found it rewarding, and on the other, she wanted a job with better remuneration.

Kirsten related her budgeting: *"Mmmm last month, I got paid R2 900. Because you get a basic salary. So it is R2 900. And then from the tips, maybe I get R1 700 from the tips on the side. So I am able to pay my rent, which is R2 300. So that leaves me with R600, plus the other R1 700, which is quite ok for me. Ya. I rent a room."* (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014). While earning the least of the participants (and well below the R7 000 a month suggested by Guba and Lincoln in 2005), Kirsten described herself as content in being able to cover costs. Tilly refers to money as *'tight',* and without the benefit of regularity (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014) as a consequence of having one's own business. Eve described being paid better as a result of her promotion at work (interview, 27 October 2015). She described being comfortable but not in luxury in terms of income. Extra expenses such as trips to visit grandchildren were difficult to cover.

None of the respondents seemed to be earning in the high income brackets. Their expectations were modest in terms of current South African living expenses. In terms of the quality of their work, Lukas, Temba and Kirsten have not found permanent positions, while Patricia and Lucy (who are in permanent employment) were looking for jobs that were more suitable. Eve was content to continue in her position until she completed her professional

postgraduate qualification. Tilly was entrenched in her job as a family endeavour. It would seem that while being able to afford more expensive foods and belongings (and thus experimentation), none of the participants showed that their degrees had been translated into significant financial rewards. Thus they had not as yet been able to access the cultural and symbolic capital (as described by Bourdieu, 1990) to enable a dramatically upwardly mobile trajectory.

5.11 Academic Commitments as Students

5.11.1 Workload

All the participants (except Lucy) described themselves as heavily committed to their studies as students in 2010. They reported putting in long hours of study and having many assessments to complete. The study covered class, vacation and exam time, and the students reported being busy academically throughout. For example: "*The month of April I will never forget this month … This month of April is one of the hardest semesters of my academic history. I can't breathe all I can simply do is to cry. At times I get so moody when I think. Not healthy, seriously. There is simply lots of work in every module and I don't think I can stand the pressure, it's too hard for me to face.*" (Tilly diary, no date).

The students' hours were reported as long and irregular: going to bed late, working through the night and sleeping during the day, were all consistently and repeatedly reported by all of the traditional aged students. They also described a habit of studying, then napping and studying again, as a strategy to complete assignments, rather than a regular bedtime and long stretches of sleep. Authors such as Teufel, Brown and Birch (2007) have referred to students creating their own rhythms and routines which differ from those at home, or in the 'outside world'.

For example: "*Things were just terrible. (Interviewer: Why?) No, in fact I don't know, but I mean we had like to much to submit. Only school work, like I have been so occupied by school work and I have submitting like almost as far nje[70] … to submit almost every day, so I*

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[70]Nje: conversational pause meaning variously just/ something not important/ you know

don't still remember like, sleeping before twelve – I sometimes, I use not to sleep at all. I went to sleep like during the day … but I theoretical need time to do some other stuff like studying, unless I decide to give myself a break then I could need the rest for some hours and then get back to work again. Well it was terrible, it was terrible. I mean, there was no way I couldn't cope because I mean if, like I used to sleep it means I would not have submitted some of the stuff. But as much as I was submitting I was eager that I was like getting everything done nje though it was terrible." (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010) and *"I was awake you know this … I think for the past week maybe I slept for less than three hours or four a day seriously."* (Tilly interview, 14 May 2010). Similar experience caused all the participants significant stress and fatigue. All the students were completing their majors in 2010, and one of the subjects that they were all (with the exception of Eve) taking was reported to have high expectations, with long assignments and field trips. However it was not clear if they could have improved their situation through more effective planning.

Patricia was the only participant who implied that she could have planned things better: *"I'm very bad with time management … it is something that this vac[71] I need to sort out 'cause I'm behind; especially with (a subject) I'm behind … I'm very behind. I really need to sort out my time … not that I don't have time – I mean I could do some things but you … no, sometimes I do think that I have got too many other responsibilities but I can work around them … I do have the time but then again I got bad habits of sleeping (laughs). Sleeping right now is a luxury which I take which I am not suppose to and sometimes obviously I must take."* (Patricia interview, 29 March 2010). Both Patricia and Kirsten who were working off campus, believed that work compromised their studies due to a lack of time.

Three (Kirsten, Tilly and Patricia) of the younger female students described studying as having to take priority over other tasks: *"Spent the whole day busy with my school work to the extent that I never had time to cook or prepare my room."* (Tilly diary, 22 March 2010). Here the student role took priority over other roles, perhaps gendered responsibilities of

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[71] Vac: vacation

cleaning and preparing food. It also took priority over pleasures, for example: "*I still had to do it, since it is unending. There were actually six assignments for that module. I missed Generations and felt pretty bad.*" (Lukas diary, 19 April 2010). Lukas reported asking female friends to help with cooking when busy with assignments (the same request was made repeatedly of different girls during the duration of the study, and was not isolated to times of academic stress). It could be that these tasks were regarded by Lukas as female responsibilities. However it could also be that it was a part of the complex strategy of support engaged in by the students: when the friends cooked for Lukas, they also shared in the resultant meal.

While Eve reported working hard, she did not consistently describe the above habit. Only once did she report going to bed at three a.m. as a result of assignments due. However she did describe sleepless nights. She explained these as being due to worry over the situation at home, and distress over the security at the residence (people knocking on the door, trying the lock and so on). Eve reported being in control of her academic work. She was older than the other students, more experienced and had English as a first language and was from a different educational system.

Eve evidenced a different concern to the others about course content. While the younger students were concerned about attendance and work completion, Eve had definite ideas about what content she was prepared to accept: *"(a subject) was unsettling for me. Our instructor for this next section isn't just going to talk about health, etc. he is a practising traditional healer. I may miss some lectures. We'll see. (A friend- fellow exchange student) is excited and curious. I don't share the enthusiasm."* (Eve diary, 6 April 2010). It may be that Eve, as older, was more discerning and assertive of her own ideas. She was also entrenched in her own identity and belief system. She has perhaps long passed through the development of Chickering and Reisser's vector 'Developing Integrity' (1993: 235) where there is an effort to bring one's own behaviours into line with one's principles. Only two other comments were made regarding course content and these were in reference to the boring nature of the subject matter (Lukas and Tilly). Eve also made a comment showing

that she looked at assessment differently to the other participants: rather than hard or easy (as was mentioned on several occasions by Kirsten, Lukas and Tilly), she rated an assessment as 'fair' (Eve diary, 7 April 2010). She also expressed dissatisfaction with various decisions (cancelled lectures, cancelled practicals, assignments) made within courses which she felt decreased the value of the courses. As discussed above, in addition to her maturity, Eve was the product of a very different education system, which may have encouraged more reflexivity and enabled her to make judgments on the course itself rather than the impact on herself as in the other comments.

All the participants described approaching academic staff (other than the researcher) for advice and assistance on academic matters. The participants (with the exception of Lucy) seemed to be fully committed and assimilated into the academic system of the university at the point of the interviews in 2010 – their final undergraduate year, which for Tinto (2006) was essential for student persistence.

5.11.2 Academic Pressure

All the students in 2010 described making great academic effort (except Lucy who seemed to have different priorities). They (Temba, Lukas, Patricia, Kirsten and Tilly) also described the pressure that they experienced to perform well academically. For example, they felt apprehensive about tests and assignments, nervous about receiving the assignments back and variously affirmed, happy or humiliated when these were returned: *"And then I got my assignment back and I was soo disappointed with my assignment … I didn't even have the energy to read for the next test; and I was like: OK! if I am not going to study for the next test what will I do? Because I just can't get into a test without even knowing anything … and then … and the submission and everything … I was so angry – it came from being discouraged to being so angry and I was like; ha[72]! OK I'm also suppose to submit; I'm also suppose to write a test; so what am I suppose to do now? And then I just said to myself you know what? Don't do anything and I didn't do anything that day … I just sat and then I went*

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[72] Ha: conversational pause denoting exclamation or surprise

to work. So when I was at work that's when I came back and I said to myself OK I have to cool down first so that I will be able to study" (Kirsten interview, 15th April 2010). This experience affected her next submission: "*I'm actually like, I am so scared to even start looking at the report … and say OK how am I suppose to do it or OK fine if I am going to do it. What if the same thing happens again? How am I supposed to do … and I'm supposed to do a presentation and I … I … I'm just still so nervous to even start looking at the report … start looking at the presentation. How I'm suppose to submit it? How am I going to like, present it to the class, when my essay was that bad?*" Kirsten did not mention making use of any feedback on the assignment – it may be that there was inadequate feedback, that she was unable to use the feedback effectively considering her emotional state, or that the feedback was not seen as a way of turning a negative experience into a constructive one and was thus not mentioned. Tilly also reported embarrassment on rereading a poorly received assignment, and on a separate occasion when handing in an essay she considered substandard (Tilly interview, 14 May 2010).

Tilly expressed similar sentiments on the other end of the scale (Tilly diary, 7 April 2010): "*I had a (particular subject) test. The test did not come well as expected, but I was happy I passed with a relatively high mark though it was not my expectation. I felt so hurt trying comparing my mark with the other one who had 89%, whilst mine was 66%. My second test was (another subject), (lecturer X's) sector. This test made me realise something about myself "I really undermining my efforts too much" (Lecturer X) sent us on email saying that he was not impressed with the marks for the test … but only for two students who chose the first question. That day I was on the middle of the discussion … but only I did was simply to drop everything and go straight away to the office. On the way I met Kirsten and she told me I was the highest. I couldn't believe myself up to until I saw my paper. This was one of my greatest moments in the month of April. I never thought that one day I might be a highest in (that subject) looking at the way I used to struggle with it in second year. I think that very day I told everyone … even on Facebook I updated my status.*" Lukas and Temba described similar moments of pride from having done well (Lukas interview, 11 May 2010; Lukas photograph of assignment with mark, 11 May 2010; Temba interview, 10 March 2010).

The above descriptions validated Barnett's (2007) suggestion that the student is heavily invested in their academic work. The claim that they are giving of and risking themselves and are thus vulnerable, is attested to above. It would seem that assessment is central to the being of the student. They are literally offering themselves through their assignments and tests. Moreover their developing self is dislocated – from the pre-student to student and beyond. It is almost as though there was break in identity within the development towards the final offering. This could be more dramatic in the experience of those who come from poverty, tradition and disadvantage.

Tilly, Kirsten and Lukas also repeatedly expressed their motivation to do well, as Tilly illustrated in an interview on 14 May 2010: *"My academics it's my personal decision … this is what I want – it's a matter of sacrificing – this is real what I want no matter how hard you see it, I have to go about it … that's the life. There is nobody who will control you. Even if I just sleep there … I don't attend lectures … nobody will ever come to my room, and say 'Tilly you have to come to lectures you have bring assignments'. It's kind of self leadership – you lead yourself, and usually for me – I stay away from home, about 1 600kms away from home – I am the one does all the final decisions, my mum is only for money (laughs). I only need her for money … but when it comes to leading myself I'm the one, I'm the one who decides with this thing, I'm the one who controls my effort in everything ya … so I think I'm the final word. Because I discover that when I came in first year; this is no longer a life when I need somebody to push me you know".* The recognition of the need for self-discipline and an internal locus of control indicated a wisdom that had developed through the engagement with the student project and maturation.

Tilly also noted an awareness of the transitory nature of the university engagement: *"What I have discovered for school, it's a phase, is part of a phase … it pass through, if it's another one that comes it pass through … That's what I have discovered. I know this holiday I am not going home: I will be doing the placement in Drakensburg for (a subject).Ya for (a subject);*

ya I know, it's boring … you know going and stay in the rural areas for one month, but I have just discover … let me just take it as a holiday in a new different environment, a new different place, ya let just treat it as a holiday." In 2014 Tilly communicated a sense of wistfulness about student life and again described it as though it were an interlude separate from her real life (Tilly interview, 16 December 2014). Lukas and Patricia also retrospectively identified a similar feeling of transience regarding student commitment (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014, Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Eve too was very clear that her time at the University of KwaZulu-Natal was an interlude to her real life (Eve interview, 16 March 2010). The participants were engaging with their environment and commitments at the university while simultaneously looking to the future.

All the respondents (as students) in contexts similar to the above referred to their own agency and responsibility in ensuring academic success. This echoes Bloomer (1997) in his concept of 'studentship' where the students' active responsibility and involvement is important. All the participants referred to the need to make the right choices and sacrifices in order to succeed as students. They also saw the role of student as instrumental for their future (here echoing the goal orientatedness of Chickering's vector 'Developing Purpose' (Chickering and Reisser, 1993: 209). Here the students seemed to be integrating parts of their life with their goals.

5.11.3 Intellectual Development
"I look at society with that eye. It's totally different. You seem to be like; this weird person. Like: 'guys you are missing the important things of life you know: it's like these stupid things that you read or these movies that you watch. Then you look at society with that eye … An eye. A way of analysing society. Like different groupings of society or how they act or think. It's like … ya[73]: 'Guys you are losing yourself'. These things that we read about[74]. They were so boring. With no reference to life whatever … But when you are outside. It's like a recollection or a recalling. It's like you think yo[75] there was some relevance. There was some truth in that. You deliberate in your mind, and then your voice comes out. This theorist: why

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[73] Ya: yes
[74] While at university
[75] Yo: oh

don't you agree? It really opens up your mind. It gives you like an edge. I think you have an edge, I think I have an edge…" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). Patricia, Lukas, Tilly, Temba and Lucy all described thinking in critical ways about the world around them. "*You learn that good things you can extract from what you are learning. I see myself as more of a critic now. I don't just look at things at face value. I am comfortable in academia but there is too much red tape.*" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

They all described this as a rewarding outcome of their studies. Indeed such thinking is often considered an important outcome of university education by curriculum developers. The above participants reported a pleasure in their analytic ability and analytic confidence. However it came at certain cost for all the above, who described a sense of separation from significant others as a result – for example being unable to discuss politics, films or books with individuals within intimate circles. This is further discussed in sections 5.6 and 5.8.2. This indicates that the participants were not necessarily experiencing strong integration (as described by Tinto, 1987) in their close relationships, nor supportive conditions at the micro and meso levels of their social environment as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1993, 1977, 1992).

Lukas, Temba, Tilly, Patricia and Lucy (2014) referred to being conscious of certain discussions having to happen with the right groups of people i.e. work colleagues, mentors or friends from the student days: "*People they will be like 'ok'. And they will be hoping that you will stop like very soon. Not academic books, scholarly articles and stuff like that.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Lucy, for example, narrated her perceptions of her own identity in terms of an ability to adapt: "*I find myself adapting in different places. I don't think I change at all. I adapt a lot. In different situations. Like nje, yesterday after work, I had to go chill with my friends in the rural area, who are people I am getting used to. But ya, it is tough. Because there are some things I don't enjoy. You have no idea. I grew up in the dump ya, but you … Some people*

think I am trying to be white. My person is still the same, but then I have to behave in a different way. You have to be careful … Because if they are work, or managers, or others …" (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). The examples narrated indicate that the educational capital (Bourdieu, 1986) amassed by some of the participants has resulted in a need for a conscious manipulation of that capital in the different scenarios and strata in which the graduates find themselves.

Patricia has also had to grapple with value laden racial ideas when thinking about her identity: "*You know growing up there used to be this whole dark skin light skin type of thing. Like you guys (people with white skin) have that blond girl, dark hair type thing. I was a dark skin girl. For a long time I had a problem with that. It was perceived as less than, or inferior to. But now, I don't know, I just want to enjoy and love it. My structure is mine. It is mine. It is still a journey.*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

While membership and attendance at various churches was mentioned by some of the participants in 2010, with Patricia and Eve being particularly integrated into such communities, by 2014, none of the participants were attending religious institutions with any regularity. Both Patricia and Eve described being unable to find a group with whom they could bond, and Patricia narrated her growing questioning of religious tenets (interviews 2014). Lukas as a student was not a churchgoer; in 2014 he was attending occasionally with his fiancé but described being critical of many what he regards as exploitative practices (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Tilly and Kirsten both attended church on rare occasions and it would seem for both, without fervour. Temba described himself as being spiritual rather than religious (interview, 25 October 2014). However Temba seemed to straddle African traditional and Christian frameworks concurrently. Temba described the need to eradicate dangerous practices associated with traditional beliefs in 2014, but as a student found meaning therein: "*I have decided to stop going to fortune tellers. Things that come out of them are things that are out of my control.*" (Temba interview, 25 October 2014). However he also related a lingering curiosity about his ancestors, as well as a fear of transgressing their lore (interview, 25 October 2015).

5.12 Taste (2010, 2014)

The theme of taste runs through all the other themes and over time. 'Taste' in this case refers to what the participants enjoy, appreciate, value and can afford in all aspects of their experience. It is of interest as a reference to Bourdieu's (1984) suggestion that 'taste' is a mechanism of both cultural capital and class separation. In the context of the participants' completion of their degrees (particularly those who were from poor backgrounds and families new to higher education), the descriptions of the things that are valued are of interest.

In 2010, the participants described clothing and food as being important with food seen as a mechanism of survival, but also as a social tool. Clothing was similarly described, but was also seen as something for which the participants had aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment. The female participants (Lucy, Patricia, Kirsten and Tilly) all provided the researcher with photographs of themselves wearing various outfits in 2010. Laptops and cellular phones were reported to be items with status attached and functional value. Consumption was, however, largely of a pragmatic nature.

The question was revisited in 2014, by which time the participants relayed having had opportunities to invest in new things. None of the participants described having invested in anything that might be classified as 'highbrow' cultural artefacts – for example: "*I don't look at painting or jewellery or ornaments. Not even a bit of painting. I won't afford jewellery so I won't look at it. But painting is not my thing at all. I don't even understand art. Like I look at some drawing, and they explain it to you. And I am like: 'ok thank you'. I don't understand what's going on. I am very illiterate when it comes to art. I don't want to lie. And I can't do painting. No, no, no. I mean I can't even play the guitar. I can't even play a keyboard.*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Temba, Lukas, Lucy and Patricia all described eating differently as a result of economic resources and of exposure to new things: "*When I started getting little extra money, I began to introduce myself to some such things like Nandos, KFC, Pizza, Wimpy[76] and stuff like that. Buying something I have never seen. Now I have been introduced to those seafoods – fish, and prawns and stuff like that. But I couldn't afford it before. Now maybe I can go a week without cooking, eating that traditional food. I eat a lot. Sit in. I mean now I even go to Mug and Bean. I hadn't even ever been to Mug and Bean. I don't even understand the menu. But anyway, I just point at it and then eat it...*" (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Patricia described her new favourite foods as being meat, pasta and potato wedges: "*I never thought, like … oh my gosh! In 2009 when I was crying for food, that I would be buying from Woolies[77]. Like A grade steak. Yo!(laughs)*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014). The differentiation between these foods and the 'traditional foods' mentioned may be related to expense, cultural preference and class. However, contrary to the above is Kirsten's enjoyment of traditional foods as a foreigner living locally – she prepared foods from home when possible and dreamed of a cooking course to learn how to better prepare such foods.

Once employed, the participants described their important purchases. Both Lukas and Patricia referred to buying beds as having been a priority (Lukas bought three – for his rural home, his mother and his lodging. "*Yo, I love my bed. My bed that I sleep in. I love it. I miss my bed when I am not in it. Yo! It is comfortable, it is beautiful. Oh and I have got very nice linen. So like, ya. It is inviting. It is my place of rest. It is important. I was like … You know what I want to buy myself a good bed. I was like; I am willing to invest money into it. A good bed doesn't come cheap. A bed you can sleep in maybe a couple of thousand, but a good bed … you know that, aaah ya. I am here to rest.*" (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

Patricia had also bought herself a small car which she referred to as having given her independence. Lucy and Lukas were hoping to buy cars in the near future. Lucy hoped to get herself a serviceable double cab truck that would be useful in her work. However "*Money

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[76] All takeaways
[77] Woolies: short for Woolworths, an upmarket South African department store

introduces us to many things. For example I thought I would buy a car. In my life, now you can imagine! I think I would like to buy a car. That's one thing I would like. At this stage I think I would buy a Toyota Run X. A Yaris kind of car or something like that. A Corolla - something like that. At this stage … But if I had the money I would buy the Dodge. If I was comfortable nje, I would buy a Dodge. There is a particular Dodge that I like. To be honest I don't know why … Well first and foremost when I look at those Dodges, I see that they look stronger, and they are big – Dodge bakkies[78]. But I mean look, because, I mean I don't have money, so I don't know about the engineering and stuff like that, the comfort, I don't really know much about those things … You have seen the Dodge Ram? The big Dodge bakkie. If I was driving one, I think I would think 'ooooh my goodness, I am king'. I think it is about status. Because it is all about people you know, not about the thing. It is not about just moving. It is about status. How do you seem? About how people look at you." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014).

Two of the participants related their enjoyment of being able to wear exclusive clothing: "*I am quite stylish, I must say so myself (laughs). Um ok. I like to make a statement. No matter what it is …Because obviously I don't shop from the same shop or the same category as everyone else. But I love clothes, I enjoy clothes. I enjoy looking good. I think if I look good, I internalise it and interpret it … I think 'today I am looking hot.' Ya. My clothes and my hair. I can't afford to have a bad hair. It just doesn't work with me. I just feel so ugly and so …I need to have my hair well maintained."* (Patricia interview, 4 November 2014).

I think it is the money, yes to be honest, I think it is the money. Because I even changed my attire. Like now I have changed my attire like completely. I am wearing some takkies[79]. But the label is saying some French thing. Small and flat. Daniel Hechter jeans. I would never think of buying jeans for R600. I never thought I would buy some pants for over R200. You know, that kind of thing. I never thought I would do that. Long ago, this guy bought some shorts for over R400. I said, I thought 'you are crazy'. I said I would never do that. I would

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[78] Bakkie: a truck
[79] Takkies: sport/ tennis shoes

buy for R120 and that would be ok for the next two years, the next three years. Now I buy. Now I realise that sometimes you know you just have to look smart." (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). As described by Bourdieu, it is evident that positional aesthetic appreciation has a relationship to the perception of the self and the body.

Lucy reported that she has moved past buying clothes in favour of saving to go overseas (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Eve, Tilly and Temba did not mention clothing when referring to valued purchases, while Kirsten reported that her budget was strict and she could only get what she really needed (Kirsten interview, 4 November 2014).

The participants reported having bought TVs and DVD players (except Lukas and Eve), as well as laptops, tablets and cellular phones: *"Well I mean I have bought myself a laptop. For the first time in my life I have my own laptop. I never had a laptop."* (Lukas interview, 31 October 2014). Lucy expressed disappointment with her expensive cell phone, as it was not as useful as she had hoped (Lucy interview, 26 October 2014). Congruent with Bourdieu's (1984) suggestion that aesthetic discrimination has a relationship to status, the participants have cumulatively described a journey from very functional choices of food, clothing and objects to items meeting those needs, but also focussed towards luxury. Central is the suggestion that the participants now identified themselves as having a choice regarding their 'taste'.

5.13 Rounding Off

Due to the length, bredth and diversity of the themes discussed in the section 5, this coalesces data, and introduces ideas common to many of the themes in preparation for the conclusion. The participants involved all described themselves as having experiences that could be classified as those of separation (from family and community, experientially, psychologically and practically) and transition (where they described becoming integrated into their new lives as a students). For example, making studying a priority, starting to assume the specific norms created in their residence and sharing daily rhythms with those

that live in residence with them. Upon graduation, rhythms of the independent individual were described.

As described in the data, early student experiences for this group initially brought confusion and loneliness, but later seemed to become an automatic part of their lives. While all describing isolation and confusion upon *entry* into the university, the interviewees described themselves as being integrated into student life by the time of the initial interviews (their final undergraduate year). Even the mature exchange student had become familiar with the routines of South African student life, although she was not enamoured with all its vagaries. All described being part of groups within the university, of understanding its rhythms, for example, assessment cycles, and its members. Thus all the participants described a move from being affiliated to their home or school to being affiliated to the university. Lucy was perhaps the only participant who found the transition incomplete at this time: her home responsibilities and roles conflicted dramatically with those of 'studenthood'.

By their third year of study, the participants (except the short-term exchange student whose exposure to the campus was transitory) had strong social networks and support systems in place within the university. However, only one of the participants was involved in formal university extracurricular activity. Notwithstanding this, the participants all engaged in similar behaviours, in terms of socialising, studying and for two, working. For Tinto (1987), following Durkheim (1952), the student's social integration is important. This forms part of what he termed 'Personal/ Normative integration' (1987). The individuals in this cohort were clearly socially integrated with their contemporaries: they shared meals, study groups and daily habits (for example, the shared watching of a local soap opera). In this sense the participants seemed to make their own structures of support at the level of the microsystem (cf Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1992, 1993, 1998), preferring peers and communities of practice over university provided structures (university counselling and the disability office). Moreover four of the participants described feeling increasingly out of place in their home environments after long exposure to university.

While Tinto envisaged a movement away from the original positioning of the individuals in their culture as a function of their engagement with university, he did not necessarily envisage the movement into a completely different culture, or that the graduate might become part of multiple cultures or have parallel facets to their identities or indeed figuratively inhabit a space which is not necessarily within the bounds of any particular cultural system. Thus the 'incorporation' envisaged by Tinto did not occur in this study's sample. The sentiment of isolation was echoed through graduation and employment. The sample could be figuratively described as having undertaken a journey in which they had begun to make their own choices, form their own opinions and experiment with their adult selves in the context of their surrounding systems.

In terms of what Tinto (1987) labelled as pre- (university) entry attributes, the participants had varying levels of support, and of exposure to higher education through family background. Similarly, their skills, abilities and prior schooling were varied, from Eve, a mature product of a first world education system to Lukas, the recipient of rural based schooling in disadvantaged circumstances.

It is interesting that none of the participants mentioned approaching institutional mechanisms for support during their time as students (other than financial aid and Lukas's attendance at an exam preparation workshop which was described as being for the free food and the better television for watching *Generations*). Three of the participants mentioned not considering using student counselling services as they were not considered practically useful. The participants did not describe being part of any organised university social life. The participants seemed more focussed on themselves, their independently constructed peer groups and outside groups. The institution was not often mentioned by the participants in either positive or negative ways. This links to the ideas of social integration as described by Tinto (1987) through using the ideas of Durkheim; institutionally in the narratives examined, norms were neither seen as overly strong nor overly supportive

– but as indifferent. Ties with the university as an entity in itself (apart from the participants' own projects of studentship which necessarily exists within the institution) were not particularly evident. Nevertheless, on the whole, the participants prevailed. It could be that to this group, agency and self-determination despite various inhospitable environments has proved more effective.

The subjects were, however, involved in outside groups to varying intensities (namely religious organisations). Particular emphasis in this regard was made by the female participants. Involvement in church based activity could be an important link between home and university life, rural/urban, Zimbabwe/South Africa, under resourced and resourced lifestyles. In other respects the participants seemed to be living a different lifestyle to their pre-student experience. All participants came from religious homes. For some, these homes were both Christian and based on traditional African religion. While the latter seemed to recede while at university, the Christian aspect came to the fore. Upon university exit, church membership was withdrawn and for some disappeared completely (Eve and Patricia). With the exception of Tilly, the 2014 interviews showed a movement away from integration into church based groupings, either due to a questioning of the principles, or as a result of being unable to find a church which suited the needs of particular participants (Eve and Patricia).

Social roles as recognised by Bronfenbrenner (1979) also proved to be important to the student experience in this study. While some social behaviours narrated were at odds with the academic role, for example drinking, partying and entertaining, these were relatively mild. In general terms 'studenthood' is recognised as a period of social freedom and experimentation. It seemed however that for this sample, the freedom was tempered by an expectation that success as a student had very wide reaching implications; in fact the stakes were too high in terms of their own and family futures. Moreover the subjects described being strongly conscious of the economic and academic expense of social activity. Thus for these students, experimentation had to occur within limits set by poverty and insecurity.

Nevertheless the social role had for some conflicted with the student role at times during the degree period. Divergence occurred between the role of worker and student, and girlfriend/ boyfriend and student. In the main however, the social and academic roles were well mediated, and in fact supported one another for most in this sample (see the communities of practice created around academic support and around practical survival). Of course it must be accepted that the participants' own descriptions of their social activity may have been mediated by the audience of the researcher, and the researcher's identity as part of the academic faculty. In some contexts, however, the goal of the academic system was supported by the social in that general learning also happened in a social environment.

Except for Lucy, the participants as students all described being focussed in terms of having intention and commitment as outlined by Tinto (1987) towards their studies. There seemed to be a commitment towards academic work, and the goal to graduate. Lukas and Tilly specifically wished to excel. These goals are congruent with the goals of the university. The university aspires to a student-centred philosophy: the University of KwaZulu-Natal "has a student-centred ethos, providing students with curricula, teachers, infrastructure and support services designed around their needs and producing well-educated, competent, sought-after graduates" (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2012). However the practical implementation of this goal is beyond the scope of the study to investigate. According to Tinto's model, the closer the goals of the organisation and the individual, the more the chances of success for the participant.

The participants' development was also shown to be congruent with Chickering's (Chickering and Reisser, 1993) vectors of identity formation, where students began to widen their social circles beyond those provided by the home. Relationships with new people of differing descriptions (for example, adults and members of faculty) were cultivated, and new ways of looking at the world and dealing with issues were described. However there were some differences from Chickering's vectors in that some of these participants,

particularly those experiencing deep poverty, had already embarked on certain experiences of development prior to leaving school. This, in some ways the phase of emerging adulthood particular to late adolescence and congruent with university experience for traditionally aged students, had been pre-empted by the individuals' attempts to manipulate their environment positively at an earlier age. This led to established roles for some of the participants as workers and survivors in addition to that of students.

At the level of the microsystem (in Bronfenbrenner's terms) it was clear that the individual participants evidenced different skills, interests, commitments and interpersonal relationships throughout the study. For example, the ways in which Patricia as a student accessed funding from an individual staff member could be seen as due to her particular "personal stimulus characteristics", aspects of what Bronfenbrenner called "developmentally instigative characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10), enabling a particular reaction from that member of faculty. She was undoubtedly not the only student with a need for funds. In terms of Bronfenbrenner's "selective responsivity", the participants all looked at the world in differing ways and responded to its challenges differently. Both Patricia and Kirsten, for example, found themselves overwhelmed by working and studying, but continued to do so, seeing themselves as achievers for doing this. However Lukas did not regard fortitude as meritorious in this regard, rather choosing to put his energy elsewhere. These same characteristics were not evident in the same ways in the graduates' search for work; for those in employment this happened through the usual channels of responding to newspaper adverts and dropping off curriculum vitae. However the activeness of the job searching could be characteristic of the above. Lukas, Temba, Lucy and Patricia, for example, were energetic job seekers, while Kirsten had become discouraged. The accessing of particular work encounters (for example, Lukas and Patricia searching for more critical ways to engage in their work) within employment and new social encounters (strongly described by Lucy and Lukas) is also part of the above.

In terms of the participants' 'structuring proclivities' (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) -these are different levels of perseverance and participation that the participants evidenced, resulting

in unique learnings; the example of work also applies in the context of academic engagement. Amongst other things, time management, role manipulation and prioritisation, as well as strategies to deal with stress (some more effective than others) were learned by the students/ graduates. In the context of this study, Bronfenbrenner's fourth aspect of his developmentally instigative characteristics, the 'directive belief systems about the relation of self to the environment' was of note. Most of the participants expressed a sense of agency regarding their own actions within the environment in which they found themselves. For instance, Temba claimed he did not want to complain about his background, he "just wanted to get on with life" and Temba, Tilly, Lukas and Kirsten all talked about how they were responsible for their student outcomes. However there were some lapses in these positions. Patricia (as a student) active in her own survival and believing it was empowering for her to be so, would occasionally refer to the need to be given something that would make her life better, a case in point being a car or laptop. Kirsten and Tilly showed similar sentiments. Those individuals are perhaps still developing in terms of their independence through to interdependence (as described by Chickering and Reisser, 1993): they mourned the loss of dependence, or regarded their enforced lack of dependence with regret.

However the above may also be a function of their relative well-off position and gender as opposed to the position of Lukas and Temba. In conjunction with the lesser importance given to institutional arrangements and the use of agency in that context, this is clearly a complex issue which is impacted on by the individual's characteristics, roles, position in time and systems. As graduates, similar ways of dealing with the world were described: Lukas, Lucy and Patricia particularly referred to their own role in gaining successful employment and creating a personal life. This active negotiation of personal life happened in the context of structured expectations and pre-existing roles.

Bronfenbrenner's (1992) idea of the 'mesosystem' enables one to make visible the relationships that occur between two or more microsystems. For the students, the mesosystem makes visible the relationships between their different contexts, for example, family and university life. The participants in the study all described the aforementioned

relationship as somewhat uneasy: for the students from Zimbabwe and the United States, distance and unfamiliarity created separation (Eve, Tilly and Kirsten); for those from South Africa distance (Lukas, Temba and Patricia), poverty (Lukas, Temba and Lucy) and unfamiliarity (Patricia, Lukas, Temba and Lucy) created a sense of separation and dislocation between the systems, a relationship that is not congruent or nor positive towards study. This feeling has been explored earlier in the section in the context of the participants move into the university system. Thus, for different reasons the above system did not produce a positive learning environment for the student participants. Peer relationships, however, at the level of the mesosystem were in general supportive (with the exception of the expressed problems around the commitments of a romantic nature interfering with study, for example Kirsten and Lukas, although for Kirsten her boyfriend was also at times a supportive force). Peer relations were expressed as assisting with survival and with academic coping.

At the point of their final undergraduate year, the participants described themselves as being involved in reciprocal relationships as students, particularly at the level of peer interaction, thus, for example, the sharing and preparing of food and the groups that clustered around learning as discussed on page 286 were all examples of reciprocal relationships within the microsystem that impacted on the relative success of the student in the study. As graduates, however these relationships were not evident. While one of the participants was married and in a fixed social group, the others all seemed to regard their social interactions with a transitory eye: not settling, not being able to create particularly supportive peer relations, and being both geographically and experientially detached from family – although as discussed these relationships tended to be characterised by inner conflict. Moreover the participants were living at a distance from life partners: geographically (some) and intellectually (all) at this point (2014).

The next level – the 'exosystem' (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) – deals with systems affecting the individual but which are not necessarily part of the individual's direct ambit of involvement. For example, governmental agencies and their policies affect students, as do university

structures and their actions. Impacting on the participants is the South African government's commitment to redressing inequality, thus the attempt to create an enabling environment for the participants to attend university. This is both at the level of financial aid and the university's policy of the augmented curriculum, allowing access on academic grounds to those who would not have otherwise qualified. One of the important actors seemed to be NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa) and the financial aid system. At a personal level the ramifications of these were significant: both enabling access for all of the South African participants, and creating survival and survival pressure at the same time. Without any allowance, attendance at university would be impossible; however all participants described problems in making the allowance last.

Using the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner (1992), at the level of the 'macrosystem' cultural, economic and social systems are recognised, for example the South African idea that education is a mechanism to escape poverty (Firfirey and Carolissen, 2010: 999). In this case South Africa evidences both a governmental policy for inclusion (Department of Education, 1997a), and an individual desire to engage in higher education. However while this may have impacted on the South African participants' decisions to attend university, some disagreement was expressed regarding this sentiment (Temba's boyhood friends who saw education as a 'waste of time', and Lukas's father who advised Lukas to search for a job as a manual labourer). In some ways the macrosystem was not conducive to the participants' experience of higher education, for example, the disjuncture between the students' (particularly Lukas, Temba, Lucy and Patricia) cultural heritage and the modern expectations of the university. University life could be seen to expect different manners (for example, less formality in addressing seniority as Lukas found) or more individualistic behaviours, as was found by Patricia, who had to refuse family demands in favour of her academic commitments, or Lucy, who prioritised family commitments over those of the university. The participants navigated the various demands in different ways and at different points in time, showing both their agency and their different levels of integration in and manipulation of the system. The Ecological Systems referred to by Bronfenbrenner (1992) enable the recognition of the systems within which the participants exist as partial, constantly changing and often under pressure. They do not exhibit the

coherence required for optimal development or functioning. In the case of the South African students the systems have not always seemed to operate on the same axis. The participants however have displayed significant resilience in overcoming negative environments and indeed in constructing their own paths within these systems.

"Undergraduate was a matter of a dream deferred. My dream prior to university was that I would be a lawyer. A big courtroom star, handling big cases. The excitement of wearing expensive suits, speaking a language that white people understand, but don't understand … But in desperation to get in, I did whatever. I went with the flow." (Temba interview, 25 October 2014).

Temba described a desire to become part of the elite grouping , which was expressed in different ways by all of the participants – the tool for this was to be the university degree. Using words from the poem 'Harlem' (Hughes, 1990) referring to a "dream deferred"(Appendix 1), Themba is referring to a dream unrealised, a fantasy of which only the essence remains, an essence which is overlaid and buried, but festering, as described in other ways throughout the narratives, and explored in more depth below.

Barnett (2007: 7) suggested that students need 'a will to learn' to survive and succeed within higher education and within the world at large. He regarded a 'will to learn' as having the characteristics of "readiness to keep going, willingness to open oneself up to new experiences, and a propensity to be critically honest with oneself and critically to interrogate oneself". Here the learning situation is inextricably bound up in character and identity. It would seem that for the student participants in this sample, much of their work on themselves was bound up in their work in the academic sphere, or was related to it in some way. Moreover as discussed, the academic system was experienced as foreign and with various challenges for the participants. It was also evident that the students, as human beings, were important entities. Rather than simply viewing the student as a disconnected role as 'the student', there are multiple parts of their life, experience and interpretations of those experiences which are essential to an understanding of their encounter with

university. Moreover the participants showed themselves to consistently and powerfully be negotiating within social structures in order to carve out spaces within which they could be comfortable whilst fulfilling the requirements of those structures.

The descriptions by the participants of their relationships with others and their relationships with commodities and assets (as students and graduates) can be viewed with reference to a broader issue. As students (and pre-students), the participants described survival as a priority. Descriptions of restraint and pragmatism in spending prevailed. However, once employed, the participants choices widened. For example, both Patricia and Lukas as graduates described buying an expensive bed as an important purchase marking their entry into the working world. Lukas described this as the first bed that he had ever owned. Patricia too described the thread count of her bed linen with pleasure. The significance of this example is perhaps as one of success, but also of a sense of being able to fill needs which are not directly related to survival. One could imagine that it is symbolic for these actors of a movement towards a better positioning within society. Within the discourse of the South African participants in particular there was a contradiction between the impulse to share with others versus the individual desire for consumer items; for example Lukas bought several beds and they became family assets. This echoed a common theme exhibited by the participants both as students and graduates, as to the extent to which they were obligated to engage in economic familial support. For all the expectation (within as well as by others) has led to an uncomfortable tension that has had to be delicately negotiated.

While Patricia, Lukas, Temba, Tilly and Lucy all described their initial motivation for going to university as orientated towards good jobs after graduation, rather than any intrinsic knowledge seeking. However having graduated with various degrees, all talked about the ways in which their understandings about and experiences of the world around them have changed in fundamental ways.

6 Conclusion

This study has longitudinally and in depth examined the accounts of seven participants, first as University of KwaZulu-Natal third-year sociology students and later as graduates having exited the bounded structures of the university. Their stories combine to form an interesting picture of a particular version of contemporary student and graduate life in South Africa. The small (at the same time varied) and self-selected nature of the sample prevents any attempt at generalisation. However the textural and detailed quality of the contributors' reports gives rare insight into the experience of those seven individuals. As such they could be used to inform other studies, and to provide insight into aspects of studentship and social mobility. The breadth of time and experience covered within the narratives is unique and has necessitated the discussion of a wide range of issues, and allowed the opportunity to scrutinise developments within the participants' lives over the timespan of the study.

This research set out to unravel the participant's stories in the context of 1) engaging in university study: getting to university, successfully negotiating through university and then 2) embarking on navigating wider society in the role of graduate. The interviewees were all first generation university students (although two had parents who had other forms of tertiary qualifications, one had a sibling at university, and another had a sibling involved in other forms of higher education at the time of their first year). Retrospective detail is provided by the participants' tales of how they came to become university students and of their lives prior to university.

The research gives a fresh perspective on an emerging student body from the South African point of view. The sample (five South Africans, two Zimbabweans and one international exchange student) is unique, as is the choice of venue (a South African university) and the timespan covered and detail of the data. The study contributes to the emergence of knowledge at a local level, in the context of a nation attempting to overcome structural inequality and use universities as a conduit of social and economic transformation. The

participants provide a rare insight into life when engaging in higher education and then in the workplace. The unstructured nature of the narratives resulted in a surprising number of common experiences described by the participants. Such commonalities were transected by the age, nationality and gender of the participant. Shared themes included in this analysis were those of poverty, survival and economic generation, family and peer relationships, initial experiences of university and the workplace, out of class and extracurricular activity and academic commitment and pressure.

The participants all revealed themselves to be undertaking a journey of development through their university involvement and after, similar to Barnett's (2007) description of the student – also applicable to the graduate as 'becoming': "She (the student) has moved herself into another place, a place in which she not only understands the world anew, but also understands herself anew" (Barnett, 2007: 53). All, including the exchange student, described themselves as having changed in some way as a result of their time at the university and exposure to the working domain. These changes seemed to be both at the level of identity and culture. In the unfolding of such change, the participants displayed a sense of agency at the level of the microsystem in that relations with themselves, with others and the environment were the result of what Bronfenbrenner (1993) described as 'progressive and mutual accommodation'. The adjustments could however have been influenced by what Bronfenbrenner identified as the macrosystem, as will be discussed.

As discussed, at the level of the specific student experience, as described by Tinto (1987), using Van Gennep (1960), university life could be regarded as an important rite of passage for the participants concerned. All the traditional aged participants described a major shift upon arrival at university. Their initial arrival at university was (for various reasons) described by four of the participants as traumatic – distance, language, residence life, their own insecurity or poverty ensured this. Adjustment could be seen as the 'life crisis' described by Van Gennep (1960) as accompanying the movement into new groups and later by Erikson (1970) where 'identity crisis' is seen as a result of role confusion. For the participants these experiences were characterised by a sense of isolation.

The participants (as students) described themselves as having goals of academic production and throughput congruent with the institution. They all described wanting to graduate, some wished to (and subsequently did) continue with postgraduate study. In many ways university life provided a way out of problems experienced in the context of family and community of origin – examples here could be those of deep poverty and discrimination. However the nature of the affiliation to the university community needs to be clarified: the sense of belonging is the same as that conceptualised by Tinto, that is, it is self-generated. This becomes even more evident at the graduate stage where the participants did not express any sense of identification with their alma mater. As Tinto (1987) suggested, the participants all recognised their stay at university as transitory. All as students talked of their life before university and were looking to the future, to a time when they were no longer students.

While identifying themselves as students, none of the sample were particularly patriotic to the organisation itself which carried through to graduate relationships. The participants (with the exception of Temba) may not have benefitted from any positive impact of formal out of class activity. However, as discussed in the findings (Chapter 5), one may well find that for participants who are second language speakers, from poverty-stricken and disadvantaged backgrounds, and/ or who work, direct academic commitment takes all available time and energy. In terms of belonging, Tinto (1987: 122) talked about the different effects of involvement in different parts of the system – some having more of a pull towards integration than others. In this case the participants' non-involvement, or involvement only in the academic sector and informal groups, impacted on their identity as students of a South African university.

In accordance with Tinto's observation (1975: 96) students are a diverse population. This is borne out by the participants of the study: male and female, African and American, mature and traditionally aged, poor and better off, urban and rural. These positionings all mediated

the experiences of the individuals with the university environment. Although each individual described very unique circumstances and experiences, there were some startling similarities: their concern with finances was uniform, if more acute for those who were poorer and their concern with academics was also shared. For the African students involved in this study, the uneasiness with traditional and cultural expectations was foregrounded.

Through the participant reports one can also see how different parts of the system as referred to by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory affect student experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Each one of the sample was active in interacting with their environment: indeed they described themselves as having power over and responsibility for their own experience. However, congruent with Bronfenbrenner's "process-person-context" (1992) model, the situations that the participants found themselves in were of central importance, for example describing themselves with little support, little money and high levels of commitment. At the level of 'microsystem', the interviewees' friendship groups and communities of practice, personal survival webs, work, courses and residence were all important components of the participant as 'becoming' (Barnett, 2007), as well as the experience of academic progress. Tinto's (1986) suggestion that positive experiences (through integration) lead to persistence and success was shown to be relevant through the study, but in informal rather than formal ways. Moreover, in some of the participants' cases, the positive experiences could be regarded as relative rather than objective in nature. It is also clear that the participants were strongly active in their own destinies as described, and attempted to manipulate those systems in which they found themselves. In many ways considering the literature, the participants have been admirable in their tenacity and ingenuity entering and persisting at university, as well as the positioning of themselves as employees and graduates.

The second data collection phase found the participants as graduates, widely dispersed both geographically and experientially. The graduates' narratives indicated not only a distance from the university, but also from family and community of origin, similar to the experiences/ emotions described as senior students. The process of separation that had

been identified as beginning with entry and progress through university has continued. Even those still living in close geographic proximity to the campus/ family/ community described a separation with all these institutions. It is clear from the narratives that the sense of commonality experienced on campus with other students at a senior level had at this point dissipated, and the participants found themselves in a liminal space socially.

'Graduateness' for these participants was as yet a contested identity. It has not provided membership to a grouping of intelligentsia or alumni, nor has it provided 'successful' employment. While Lukas and Temba are fulfilled in their work, these positions are temporary and in the format of learnerships. Patricia and Lucy, while employed full time, found that their self-recognised capacity for critical expression sets them uncomfortably apart from their colleagues. Kirsten and Eve found their skills and qualification wholly underutilised. However, for Temba, Lukas, Lucy and Patricia the qualification is the reason for employment. The dynamics above lead to the question of the role of university in transformation.

While graduation had provided a modest improvement in their economic position, the subjects did not seem ultimately to develop a sense of group identity linked to class, role or achievement. Intellectual development (particularly for Lukas, Themba, Patricia and Lucy) while congruent with the goals of higher education, resulted in an isolation from family, colleagues and some friendships. There was a certain guardedness evident in interactions with families and communities of origin; the latter were identified as being very different as well as sometimes exploitative. Lukas and to some extent Patricia had reconciled these expectations as part of their role as an 'African child' and seemed to be straddling a position between the modern and the traditional. The roles expected by culture, for example, in terms of gender and age, produced pressure and incongruence for the participants, these requiring both adherence to traditional notions of femininity and masculinity and simultaneous translation to modern notions of equality, forcing awareness and negotiation. In sum suggesting that the participants had not yet managed to translate the capital (as

conceptualised by Bourdieu) gained through higher education into an economic nor social place of security or belonging.

While there was an engagement with the world as an individual upon graduation (see the participants' discussions of their newfound independence in sections 5.10.3, 5.9.2, 5.8.2 and 5.5.2) there is also a desire to engage meaningfully with others at the level of community and to share the responsibility of decisions and experiences, both emotionally and normatively. There was also a noticeable idealism which surfaced through the ways in which poverty alleviation and community building in general are eulogised. From the intensely felt relationship of being of the poor, but no longer part of the poor, an idealism regarding upliftment became evident. Thus there was a concurrent need for less independence, less isolation. The participants seemed to be experiencing an excess of independence and were looking for connections. However the connections that they were finding did not come from social groups operating on the same axis. In fact many of their original connections created significant stress: the participants were constantly questioning motives and discerning manifestations of exploitation. The participants in the second phase of data collection could be seen to be engaged in a search for connection and recognition. The participants narratives showed that they were moving into new experiences and places without any familiar points of reference guiding or easing them through.

As suggested in Chapters 1 and 4, the project of higher education is entrenched in a discourse of social and economic improvement. As such recipients are tasked with not only individual socio-economic mobility, but with improving the nation at large. Traditionally, ideologies of community are innate. However the participants, all having made the journey through their degree studies as individuals – generally without the support of community and family structures – in a framework reifying the success of the individual were ultimately disposed to question such loyalty.

The social and economic spaces in which the participants were, are and will be part of are pivotal in the construction of self and identity.   As discussed above, within the narratives collected, a juxtaposition of the needs of the individual and those of community was seen to be playing out. The participants described wanting to be part of a whole or group, and of then being unable to find such belonging, or of balancing several sets of cosmetic belongings concurrently (for example, the descriptions of adapting behaviours to context, and the sometimes opposing world views of those contexts). This was evident while the participants were students and as graduates and working people. The unique identity as graduates had not coalesced into membership of such a grouping. There was no sense that the participants had found refuge in a social setting recognising their experiences as student and potential as graduates resulting in certain isolation.

The participants also seemed to find themselves seeing the way in which others see their (the participants) positions. It may be that the politicised nature of inequality in South Africa and the participants' own roots, as well as the intellectual project of the university, had made them 'hyper' aware. However such reflexivity seemed to contribute to a sense of disconnection and certain incompatibilities. The circumstances described were partially congruent with Bourdieu's cultural reproduction thesis (1997). Social mobility for the participants was only partially realised. This may be as a function of time (as in a short period of time since graduation) or of the inability to translate educational capital to economic mobility. Perhaps educational cultural capital, suggested by Bourdieu (1984: 578) as a mechanism of social mobility, is less potent than inherited cultural capital in cementing membership of groups of status.

Such experience may also be a result of an unwillingness to forgo ties with groupings with which they were previously affiliated. The past for the participants remained part of their identity and their microsystems, and was not fully relegated to the insignificant. The participants were therefore holding multiple places in multiple strata concurrently. For an individual this often translates to a certain sense of isolation.

At the level of the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), Tomlinson (2010) suggested that universities, in their role of providing higher education from an expanding base of applicants, sit uneasily in the role of transformative agents. Using Bourdieu's terms he posited that the engagement in higher education to overcome "pre-existing habitus" in the pursuit of acquiring social, cultural, economic capital is conflicted. As such, in the simultaneous protection of elite interests and the provision of equality, the possibility of two strata within higher education itself might in fact intensify class differences. The participants' narratives in this study would suggest that they had not yet been accepted into an elite class, but were no longer fully part of their previous strata. They seemed to occupy a liminal space – one of disparate membership, of potential not yet realised, and with conflict of interest.

The history of discrimination and deprivation, as well as political correctness, affirmative action and redress of the present, ensures that positions described in the data were not comfortable nor were they necessarily integrative of the maverick. The narratives of the participants in the second interview phase depicted experiences both similar and dissimilar to the international graduate counterpart. The South African graduates, as suggested in the literature, described engaging in 'liminal' unemployment while looking for appropriate work (as described by Brooks and Everett, 2009) or engaging in temporary posts in the attempt to become employable. The graduates related engaging with the work place at an entry level – for example Lukas and Temba who were interns, and Lucy who was a development field worker. Kirsten who had worked in her 'temporary' post for some years was finding it difficult to enter a professional position – this may be due both to her foreign status as well as her now limited experience. Tilly worked for herself, and Eve remained in the same job she held for most of her student life. Patricia described her employment as limiting – both in terms of her own intellectual capacity and skills, and ambition.

It is interesting to note that the participants each described a very unique set of experiences as part of their involvement in higher education and their journey towards immersion therein. The narratives showed that the participants, while being unsupported in some ways (or at certain levels), for example by family, economic resources and/ or an inadequate education system, were supported in others, for example by their peers, by the financial aid system (which while not ideal, was helpful), and in some cases family who, although strange to university and South Africa, were emotionally present. Some of the experiences described bear further investigation as part of the uniquely South African and African circumstances. For example, the effects of poverty, cultural dislocation and allied coping skills were emergent themes. Some of the occurrences however, while expressed differently and in some cases seeming acute, echoed the same root problems experienced by students internationally; for instance a crisis on initial exposure to university, and difficulties experienced by those who are first generation students. For the South African participants in particular, poverty and inequality were directly experienced, rather than being abstract concepts. However, it was also increasingly seen from afar, as a function of the African participants' economic, social intellectual and geographic mobility – both as students and then graduates. This led to both a rationalisation of position and flexibility of identity.

The narratives collected over time depict an interesting dichotomy in the sense that there was a struggle of oppositional positions and experiences for the South African participants in particular. Being the 'other' and concurrently trying to and then gaining entry into the mainstream, engendered unique perspectives and experiences: tradition vs current/'western'. Engels (1987: 64) counterintuitively theorised that such a struggle can create a certain unity, in that the contradiction within change can result in different connections. As in Marxist discourse, change within society is characterised by both a clean break with the past and a development from the past (ibid.: 63). Thus the change in society (and thus individuals' experience of that society) is both one of the translation of old understandings and ways of life and the transformation of those, as well as a break away towards some new understanding. The social world is experienced through contradiction and through conversion, as has been the case described at many points by the participants of this study. The past is both brought into the present and the future and at the same time

rejected. The description of the basic Marxian dialectic can help with understanding this study's participants' descriptive narratives in a very real way.

In sum, this research has enabled the participants to express a polarisation of experiences into oppositional spaces. The African participants in particular described conflicting conditions shaping the spaces which they inhabit. These included, for example, the commitment to the collective vs the individual; a sense of detachment vs belonging, norms vs the lack thereof, home vs university, family-home vs new home, tangible markers of success vs assisting others. The narratives described a sense of isolation for the participants inherent in the individuality of their position juxtaposed with a desire for community engagement and for the sharing of the responsibility of their own lives.

The participants also consistently showed resilience both in navigating higher education and the job market, but also in the face of the expectations of significant individuals and social groups. Some of the narratives showed a strategic use of norms and values to suit situational needs, while others demonstrated a sense of bewilderment. The actors in this case were engaging in their own manipulation and reconstruction – in a social milieu which was in itself constantly changing. However, within the reconstruction and manipulation there was the desire to fit into that which was already defined.

The narratives problematised higher education as a remedy for poverty and inequality. The improvement and prospective improvement in class position was uneven, and for some had resulted in a balancing act between different normative structures. For these participants both had led to a necessitating of social and personal engagement with inequality at an intimate level without the full gamut of resources to do so. The negotiation of positioning with such spaces seems to be of a long term nature. The journey through student-hood to graduation and beyond was mostly a quest into a lonely and often contradictory new realm. At the systemic level for the participants in this study the existent class structure has so far prevailed, -despite slight accommodations as described.

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Appendix 1

Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

       Langston Hughes